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The Element of Risk in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*

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Abstract

William Dean Howells' A Hazard of New Fortunes (1889) is a novel of risk. It entails chance on several levels. The title itself is redolent of risk: "hazard" and "fortunes" having connotations of peril and fate respectively. When we examine the aspects of Basil March's career that Howells presents us with, we see an inherently cautious man thrust into a milieu that is fraught with danger. In A Hazard of New Fortunes, "risk" can be assessed as a virtual milieu-in-itself, a milieu that is composed of fin-de-siècle capitalism's social imperatives.

Keywords: William Dean Howells, Boston, New York City, risk, fin-de-siècle capitalism, literary journalism, realism.

William Dean Howells' 1889 novel *A Hazard of New Fortunes* is a novel of risk. It entails chance on several levels. The title itself is redolent of risk: *hazard* and *fortunes* having connotations of peril and fate respectively. When we examine the aspects of Basil March's career that Howells presents us with, we see an inherently cautious man thrust into a milieu that is fraught with danger. He works for an insurance company and seems to have set aside his previously held literary aspirations almost entirely. He has opted for the safety of an office job in order not to risk his family's security. Indeed, in assessing *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, let us employ "risk" as a virtual milieu-in-itself, a milieu that is composed of fin-de-siècle capitalism's social imperatives. Howells was outraged by the 1886 Haymarket Massacre of protesting anarchists and his letter to Henry James details his ambition

to commit his radical political ideas to print (Anesko 192–93). Howells "status as a radical" was certain by 1887; he wrote a letter to the *New York Tribune* calling for a stay of execution for the alleged anarchists (Forster 216).

We know that by 1889 Howells embraced socialist ideals, and proceeding from this knowledge we may attempt to find a correspondence between the societal imperatives imposed by capitalism and the risk-laden milieu of Howells' New York City. The controlling factors in March's life all come from outside himself. He is incapable of directing his own life. March is a figure of mass society whose literary ambitions seem to be a meager defense against the depredations of mass society. Howells' plot reveals political and social pressures that obviate any aesthetic isolation on March's part. Basil March's status as a mediator in the novel is a reflection of his status as a mediator for the reader. March functions as a normative character; we latch onto him easily even if our laughter at him precludes total identification with him. It is the contrast of March's initial ponderousness that makes him such a worthwhile figure of venturesomeness once he decides to take the chance in New York. He is able to engage us because of his stolid progression. Unable to make a move, even when faced with being replaced by Matkins, his own assistant, March nevertheless is "our" man. We appreciate his position as a victim of the henpecking Isabel and the ebullient Fulkerson. We have described March as a mediating figure. From the novel's opening March is in fact a man caught in the middle. He is, as described by Fulkerson, a natural born literary man, who happens to work for an insurance company. The process by which he leaves insurance to edit *Every Other Week* is a means by which Howells clarifies March's position as a mediator for the novel. March seems to be assuming a mantle that was his from birth; actually he is going to work for Dryfoos the capitalist via Fulkerson. By moving into the editorship March takes his first risk, and he can now "mediate" for a society in which art is a function of capitalism.[1]

Let us turn then to Howells' opening of his narrative. "Now" is the novel's first word. Perhaps no other word in the language conveys immediacy more forcefully, yet beyond the self-evident nature of this word, let us concern ourselves with its power. It is appropriate that Fulkerson utters this word, for he seems the very embodiment of it. Fulkerson is always moving, always enthusiastic. He is in complete contrast to March's sedentariness. Thrust into temporalness, as we are by Fulkerson, let us observe the danger that Fulkerson seems to exude. Fulkerson is "at risk" when first we see him; he is leaning back with his chair tilted off the floor. Such a posture is almost reckless, despite the fact he is giving instructions to March. Indeed, Fulkerson appears to sense the precariousness of his position for he changes it to a safer and more authoritarian one. Fulkerson stands to tell March that he should get out of the insurance business. It is most ironic that March is getting sick of selling people protection against the natural consequences of life because he himself wants to be free of the security, the insurance, which this position provides for him. He is tired of being a cog in what is actually an odds-making business. To return briefly to Howells' title, "hazard" is a technical term in the insurance business relating to something of more than ordinary liability, and Fulkerson and March relativize the quotidian dangers which we observe in context with the celestial images that Fulkerson invokes. Fulkerson places himself at the same level as the Creator-God, "I tell you March, this is the greatest idea that has been struck… since the creation of man" (Hazard 7).

In his way, conversely, Fulkerson can be seen as a devil-figure or at least as "Satan's angel," as March describes him to his wife (21). He works to seduce March and is an amusing figure, more "Old Nick" or "Mr. Scratch" than demon: "he wore his grizzled beard full, but cropped close; it gave him a certain grimness, corrected by the gentleness of his eyes" (7). The thin bamboo cane that Fulkerson brandishes is his tail, and it is this appendage that nearly causes a desktop disaster of immense proportions: the toppling of March's mucilage bottle and inkstand. The upsetting of these objects would be to a blotter the equivalent of the fall of brimstone and sulfur upon the biblical Cities of the Plain. Howells saw urbanization as nothing short of a conflagration for the lower classes; he enjoyed living in the city (Crider 60–62). It is within such a parameter that March and Fulkerson's "worldliness" takes on its element of risk. While Fulkerson is too obvious to be anything more than a figure of fun, March's self-deprecating manner adds to our perception of Fulkerson as the picture of confidence and self-assuredness. When we compare the two men in their exchange, we wonder about their relationship. March says that he gave up "smoking and the muse together" before his marriage, and has attempted nothing literary since. Fulkerson is undaunted by this admission. He wants an editor with little experience. Fulkerson himself is taking a risk with March. Through this sequence we are able to note the "haphazard" nature of the enterprise and the essential rootlessness of March's career. He got into the insurance business by "accident". March does not seem to have the certainty of will that Fulkerson possesses in such abundance.

When March and Fulkerson come to the point in their discussion when the name of the magazine is brought up, it is clear that Fulkerson really needs March. Fulkerson tells March that the name will be left undecided until an editor is chosen. It is here that March's enthusiasm perks up somewhat. He begins a series of suggestions which, while comic, do have elements of irony and even of foreshadowing in them: "From Sea to Sea", "The Syndicate", "The Mutual", "The Round Robin", "The Army of the Martyrs", "The Fifth Wheel", "The Free Lance", "The Hog on Ice", and "The Lone Hand". It is at this point that Fulkerson says to March, "I see the poison's beginning to work in you, March." Fulkerson's vaguely stated ideas about the nature of how the magazine will be run cannot but help fill the reader with some foreboding. Glancing back over the titles with this foreboding in mind, we might note that "syndicate" is part of the vocabulary of trade unionism, so despised by the journal's owner Dryfoos; there will be nothing "mutual" at all in the running of the magazine once Dryfoos' ire is aroused; between Fulkerson, March, Conrad Dryfoos and Dryfoos there will be confusion of final responsibility; Conrad Dryfoos will become a martyr for humanity; there is something more mercenary than "completely independent" about the magazine; Dryfoos is certainly porcine in his growing rapaciousness, and this culminates in his struggle with March over Lindau; and at least part of "the whole West" would recall that it was a "lone hand" that wrote on the wall at Belshazzar's feast. It is appropriate that Fulkerson, the man so much of his own times, should opt for a title that has to do with periodicity. "Every Other Week" springs from an English model that was not successful and which, despite its title, became a "monthly,"[2] and from the French *Revue des Deux Mondes* which was successfully published twice monthly.[3] Perhaps even more noteworthy is the fact that Fulkerson, the jingoistic American, is aware of such noted English and French journals. The "poison" Fulkerson injects into March works slowly.

March is by nature plodding and is not quite as easily used by Fulkerson as we might think. Fulkerson understands the balance of power in the March household, and when March voices his objections about moving to New York he makes his knowledge clear:

> I daresay it wouldn't–or needn't–cost so very much more, but I don't want to go to New York; or my wife doesn't. It's the same thing."
> "A good deal samer," Fulkerson admitted. (12)

Fulkerson's "candor" is quite evident in the above quoted passage. Yet, Fulkerson can be selective about his candor. Consider that it takes seven pages for Fulkerson (71–78) to admit to March that Dryfoos is his "angel." It is this quality that demonstrates his manipulative ability. He is able to control information about the magazine and thus control March's responses to it.

The other great, indeed greater, influence on Basil March is his wife Isabel. It is she who will decide whether Basil will take the proffered job or not. March is quite the family man and Howells subtly draws for us a picture of life at the March house. It is significant that they reside in the South End, an address marking them as distinctly middle class, despite Isabel's family income. Bella March "lies in wait" like a predator and pounces on her father upon his arrival; Tom March is indifferent to his father; Mrs. March is sitting, looking "cultivated," as she reads that most proper Bostonian newspaper *The Transcript*; and yet all is not right with this world. Isabel sensed something wrong when Basil kissed her; she lives up to her cultivated "look" by making a play on words in French (16). It is here in March's home that we learn that the magazine is to be based on "the principle of cooperation" (17) inspired by March himself. It was his "germ", his "microbe" as Fulkerson puts it. The risk of leaving for New York is depicted as a sort of bacillus. Moreover, this germ of journalistic enterprise will infect the March household and lead Basil to speculate that his position at the insurance company, Reciprocity Life, is not secure. The children express selfish, albeit "educational" reasons for not wanting to go to New York and are immune to the "irony" of March's response to their selfishness as Howells describes it in the first sentence of the novel's fourth chapter. It is at this point that the question of exchange may be raised about March's existence.

We have observed March at his office with Fulkerson and at home with his family. What are the values "exchanged" in these opening scenes? How does March assay his own position? He appears unable to bargain from strength, and to view himself as being somehow worthless. March's personal inelasticity reflects his place of residence. By 1890, the year of the novel's writing, Boston had not been the nation's literary capitol for fifteen years.[4] At Reciprocity Life, March's productivity has declined and he is replaced by his own clerk. March admits that he has not changed his way of handling the office's affairs:

> During the eighteen years of his connection with it – first as a subordinate in the Boston office, and finally as its general agent there – he had seen a good many changes in the Reciprocity; presidents, vice-presidents, actuaries, and general agents had come and --gone, but there had always seemed to be a recognition of his efficiency, or at least sufficiency, and there had never been any manner of trouble, no question of accounts, no apparent dissatisfaction with his management, until latterly, when

> there had begun to come from headquarters some suggestions of enterprise in certain ways,.. he had embodied some of Matkins' ideas. The things proposed seemed vulgar; he had never thought himself wanting in energy, though probably he had left the business to take its own course in the old lines more than he had realized. (29)

How knowing of Howells to have March gently offered a demotion that he will nearly insist on taking. Amy Kaplan draws upon Walter Benjamin's figure of "the Walker in the City" as a figure that stands for the writer (71). Alfred Kazin famously used this as the title for his memoir of growing up in New York City. One of Kazin's themes is the immigrant who has arrived, and he reveals his growing consciousness of himself as an American in a city of transplanted cultures. The rootlessness that Benjamin sees as the key to understanding Baudelaire and the nineteenth century underlies the Marches' search for a *place* in New York City. For her part, Kaplan applies this idea from Benjamin's "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" to emphasize the Marches' dread of somehow making a mistake and losing their genteel place should they not choose the proper address. They become acutely aware of the line between "respectability" and "shabbiness." In this essay by Benjamin, there is also a section on the nineteenth-century phenomenon of gambling among the middle classes.[5] Kaplan analyzes the apartment hunting sequence in terms of "being foreign territory, [which] the narrative struggles to chart (71)." Yet to return to "risk," and our purposes, the search for the apartment is essentially a gamble. The "real estate game" has very high stakes and the Marches are not canny gamblers. It is not enough to simply find a place to live; one must find the *right* place.

1890 is usually seen as the year of the closing of the American frontier and the beginning of the city's taking its place. Kaplan argues precisely this point (76). The next frontier is an urban one. March (like Howells himself) is blazing a new trail in American cultural history. This will expedite the self-fashioning and creation of literary personae culminating in the first quarter of the twentieth century with the debut of *The New Yorker*, the magazine "not for the old lady from Dubuque." Harold Ross, who made that declaration in the magazine's 1925 prospectus, was himself from Aspen, Colorado, but he is emblematic of the early twentieth-century American literary figures who gathered in New York City to make their careers as cosmopolitan artists. The modern artist is remade by distancing himself or herself from anything that is not the metropolis; clearly Boston lacks sufficient scope to embody this new aesthetic imperative (let alone Dubuque, Iowa). These twentieth-century New Yorkers were prefigured by Baudelaire as much as the nineteenth-century Parisians on whom Benjamin elaborates. Pizer's recent "formalist" discussion of the novel emphasizes the importance of non-native New Yorkers to Howells' cultural landscape: in choosing to make March's move to New York to start a new journal the fulcrum upon which the novel rests, Howells was thus reflecting both his own personal hazard of new fortunes and that of an entire literary and artistic generation. Pizer's argument sums up and also amplifies Howells' place as author and exemplar of the cultural transition that the novel depicts. Pizer seeks to counter Kaplan's social argument. Indeed, her perspective is a social one, and much of the commentary on the novel is rightly taken up with this point of view. Nevertheless, to shift from this perspective and consider another aspect of Howells' society, one may view the Marches as displaced pseudo-aristocrats. After all, Isabel's

money is not enough to live on. They must leave Boston-in-decline to come to the *new* city-on-the-hill: New York City. It is here that commodification is the norm and in a signatory exchange on the train to New York, Basil and Isabel, though not without irony, reveal how they have become a bit commodified themselves. The conversation they have demonstrates that Basil's ideas are potentially worth money – they are things that may generate income. He is not an intellectual, but a generator of ideas to sell. Isabel makes herself his agent when she insists that Basil marshal his resources rather than carelessly expend them. Basil is observing that the foliage is not as dramatic as in years past, and this leads him to conclude: "Do you see how the foreground keeps abreast of us, while the middle distance seems stationary? I don't think I ever noticed that effect before" (35). It is an idea that March feels should have something literary in it – "retreating past, and advancing future… deceitfully permanent present" (35). Isabel remonstrates with him for "wasting an idea." Basil responds that she is right; it is taking money "out of Fulkerson's pocket" (35). No matter how self-consciously, or ironically, the Marches have allowed the salesman – commodity – to get his foot in the door. How did they finally decide to make the move to New York? They entered into an exchange of risks.

It is Isabel who recognizes their position for what it is; she spurs her husband on to achieve his literary ambitions. Howells has played a variation here on what might be a false typification: Isabel has her own property, yet she is taking the risk using her own economic leverage. We must allow that there is a genuine bond between Basil and Isabel for us to be able to accept her statement, "If I could once feel that you had fairly seen what you could do in literature, I should die happy" (25). Moreover, she "pleads" with Basil, "I will take all the responsibility" (25). Surely she is no pasteboard figure. Basil may be dominated, but he appears to need this in order to survive. It is Isabel's property that enables her to function as Howells' "real grasshopper" (6) and avoid the danger of becoming a late Victorian type. When the Marches finally settle into their apartment, Howells returns the reader to *Every Other Week*. The magazine is a venture of motivation for the novel's narrative, an economic device that brings the other characters of the book together. The correspondence between the economic risk of the magazine and the social risk of the Marches' relocation is somewhat vitiated by the presence of the capitalist, Dryfoos. Yet this vitiation has its price. March and company are relieved of the responsibility of risk; therefore, they cannot be independent. *Every Other Week* is nothing more than chattel journalism. Despite the high-mindedness of its syndicalized management, it is essentially a sham that functions on Dryfoos' whim. Thus the main body of Howells' narrative is caught up in a dysfunction that will have fatal results: Lindau's and Conrad Dryfoos' deaths. Dryfoos is punished for his manipulation of the system. He overreaches when he attempts to become a capitalist overlord. Howells abhors such a would-be malefactor of wealth as Dryfoos and will not allow him to flourish. Dryfoos' insistence that Lindau be removed prefigures the transit strike because it makes March aware that he is a mere functionary in a capitalist's enterprise. Dryfoos summarily ordains and March must abjectly obey. March will not comply with him, and the conflict represents a "holy war." He must resist or be swallowed up.

While this refusal to buckle under by March is often seen as evidence of moral growth on his part, perhaps we can look at it in a different light and consider it as a consequence of a power struggle between March and Dryfoos (Cooley 75 and Nettels 107). Is March's

refusal to fire Lindau symptomatic of his growth as a citizen of New York City, cognizant of his own ambitions at last? I think that it is. March is finally able to enter into a risk exchange of his own volition. Morality aside though, it of course adds to March's side of the exchange. Basil is fighting for his own position, his authority. March is no longer the alienated figure; he applies the values that are native to himself (however, we must not preclude loyalty to an old friend here) in order to challenge the assault on his place in society. March has taken his own role in New York. He is a "literary man" now. In Boston, he was working for his family, satisfied with being dissatisfied. Now he will not be brushed aside. What a change from the March who would have gladly assumed his inferior's position at Reciprocity Life. March will not have his authority challenged. We are observing the first stage of Dryfoos' "disintegration." As Trilling has written in "William Dean Howells and the Roots of Modern Taste": "Disintegration itself fascinates us because it is a power. Evil has always fascinated men, not only because it is opposed to good but also because it is in its own right, a power" (88).

Dryfoos' daunted application of his own power will end up disintegrating him. The flaws in his personal application of capitalistic energy are too many for his family to bear, and it will break down under this pressure. It is an ironic thought that Dryfoos succeeded in creating a valuable commodity out of all this, the magazine *Every Other Week*. The periodical becomes viable on its own. It is important that we recall Dryfoos' pseudo-capitalistic origins at this point. He was a farmer with the good luck to own land that held natural gas beneath it. Dryfoos is not really an actual capitalist until he "owns" *Every Other Week*. We recall his mentioning that Rockefeller undercut his prices at one time, causing Dryfoos to lose money. Dryfoos cannot be allowed to function as a successful capitalist because of his desperate desire to overreach himself – reflected by the pathetic social pretensions of his wife and daughters. Dryfoos stands for the great myth of laissez-faire competition. He has already been victimized by a genuine capitalist, Rockefeller, yet his lack of awareness is such that he cannot see the smallness of his own position until his son is killed. *A Hazard of New Fortunes* is thus a title that is a commentary on the novel itself. The risk exchanges that March and Dryfoos enter into demonstrate that March is the stronger of the two: both originally "Western men," they come to New York and collide. Dryfoos, though, is a man made wealthy by chance, and thereafter bankrupts himself of morality. March, while lacking wealth, has convictions that have lain dormant since he chose not to employ them. When confronted, March will rise and Dryfoos fall. The transit strike is the means by which Dryfoos will be undone.

The transit strike which forces the narrative to its climax is Howells' de1iberate projection of human will onto the capitalist system. The strike engages all of the characters since the transit system is such a vital part of the city. It is quite a stroke for Howells that he can so unobtrusively crystallize the problems of the capitalist city. It is the social contract abrogated by the risk of the social contract in capitalism writ large. Neutrality is impossible. The accounting process will give no quarter. Yet, the amoral vengefulness of capitalism is not an excuse for Howells to wax didactic because he presents the problem with no solutions readily at hand. It has been observed that Howells was using Tolstoy as his model by this time in his career, yet in *A Hazard of New Fortunes,* we find no such commandments such as those the Russian author would later include at the end of *Resurrectio*n (1899).

Of course, Howells lacks Tolstoy's religious convictions and *Hazard* is a much smaller work than Tolstoy's is, but Howells is also writing of a society that is economically more sophisticated than Tolstoy's is. Therefore it is more difficult in Howells' more "advanced" capitalistic society to have such an earnest hope as is articulated by Tolstoy's "Forgive!" at the close of *Resurrection*. What Howells gives us is a wiser March who is a narrative figure capable of mediating for the end of a novel that will not bring closure. The reader needs March to grow not so that we will be "satisfied" at his personal "progress," but so that Howells can refrain from didacticism. March hardens but does not become a negative character. The determinism that March expresses in the latter section of *Hazard* is Howells' solution, which according to Bennett is his "recognition that he could offer only the most generalized kind of answer to the individual moral question. It is simply not possible to provide any really useful clue as to what the individual should do to act against the system" (41). It is interesting that March feels "a fantastic sense of shame" (*Hazard* 330) with regard to Lindau. Here, March is at his most moralistic, yet he will emerge from this struggle changed just as Dryfoos will. March has a conversation with his wife toward the last part of the novel in which his "philosophy of life" clearly shows the influence of having lived in New York City and how it has hardened him:

> Someone always has you by the throat, unless you have someone else in your grip. I wonder if that's the attitude the Almighty intended his respectable creatures to take toward one another! I wonder if he meant our civilization, the battle we fight in, the game we trick in! I wonder if He considers it final, and if the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, which we pray for…. (379)

Mrs. March coolly responds that she assumes he has been with Lindau, but he has "not gotten his piety from Lindau" (379). The expression of doubt bordering on disgust and rejection is the fruition of March's time in the city. March and his wife continue their conversation and it grows heated. Here is where the novel can begin its way toward a conclusion. When March says conditions make character, he is waving the determinist reformer's banner that would fly even higher when Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* was published the following year (1890). Howells saves this scene from lapsing into the speechifying of zealotry by March's proclamation that he will become a beggar. By returning to their encounter with the panhandler, the incident early in the novel that rather shocked the Marches, and furthermore by March's ironic attitude regarding that beggar, we see that he has become genuinely sophisticated. The sarcasm that March uses when he talks of becoming a beggar in the argument with his wife shows us that he has fully assimilated himself into the process of risk exchange. He can entertain the idea that the beggar they saw may have been an "impostor." Isabel can only argue earnestly, taking the beggar at face value and even taking her husband's sarcasm seriously.

March's ludicrous "decision" to take up beggary is a response to the dilemma of an individual poised against society. This is not the only possible response, though. Howells himself is too sophisticated to claim as much for Basil, whose acceptance of risk exchange as a *modus vivendi* does not preclude his disgust with capitalism. There is no shining light to lead the Marches away from New York City. Indeed, in the United States there is really

no alternative. Howells is not writing a utopian novel. Thus, there can be no closure, only acceptance. In *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, we have certainly seen more of life's dangerous side than its smiling side. Howells would assuredly concur with this passage from Tolstoy's *What Is Art?*:

> The task of art is enormous. Through the influence of real art, aided by science…that peaceful cooperation of man which is now maintained by external means…should be obtained by man's free and joyous activity. Art should cause violence to be set aside. (287)

The violence of Howells' novel is the violence of a society in conflict with itself. It is not only the threat of anarchism or labor unrest that Lindau's character presents. It is another aspect of the new urban "frontier." To consider another aspect of what happened with the closing of the frontier at the end of the nineteenth century, one must also recall that this meant the end of the warfare between the United States Army and the Native Americans of the western territories. For a time, from the Haymarket Massacre (1886) through the first "Red Scare" (1919–1920) conservative Americans were profoundly afraid that an era of urban violence bordering on revolutionary ferocity was at hand. No such revolution took place, of course, but neither has there been a satisfactory conclusion to the conflict that Howells depicts in the novel. Howells has presented a picture of the conflict, not the resolution of the conflict. True to his idealization of Tolstoy, Howells is also a defender of art holding the mirror up to nature.[6] Further, regarding Shakespearean reference, consider the source of Howells' title, lines from Shakespeare's *King John* King John, Act II, scene i:

> And all the unsettled humours of the land,
> Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
> With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,
> Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
> Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,
> To make hazard of new fortunes here:
> In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits
> Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er
> Did nearer float upon the swelling tide,
> To do offence and scath in Christendom.
>
> Lines 66–75.

These lines spoken by Chatillon, the haughty French ambassador to the English court, are conventionally seen as being reflected by the Marches' move to New York City and Dryfoos' arriviste arrogance. However, Jonathan Bauch raises the possibility that Lindau, the "fiery voluntary" of Revolution, should also be included here. He argues that Howells intended Lindau to be not only a German immigrant, but a Jewish immigrant, thus embodying the immigrant hordes hazarding their fortunes in America (15). Bauch is much more concerned with "the other half" than are most commentators on the novel. He makes much of the fear of violence that "alien" anarchists inspired. Doubtless Lindau is the touchstone

for the violence central to the novel's conclusion, and we would do well to recognize that fear, and to recall the combustible nature of the commodity in question (natural gas) as well as its commercial value, which pays March's and Fulkerson's salaries. Thus, risk underlies every aspect of *A Hazard of New Fortunes*.

Notes

[1] For a discussion of the role of mediation as a function of art in society, see Williams 97–98.

[2] Gross discusses the *Fortnightly* throughout his book as a leading journal.

[3] Becker and Philips note *La Revue des Deux Mondes* throughout their text.

[4] For a discussion of Howells' move to New York and the decline of Boston, see Brooks 373–394.

[5] Benjamin's consideration of gambling is continued in Section IX of "One Some Motifs in Baudelaire." 178–182.

[6] Howells' defense of using nature as the standard against which art should be measured is in Becker, 134.

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Asian American Belonging Revised in Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* and Hamid's *Reluctant Fundamentalist*

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Abstract

The paper examines narratives by Jhumpa Lahiri (the author of Unaccustomed Earth) and Mohsin Hamid (the author of Reluctant Fundamentalist) as exemplary accounts of identity quests by Asian migrants to the US who negotiate their bicultural identity and re-configure their private spaces as responsive either to cultural roles or to global events such as 9/11. It is insufficient to view these global authors merely as third world cosmopolitans (M. Mukherjee), or to frame texts as comparison literature – products of the imagination of the global literary market (R. Walkowitz). In the overlaps of Western or Eastern cultures, these transnational negotiations examine the meanings of acculturation for a model minority professional and mother (in Lahiri) or an exiled Muslim (in Hamid). Choosing not to ignore intricate issues of identity bound up with dislocations and displacement in the US context, the article applies selected comparative tools (as provided by S. Hall, L. Lowe, A. Appadurai and F. Wu) to spell out the challenge for transnational scholarship, and urges the examination of the large emerging body of transcultural South Asian fiction with diversified narrations that re-imagine topics within the current stream of world literature identity politics.

Keywords: Jhumpa Lahiri, Mohsin Hamid, Unaccustomed Earth, Reluctant Fundamentalist, Asian American transnational literature, 9/11, third world cosmopolitans, comparison literature, global literary market

In the post 9/11 era, major social transformations have affected transnational cultural production, and South Asian American literature is no exception. Comparing transformative time-bound experiences of migration and examining responses to America's selective

acculturation constitute major themes of Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2006) and Jhumpa Lahiri's story collection *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). Hamid presents the tale of a former overachiever in the US named Changez, who is of Pakistani origin. He faces the transformations of the public mood in the aftermath of 9/11, becomes disillusioned with US democracy, and leaves for Pakistan. The novel takes place in a café in Lahore where he tells a nameless American listener the story of his conversion into a fundamentalist. Lahiri, on the other hand, narrates a tale about the personal dilemmas of Ruma, a lawyer, a mother, the wife of an American, and a daughter of a relocated Indian American, while she is mourning for her deceased Bengali mother. The dilemmas portrayed in the story concern multiple identity quests and personal responses to acculturation and uprooting; Lahiri poses questions about belonging to the "unaccustomed earth" – standing for the US.

Specifically, both novels contribute to the discourse on the belonging of Asian migrants in the United States, where cosmopolitan engagement and acculturation policies are significant factors in the formation of general culture and politics. Since 9/11, transnational texts invite the impression that Asian American sentiments and relations have been disrupted, yet are still developing in a direction congruent with cosmopolitan (not ethnic-blind) principles. Both texts reveal that cosmopolitan principles invite and develop the new identity ethics of literary imagination:

> [C]osmopolitanisms seek to establish principles of interpretation and encounter in the context of cultural diversity and political conflict, yet these principles are often formulated within and throughout the interactions they serve to manage. Indeed, theorists regularly invoke works of literature and other cultural artifacts to exemplify ethical paradigms, even as these paradigms seek to make visible, if not suspect, such acts of exemplarity. (Walkowitz, "Cosmopolitan Ethics" 221–2)

While promoting diversity, these cosmopolitan texts invite new pro-ethnic ethics and call for differentiation rather than simple binaries and negations (Hall 233–46). In both novels, the protagonists' cosmopolitan and transcultural experiences are complex and challenge the horizons of the readership's expectations. These cosmopolitan writers transgress traditional migrant Asian narratives. They point to trivialities, paradoxes, and intimate personal dilemmas. As Asians who experienced relocation to the US (Hall 236), they evaluate the impacts of personal choices. Both books offer moving though ambivalent accounts of transnational experiences, while touching on sensitive issues of acculturation in argumentative and even debatable ways, evoking criticism mostly among first generation migrants. Nevertheless, both authors' imagination is less ideological and political, more complex and subtle; it cultivates the new transnational ethics, as discussed by Comparison Literature (more below). Both texts also illustrate the complexities of acculturation, discussing migration and nostalgia for the ancestors' homeland while commenting on the deepening sense of the loss of their roots in the South Asian Diaspora, as if the omnipresent and complex sense of loss has replaced the initial excitement and commitment of belonging to the US which was felt by the first generation of migrants.

Third World Cosmopolitans?

Strategies of cosmopolitanism differ in both novels; cosmopolitanism requires a quest for complexities. Both authors could be labeled as third world cosmopolitans, due to the obvious cartography of their roots. Meenakshi Mukherjee explains the label:

> The category of writers called Third World Cosmopolitans are globally visible, are taught in postcolonial classrooms all over the world, and are hailed in the review pages of Western journals as interpreters and authentic voices of the non-Western world. The precondition for belonging to this club is that she/he must write originally in English. Implicit here is an erasure of the diversity of India. (239)

According to Mukherjee, the current third world cosmopolitans have close personal experience of both worlds – East and West. They are "qualified" to discuss South Asian mythologies, criticize India, or show uncritical nostalgia; yet their memory of the homeland/ancestor-land is rather selective. They frequently point to the social ills of South Asian society, the paradoxes of the modern and traditional worlds, the differences between local and global, individual and collective, secular and orthodox. They also mirror the West as they examine the American dream or the sentiments of transnational Asian migrants. Nevertheless, among the third world cosmopolitans there are many authors who opt to relocate to the West permanently, and thus the label "third world" becomes rather inaccurate as a description of them.

The majority of the authors from the current generation of transnational authors-cosmopolitans have tended to move to and write in the West[1] for various reasons, usually connected to their careers and publishing options. They mostly belong to the first generation of migrants born in South Asia, and often narrate tales set in their eastern homeland. Unlike the East, the West is often depicted in a rather negative way. Nevertheless, transnationals like Lahiri and Hamid do not fall within this the paradigm. Lahiri locates her texts in US settings (not taking sides with East or West). Hamid narrates his story while physically sitting in the East, though most of his tale is set in the US. Their voices are strongly US-acculturated, and from this perspective they explore the lives, emotions, limited options, dilemmas, expectations, or generational confrontations of first and second generation migrants. Both authors choose to accept the United States as their homeland for some period of their lives, though Hamid feels exiled. Nevertheless, both seem to have overcome their nostalgia for their original ancestral land, a nostalgia which is common among many Asian authors. Other members of this contemporary group of transnational authors seek alternative means of expression; for example, Kiran Desai opts to be rather rootless and sets her narration *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) in India and the US, taking sides with the uprooted cosmopolitans such as herself, who live in a borderless global space. On the other hand, India-based Arundhati Roy presents uprooted individuals as doomed wrecks who can be reborn only when re-rooted in the Indian soil and when they come to terms with their communal spirit and family traditions, however harsh that may be (as in *The God of Small Things,* 1996).

Lahiri and the emerging second generation of Asian transnational writers aspire to prove that their geographical origin is not the only criterion by which their work should

be evaluated. In her writing Lahiri is preoccupied with her Bengali descent, yet she was born in London and lives in New York. Although South Asian families and traditions are at the centre of her work, her major theme is the search for the connections of transnationals like herself to places that are undefined by family roots. According to her, one does not necessarily feel the strongest attachment to the country of one's birth or ancestry: instead, her characters grow connections to places that allow them to experience personal growth. These notions are the prime concern of her collection *Unaccustomed Earth.* She is the voice of the incoming second generation of American South Asian writers settled in the "unaccustomed earth" of the US.

In the title story "Unaccustomed Earth", transnational characters planted in the US environment may change, mature, and progress, or they may fade and eventually perish. The relocation to the US seems to be no guarantee of emotional security and stability. Lahiri questions acculturation and traditions alike. The title "Unaccustomed Earth" is used not only as a powerful metaphor, but in a very material sense as well. A Bengali American grandfather shows his grandson Akash how to sow seeds and grow plants, while the grandson plants Lego blocks along and a plastic dinosaur instead. Thus, as symbols of the international, the foreign and the prehistoric are buried in the particular US garden plot:

> Akash nodded. He picked up a plastic dinosaur forcing it into the ground.
> 'What colour is it?' her father asked.
> 'Red.'
> 'And in Bengali?'
> 'Lal.'
> 'Good.'
> 'And neel!' Akash cried out pointing to the sky. (44–45)

These objects do not have a chance to become rooted and to grow in the American soil, unlike the seeds planted by the first generation migrant grandfather. Lahiri also explains that the grandfather wishes to help his grandson feel connected to the soil and family ancestry, while neither Ruma nor her husband plant seeds around their house, and Bengali is not spoken in their home. Their connection to the American soil is mediated and indirect.

The plotline concerns the widowed grandfather's visit to his daughter's new home. Ruma is married to an American. The story revolves around her settling down in a new luxurious home in Seattle. Her dilemma is: should she share it with her father or not? Without consulting him, she wonders whether her father should move in with them. Yet her father's concern is different: should he tell his daughter that he has a new girlfriend and, by telling her, cast a shade on the memory of her deceased mother? Using this seemingly simple plot, Lahiri describes minor tensions and details before the story comes to its climax, revealing an urgent sense of loss, sadness, and yet also hope.

The character of Ruma is ambivalent regarding her nostalgia for her Indian ancestry as she mourns for her Indian mother. Ruma is a second generation migrant who adapts to her new homeland well, but who mourns for her mother's ways. Women are seen as transmitters of culture, but Ruma's mourning for her mother can be seen as missing the actual person, not merely as an expression of nostalgia for the motherland. Perhaps it is nostalgia for someone living a culture that has now gone, though that culture was in fact

rather bothersome when she was living in it. However, Ruma's father, a representative of the first migrant generation, seems to have negotiated his origins better, and he has seamlessly transformed himself into a retired Westerner, living alone in a condo and traveling on package tours. Juxtaposing the parallel reactions and preoccupations of the first and second generations of relocated Asians to the US, Lahiri thus examines generational differences and gaps, diverse expectations, commitments, sentiments and levels of acculturation that bring about changes between generations.

Lahiri seems to question the clear borderline between the first and second generation migrants which was delineated in her previous work. In *The Namesake* (2003), her earlier novel, she criticizes Asian American culture for suffering from the unmediated vertical transmission of culture from one generation to another, yet in "Unaccustomed Earth" she is more ambivalent. While the characters in *The Namesake* personify the possibilities of living between cultures, the differentiating experience of "Unaccustomed Earth" is less clear. Although the grandfather seems to be content and rooted in his American homeland, his US-born daughter Ruma seems uprooted, confused, desperate and lost. Moreover, she starts missing her Indian mother, and is struck by how much her father "resembled an American in his old age. With his gray hair and fair skin he could have been practically from anywhere." (23)

Indeed, the grandfather appears as a truly assimilated transnational, yet he wishes to reproduce his Bengali identity and project it onto his grandson. He wonders:

> The temptation was the boy, but he knew that the boy would forget him… The more children grew, the less they had seemed to resemble either parent – they spoke differently, dressed differently, seemed foreign in every way… Oddly, it was his grandson, who was only half-Bengali to begin with, who did not even have a Bengali surname, with whom he felt a direct biological connection, a sense of himself reconstituted in another. (54)

The story "Unaccustomed Earth" describes the dilemmas of new Asian Americans: Do I want to identify with my parents' Bengali ancestry and their ways? Or do I fully accept American land, culture, values and traditions? Lahiri shows there is no simple answer. These dilemmas are ascribed to her Bengali immigrants in the West, yet they appeal universally.

The examples of cosmopolitan identification described by Lahiri in new South Asian literature are rather complex. Other helpful criteria are suggested by Stuart Hall, who proposes two ways of constructing cultural identity. First, there is a collective identity based on shared history; this is the notion depicted by Hamid. Second, there is an identity that is unstable, metamorphic and contradictory (Hall 233), as depicted by Lahiri.

To conclude the discussion of so-called third world cosmopolitans, it is not sufficient to treat transnational voices as authentic voices; the voices need to be heard and evaluated. The text by Lahiri presents attitudes, stances and double or multiple identity consciousness, comparisons, and persistent self-reflection that question the otherness of the third world cosmopolitans (Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Ethics* 2).

Transnational Literature = Comparison Literature

For a better understanding of cosmopolitan engagement and the global impact of contemporary transnational texts written by Asian American authors, it is essential to examine the concept of comparison literature as proposed by Rebecca Walkowitz:

> Novels such as these are part of an emergent genre of transnational fiction whose preoccupation with comparison is stimulated in part by the historical conditions of the global literary marketplace, and in part by several related developments such as the flourishing of migrant communities, and especially migrant writers, within metropolitan centers throughout the world. In addition, comparison literature responds to the ongoing problem of statelessness and post-Holocaust debates about the treatment of minorities. And it joins the renewed effort to imagine transnational and/or cosmopolitan paradigms that offer alternatives to national models of political community. ("Comparison Literature" 567)

Walkowitz coins the term "comparison literature" to address emerging literary developments in the post-9/11 era. Current literary production focuses on themes of diverse experience, displacement, and deterritorialized space (Appadurai 25–30), imagined communities, and inter-cultural or inter-racial conflicts. Specifically, South Asian prose discusses immigrant communities experiencing the pressures of cultural assimilation, and their responses to it. Comparison literature suggests tools and frameworks for evaluative responses to South Asian particularities. This concept reminds us to consider the bigger picture of the global literary market as shaped by current and emerging cultural policies and preferences, which seem to highlight the importance of narratives of incoming transnationals such as Lahiri or Hamid as transformative of the Anglo-American literary canon. Last but not least, similar narratives invite a raising of consciousness in those who have experienced relocation, who are bi-cultural individuals or who describe the borderless global experience.

Asian American / Transnational Protagonists

Lahiri's characters tend to be immigrants from India who have to come to terms with their American-reared children. They are exiles who straddle two countries, two cultures, yet belong to neither: too accustomed to freedom to accept the rituals and conventions of home, yet too rooted in Indian tradition and family roles to embrace American ways fully. When they become parents, Lahiri's Indian-born parents live model minority lives – like Ruma's father, they are not estranged illegal immigrants fighting poverty. They envision the American Dream for their children – they send them to brand-name schools so they may get prestigious jobs, and live in roomy houses like Ruma – but they are also cautious about the pitfalls of life in this unaccustomed land, and they are isolated by their difficulties with language and customs. Like Ruma, the children are often emotional outsiders: they grew up translating the mysteries of the American culture to their bi-cultural understanding, trying to belong. Often they struggle to balance both Bengali and American cultures in the family home, much as their mothers did, but they may fail completely, unable

to feel at home in either culture; they always experience themselves as standing slightly apart, not participating wholeheartedly in their American lives and family roles.

Ruma's role as a mother makes her uncomfortable and lost; she struggles to do justice to both worlds, resembling her Indian family-oriented mother while also being an American career-minded mother. Suddenly she finds herself conflicted; deep inside she wishes to resemble her mother, while on the outside she strives to act out her role as an ideal middle-class dedicated American wife. By contrast, her father is able to come to better terms with his bi-culturality, and he observes how trapped Ruma becomes. Ruma's transformation from an easy-going successful lawyer into a lost and unhappy non-American is noticed by her father: "She now resembled his wife so strongly that he could not bear to look at her directly" (35). Thinking about his wife's unhappiness in the early years of their marriage when they first relocated to the US, the father realizes that "he had always assumed Ruma's life would be different" (35). But if his daughter chooses the life in Seattle that she could have led in Calcutta – where she would at least not have been isolated and lonely – then the question of another kind of freedom is raised, as well as the question of loss. Ruma seems to embody loss and emptiness, even though she impersonates the achiever of the American Dream – she has a good career, a fine-looking broad-shouldered successful American husband, one son, and the second one on the way. Though she may suffer from the "feminine mystique" (Friedan 1983), the middle-class American women's malady stemming from a home-centered existence, she suffers from cultural melancholy instead.

In fact, Lahiri seems to suggest that Ruma's identity is affected less by her location than by Indian family ways. She was born on American soil, but she is torn, wishing to reproduce Indian motherhood and womanhood. Using the tale of Ruma, Lahiri poses questions about in what conditions transcultural women-migrants can lead fully-fledged American lives. While visiting Ruma in Seattle, her father asks her a very American question: Will this make you happy? He is urging Ruma not to isolate herself, to look for work, he reminds her of the importance of the Western value of self-reliance. The father's statement is directed at the readers, reminding them that there are major value differences which Asians must overcome.

Anglo-American culture and Asian American culture are marked by qualitative differences. According to the sociologist Frank Wu, Anglo-American qualities culturally stressed and appreciated are "[i]ndependent thinking, imaginative problem-solving, emphasis on ability, independence, self-confidence, individuality, self-expression, individualistic orientation, and relatively egalitarian relationship among children and adults" (47). On the other hand, Asians prefer and value "memorization, task persistence, emphasis on effort, interdependence, traditional values, group harmony, self-control, modesty, obedience, collectivist orientation, and vertical hierarchy of status difference" (47).

These qualities seem to be exploited by model minority myths, when Asians are seen as nerds, or overachievers, as the "new Jews" or "honorary whites." Yet Lahiri seems to create counterpoints: she brings up the other side of the story – the model minority is under the pressure of a double standard, and many individuals, like Ruma, are under immense pressure to preserve the traditional family and its values, while also achieving success and belonging to the US culture.

South Asian Muslim and Diverse Voices on Transculturalism

Mohsin Hamid's character Changez from *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* would have followed the path of a model minority achiever, yet September 11 interrupted his path to success. The general acceptance of Muslims was disrupted, and hysteria against them came to dominate the American scene. Experiencing the consequences of the public hostility toward Muslims, Hamid felt an urge to respond as an author. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist,* Hamid parallels his personal experience with the life story of his protagonist Changez. Like his protagonist, Hamid grew up in Lahore, Pakistan, and attended Princeton and Harvard.

The novel is delivered as a monologue of the narrator's life story. It is narrated by Changez, speaking to an American visitor in Pakistan. They meet in a restaurant in the Old Anarkali district of Lahore. Changez tells his story to an anonymous visitor. He begins: "Excuse me, sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard: I am a lover of America" (1). Changez goes on to describe his family history, his journey to the US on a scholarship, his achievements and how he turned into a bearded and generally re-acculturated Pakistani. Changez presents himself in the description as "…a modern-day Janissary, a servant of the American empire at a time when it was invading a country with a kinship to mine" (152). Changez was doing well in New York until 9/11. Now he is a teacher and political activist in Lahore, which is why his monologue is, predictably, political. He wonders

> …how it was that America was able to wreak such havoc in the world –orchestrating an entire war in Afghanistan, say, and legitimizing through its actions the invasion of weaker states by more powerful ones, which India was now proposing to do to Pakistan – with so few apparent consequences at home. (131)

Hamid voices communal sentiments and responses to the US's unfortunate foreign policy, as well as disagreement with US military actions. The novel is a time-bound response to world events after 9/11. Nevertheless, Hamid also reflects the general concerns of Pakistani transnational writers, and adds to their calls for acceptance, even as they are in the process of re-imagining themselves. According to the Pakistani scholar Muhammad Safeer Awan, Western scholars tend to debate South Asian Muslim identity in terms of global migrancy and the formation of multicultural societies in the West. Yet the authors, even as they narrate as insiders, are re-examining the harmonizing effects of different cultures, as they seek either to reach a compromise or to assimilate to the host culture. Furthermore, Awan urges Western scholars to re-evaluate the role of the bi-cultural author and to listen to diverse experiences and views in order to reformulate exilic perspectives. Such a challenge to the Western audience is represented by Hamid at "times of need". Yet we also need taxonomies and perspectives to explore the complexities of South Asian transcultural production.

9/11

9/11 cannot be forgotten; much sensitivity has been awakened in the US and worldwide since then. Overnight, the US residents (like Hamid's protagonist Changez, and like Hamid himself) came under suspicions for having foreign-sounding names and an exotic bearded appearance. America's spirit of openness, as a land where people could build new identities (third world cosmopolitans and Muslims alike), was damaged. In the aftermath of the events, Hamid decides to narrate a one-sided conversation presented to an American, who represents the US society that misunderstands the migrants' world. Hamid explains his approach to the writing:

> One reason for having this formal structure is that by creating half of a conversation, a conversation of which you only hear one half, and where the other party of the conversation is only present as an echo, a space opens up in the novel, a vacuum that the reader is invited to fill. The *Reluctant Fundamentalist* plays a kind of game where Changez, the narrator, a Pakistani man with a beard, comes upon an American man with a crew-cut in a bazaar in Lahore, in Pakistan, and starts speaking to him. It is unclear why Changez is deciding to do that… (Hamid, "Slaying Dragons" 225)

Besides touching upon transnational and American sentiments, Hamid's narrative addresses complex dilemmas of Muslim Asian American relations after 9/11. Here Hamid's and Lahiri's novels explore, challenge and even transgress sentiments towards migrants as well as perceptions of South Asians in the West. The texts negotiate cultural collisions and cultural assimilation in America. Nevertheless, the US is still projected as a place where the rest of the world comes to reinvent itself – experiencing excitement and anxieties, and facing the necessity of leaving behind the constrictions and comforts of distant customs and traditions.

Marking Asian American Differences: Inherited, Modified, Invented

Asian American constructs should not be limited to the traditional categories of social hierarchy and family. It is also essential to pay close attention to the differences between first and second generations of South Asian migrants, since they deal in multiple ways with "histories of exclusion and differentiations that have traditionally placed Asians apart from America." (Lowe 138)

Lisa Lowe warns us not to approach Asian Americans as an amorphous monolithic mass, but to reconsider social, cultural, and economic distinctions that vary across generations and communities, as well as the following factors: "the disruption and distortion of traditional cultural practices – like the practice of parental sacrifice and filial duty or the practice of respecting hierarchies of age – not only as consequence of displacement to the US but also as a part of entering a society with different constructions of gender roles" (Lowe 134). Similar patterns are represented in "Unaccustomed Earth". In the text, Ruma, a Bengali-American mother and lawyer, seems to reproduce her mother's way of life when she gives up her job and follows her husband to a distant city where they await the birth of their second child: "Growing up, her mother's example — moving to a foreign place

for the sake of marriage, caring exclusively for children and a household — had served as a warning, a path to avoid. Yet this was Ruma's life now" (22). Ruma seems to lose herself, unable to reflect on her current state, afraid to re-establish links with her widowed father, whom she sees as a burden rather than as a support and companion.

Nevertheless, Ruma illustrates Lowe's claims that Asian American culture is partly inherited, partly modified, and partly invented – yet significantly shaped by the dominant representations that deny or subordinate Asian and Asian American cultures as "the other." This seems to be the message of Changez's monologue as well. He feels an urge to re-define and justify his transformation to an American listener. Calling himself a lover of America, he is one of two Pakistanis in his Princeton class; he does better than most Americans and reaches his senior year without a single 'B' grade. He agrees to contribute his talents to US society in return for being allowed to join the elite. He gets a dream job with the Underwood Samson Valuation Company.

Yet this overachiever is forced to revolt. On acculturation Hamid finds himself in agreement with Lowe, who makes the following observations on recent acculturation trends:

> Once arriving in the United States, very few Asian immigrant cultures remain discrete, impenetrable communities; the more recent groups mix, in varying degrees, with segments of existing groups… [T]he boundaries and definitions of Asian American culture are continually shifting and being contested from pressures both inside and outside the Asian-American origin community. (Lowe 138)

Yet the speed and trends of acculturation seem to vary: while Ruma "marries up" and is on the way to being acculturated (or lost), the "overachiever" Changez seems to end up exiled, lost, bewildered. The war on terror hits him hard, in so far as he is subjected to public xenophobia, to the megalomania of politicians, resulting in irrational fear of the other. Hence Changez is reminded of being "the other" once again. The existence and acculturation of Muslims in the West is disrupted, and Changez as a Pakistani expatriate experiences his exile and raises his voice in response to the events of 9/11. Seemingly humbly, he presents his perspectives on the "war on terror". Changez is concerned; he might sound too insensitive to American ears, but on the other hand he reminds readers that his nation is not the one which stirred up the tension. In the novel Changez apologizes, and reminds:

> But once more I am raising my voice, and making you rather uncomfortable. Besides I apologize; it was not my intention to be rude. In any case, I ought instead to be explaining to you why I did not speak to Erica of my fury at seeing American troops enter Afghanistan. (102)

Though he describes the US with nostalgia, he firmly explains why he cannot live there any more and why he has lost some of his appreciation for American culture. Growing his beard, Changez opts to identify with his home culture (where all Muslim men grow beards), and he demonstrates his disapproval with the monolithic treatment of Muslims. Gradually, as he explains, he loses interest in his job, the woman he loves and his US existence.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist uses highly symbolic first names of people who are related to Changez in order to highlight intercultural dialog in hard times. Until 9/11

Changez seems to be happily achieving and loving his college sweetheart Erica (standing for Am-erica). After that, he is stripped of his illusions and forced identity. At this moment his personal transformation begins. Erica starts mourning her mysterious missing ex-lover Chris (standing for Christianity), and her relationship with Changez deteriorates.

Changez reports he cannot forget that overnight he is suddenly no longer treated as a prominent citizen, but as somebody with second-class citizenship:

> America was gripped by a growing and self-righteous rage in those weeks of September and October as I cavorted… Pakistani cabdrivers were beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was riding mosques, shops, and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse. (94)

Changez witnesses the moment in American history and he observes "how the syncretic nation fails to become the first universal nation the world has ever seen" (Awan "Global Terror" 6). Due to the sudden misunderstanding and lack of communication, Muslim individuals such as Changez himself, and Americans such as the anonymous listener or Changez's girlfriend Erica, seem hardly able to establish communication and clear up their mutual misunderstanding and avoid harmful generalizations in the aftermath of 9/11.

Conclusion

Cosmopolitan ethics, morals, worldliness and transcultural politics as well as transnational identities, as explored in Lahiri's title story "Unaccustomed Earth" and Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, are subject to change as products of comparison literature, partially shaped by the demands of the global literary market. Nevertheless, the texts also reflect personal stances on topics of US immigration discourse. These texts represent examples of the transformative wave of emerging Asian American writing. These texts represent the current voices of emerging globally-known Asian American writers, who belong to a US-acculturated generation of West-based Asians who work in cultural overlaps. These writers can no longer be labeled "third world cosmopolitans", but must instead be perceived as transnational writers presenting time- and place-sensitive bi-cultural narratives. Narratives offer particular individually nuanced as well as unique scenarios. The authors' backgrounds reveal much of the writers' ethnic backgrounds, as they seek to come to terms with the unique particular aspects of their immediate experience of acculturation. Nevertheless, the texts are not focused on intimate encounters with the writers' ethnic communities, but serve as universal quests for aspects of the identity of immigrants who steer a path between US acculturation and nostalgia for their homelands. Last but not least, the texts have been widely distributed and favored by the global literary marketplace, which is fond of authors with transnational visions who explore the theme of identity politics. Asian American literature has attracted a rich response from flourishing migrant communities. In addition, both narratives by Lahiri and Hamid respond to the treatment and self-perceptions of minorities in a post-national or rather borderless global space, in which protagonists of South Asian origin are connected to Eastern and Western spaces and their cultural meanings. In that sense, Hamid represents a Muslim voice which pays

close attention to Asians who enter, re-enter, are expelled from, or migrate to the West and contest the limits of the utopian borderless global space in the post-9/11 era. On the other hand, non-Muslim Asian American-acculturated cultural production as represented by Lahiri focuses on self-presentation, gender roles, family ties and debates about belonging. These current cultural productions apparently contain no unifying grand narrative, and the texts address intersections of gender, sexuality, class and religion in transnational Asian America. The term "transnational" therefore proves to be a particularly useful concept for examining a type of Asian American cultural production which is emerging rapidly. The texts by Lahiri or Hamid show that various particularities must be addressed, including heterogeneous migratory strands, personal and national histories, religious, familial and generational affiliations in reaction to world events, and that this multitude of factors helps to determine the credibility of the authors' voices as their texts are published and made known in other environments. These texts refer to continuous migrations, both uni-directional and bi-directional migration among numerous locations and cultures. Simply put, these examples of widely read and anthologized Asian American literature invite critical attention not only to the works themselves, but also to the sites of production (places, communities). Both texts explored in this article encourage transnational debates and invite readers to re-imagine the new geographies of literary production while encouraging them to understand the particularities of various ethnicized historical experiences and legacies across cultures.

Notes

[1] In the United States there are Mohsin Hamid, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Anita Desai, Meena Alexander, Anjana Appachana, Samina Ali, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Ru Freeman, Bharti Kirchner, Thrity Umrigar, Bharati Mukherjee, Talat Abbasi, and Bhapsi Sidhwa, to mention just a few.

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Factuality and Fictionality in A. Adamovich's *Khatyn Story* and *Out Of Flames* and J. Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*

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Abstract

The essay addresses the traumas of World War II in the books The Painted Bird by the Polish-born American writer J. Kosinski and Khatyn Story by the Belarusian writer A. Adamovich. These works are largely based on the authors' wartime and Holocaust experiences, but they are different in their depiction of post-traumatic consciousness, especially because the war is seen through the eyes of an adolescent in his formative years. Of special interest is the connection between the real and the imaginary, the factual and the fictional, which determines the genre characteristics of the books.

Keywords: fact, fiction, non-fiction, genre, Second World War, the Holocaust, Belarus, Poland.

Introduction

The paper will explore the books *Khatyn Story* (1977) and *I am from a Burning Village* (*Out of Flames*, 1977, another translation of the title: *Out of the Fire*) by the Belarusian writer Ales Adamovich (the latter co-authored with Y. Bryl and U. Kalesnik) and *The Painted Bird* (1965) by the Polish-born American writer Jerzy Kosinski. The books are landmarks in World War II literature. They draw on the dramatic wartime experience of their authors and show the war through a teenager's eyes, reconstructing the greatest tragedy of the 20th century. The fictional representation of the war ordeal, based on the real facts of life under

the Nazis on the territory of the "bloodlands" (T. Snyder's term[1]), brought the writers immediate popularity, but also aroused strong criticism both in and outside their countries as their books challenged the established tradition of dealing with the theme of the war. The paper will discuss the interpretation of the war by the writers belonging to different cultures, having a different world outlook and different personal histories, which is evident, among other things, in their choice of genre and literary techniques.

The body of critical evaluation of the literary heritage of Adamovich and Kosinski is impressive but contradictory, as both writers challenged not only the literary canon but also socially accepted views and attitudes. After graduating from the University of Łódź and studying at Moscow State University, Kosinski emigrated to the USA where he soon became a famous writer and public figure. Commenting on his role of a prophet, Z. Kolbuszewska writes, "[t]he author creates the persona of a man who has experienced everything in every dimension of human life – 'Jerzy Kosinski'" (73). He raised his voice against censorship in the communist bloc and actively fought against repressions in Eastern Europe, especially when he was elected President of the US Chapter of the PEN Club. One of the writers whom he sought to release was Vaclav Havel. For reasons which are not yet quite clear, he committed suicide on the Polish Constitution Day, May 3, 1991. His widow, Ms. Katherina von Fraunhofer-Kosinski, was sure that he chose the day "very deliberately; he was gratified and proud that Poland and America, the two countries he called home, have the two oldest constitutions in the world" (7).

His relationship with Poland was complicated. He had been subjected to slanderous attacks in communist Poland, and his books were banned, *The Painted Bird* being regarded as a malicious anti-Polish book discrediting the country. Kosinki is known to have been making a myth of his life, and a number of critics viewed *The Painted Bird* as autobiographical fiction, thus misreading the book and approaching it from a purely ideological perspective (M. Blaźejczyk, K. Zbyszewski, W. Górnicki, E. Morawiec, etc.). However, in the late 1980s Kosinki became an iconic figure, an intellectual who had survived both the Holocaust and the communist regime to become a major voice of the fighters for a free and democratic Poland, and the tone of critical reviews changed dramatically. Henry Dasko (Henryk Dasko), Kosinski's close friend, observed that the "substitution of the literary for the real characterized Kosinski's reception in Poland" (704), which is evident in the heated discussion of J. Siedlecka's book *The Black Bird* (1994). The journalist showed that the events in *The Painted Bird* had not really happened in Kosinski's life. However, it would be not quite correct to interpret the book from the point of factuality. According to E. Kasperski, the writer tried "intended, invented autobiographism, not necessarily reflecting reality" (57) with the aim "to defictionalize literary fiction and to create the illusion of verism and the so-called personal documentary" (59). Kosinski himself warned that the book should not be read as autobiographical, because this would limit the scope of vision, reducing it to "a single life", while his intention is different: "A fictional life… forces the reader to contribute: he does not simply compare; he actually enters a fictional role, expanding it in terms of his own experience, his own creative and imaginative powers" (xiv).

The reception of the book in the USA was just as ambivalent. James Park Sloan's biography of Kosinski (1996) was biased and focused on negative aspects, while major literary critics like Jonathan Yardley praised the writer highly. The problem of this controversy

may be that, as Welch D. Everman writes, "Kosinski is a bothersome writer – disturbing, upsetting, unconventional, not only in terms of subject matter but in formal terms as well" (113). *The Painted Bird* raised the question of the relationship between fact and fiction, history and memory, historical event and its imaginative representation, which is especially important in the discussion of Holocaust literature as the survivors' memories of the war were so appalling as to be beyond description. In her discussion of the novel, Sara R. Horowitz points out that "the purported confluence of the author's own childhood experiences and the novel's boy protagonist's fictional experiences helped to ensure the book a place in what has evolved into a 'canon' of Holocaust writing" (8). On the other hand, Lawrence L. Langer warns: "Although fictionalized historical material may alienate the reader, an adequately imagined *invented* center of consciousness can draw him against his will into the net of atrocity, where his own sense of normal reality struggles to escape from the lure" (423). The problem lies in the status of books like *The Painted Bird*: is it at all possible to represent actual events, or those witnessed by the author, not only truthfully, but also artistically keeping the delicate balance between extratextual reality and narrative strategies? The international reception of the book shows polarized attitudes, which are understandable in view of the short historical distance that has elapsed since the end of the war, when the Holocaust is still a living memory.

In spite of Kosinski's status in the West, his name is still little known in post-Soviet countries. The first translation into Russian of the novel *Being There* was made in 1997 by the poet, music critic and publisher Ilya Kormiltsev, who later translated *Steps*, *The Devil Tree* and Kosinski's *Afterword* to *The Painted Bird* and published an essay about Kosinski's life and myth (1999). The first publication about Kosinski in Belarus, by the author of this paper, dates back to 1998, in the book "100 US Writers" (Minsk). So far there has been only one PhD dissertation on Kosinski's work in the Newly Independent States (former USSR) (E. Stulova, 2003).

Some of the issues that have been dealt with in connection with Kosinski are also relevant for the study of Ales Adamovich. Langer's term *the literature of atrocity* may be also applied, with some reservations, to Adamovich's writing. The protagonist of *Khatyn Story* survives the death of his mother and sisters, fellow partisans, the destruction of nearby villages, and narrowly escapes death in the village of Perekhody, which was burnt with all its inhabitants. The writer determined the genre of his books as an "account from the historical event locality" (Adamovich, "Poshuki" 5)[2]. Most of the critics in the USSR and post-Soviet states explore his novels within the limits of the "war novel" and define them as documentary/autobiographical/confessional (L. Lazarev, L. Sin'kova, T. Tarasava). T. Tarasava points to "a tendency in contemporary autobiographical prose (both national and foreign) towards a writer's self-exposure and self-revelation through intertext, metatextual inclusions and epistles" (6), of which Adamovich is an example. M. Tychyna calls *Khatyn Story* and *Chasteners*, which along with *I am from a Burning Village* form a kind of sequence, "documentary imaginative books" (24). A. Belski explains that the books are a "documentary imaginative exploration of the brutal nature of fascism, a stern, cruel and painful truth of the war, moral degradation of a human in the conditions of obscurantism, evil and hatred" (20). The approach of Belarusian scholars falls into Leonora Flis's

description of the documentary novel, which "speaks of real people and real places, yet it is a dual narrative, namely, a narrative characterized by its adherence to novelistic strategies, associated with nonfictional modes of discourse" (82).

Like Kosinski's, Adamovich's life was full of dramatic events. Though he became a famous novelist, a distinguished literary scholar, and a member of the USSR Supreme Soviet during the years of perestroika, he was forced to leave Belarus for his criticism of the Belarusian *nomenklatura*, which he held responsible for their inefficiency and lies about the Chernobyl disaster, prior to which he had had to abandon his position as a professor at the Moscow Lomonosov State University for refusing to sign a letter condemning Y. Daniel and A. Sinyavski. He died of a heart attack after making a fiery speech in court in defence of Writers' Union property that was being confiscated (January 26, 1994). He had a pronounced anti-totalitarian stance and was known as the Belarusian Havel, displaying a unique example of morality in politics. His main theme was World War II and the human predicament, and his treatment of the theme of war was contrary to the ostentatious stories of courage and valour that made up much of Soviet literature about the Great Patriotic War. His *Khatyn Story* was severely censored, and the complete text was published only much later. E. Klimov's film *Come and See*, based on the book, was made only after an interval of over ten years, and it was released only after it had been supported by P. Masherov, a former partisan, Hero of the Soviet Union and First Secretary of the Communist Party of Belarus; it was one the greatest films about the tragic events of WW II. Adamovich's truth about the war was different from what Soviet ideologists allowed. Both the writer and the film director refused to introduce changes that the censors had insisted upon. The writer S. Bukchin says, "[i]n him some kind of thoroughness and peasant's grip were combined with idealism; the romantic spirit lived side by side with a sober appreciation of the situation… And above all was the irrepressible spirit that called for self-expression, freedom of life and creative work" (2).

The historical background for both books is World War II, which was called the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) in the Soviet Union. It occupies a very special place in the arts and literature of Eastern Europe. WW II brought severe damage and enormous casualties to Belarus, which lost over a quarter of its population. The atrocities of the Nazis provoked a strong partisan movement, which was met with enormously cruel retaliation. Frank Biess points out that "Wehrmacht units committed countless massacres against Soviet civilians including women and children. These murderous practices occurred under the guise of 'antipartisan' warfare and were part of the systematic economic exploitation of the occupied territories" (3). 628 villages were burnt with their inhabitants. One of them was Khatyn, only 40 miles away from the capital city Minsk, now a national memorial to commemorate all those Belarusians who were killed during the war[3]. It becomes the destination of the pilgrimage of former partisans in Adamovich's book.

Human suffering and the wartime trauma determined not only national mythology, but also people's mentality. The memory of the war is central in the identity construction of the Belarusian people, as the war was the most painful event in the country's history and led to the internalization of the traumatic past. Though there still remain many gaps concerning the truth about the war in Belarusian historiography and literature, one thing is recognized by all scholars: "The ethos of the war in Belarus became a basis for constructing

the history of the nation – and its national identity" (Gapova 647). Swedish historian Per Anders Rudling reiterates E. Gapova's conclusion, "[w]artime suffering remains an important identity marker, shared by both the current regime and the opposition alike" (45).

Poland, Belarus's Western neighbor, also suffered terrible losses with about 6 million people dead, almost half of them Jews, Auschwitz becoming a symbol of the Holocaust. The large-scale Polish resistance movement, the unprecedented heroism of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, and the drama of the August 1944 Warsaw uprising are among the phenomena that shaped 20th-century Polish history and accounted for the concept of martyrdom that features so prominently in the national mentality. Later the war's trauma was intensified by the post-war totalitarian regime and the ideological division in Polish society that led to social unrest and various instances of resistance to the communist rule.

The historical trauma that determined the life of the war generation helps to understand what happens to a human during the events of wartime, showing both the potential and mechanism of destroying the humane in human nature. The war experience is appallingly shocking. Both Adamovich and Kosinski were quite young at the time of the war: Kosinski was six years old when the war started, and Adamovich was thirteen. Kosinski, born into a Jewish family, survived the war under a false identity in a remote Polish village, and Adamovich along with his relatives took part in partisan warfare. Human memory keeps revisiting the most dramatic events, and when they became writers both Adamovich and Kosinski wrote their first novels about the war ordeal. US scholar Nina Tumarkin maintains that the war "… like all wars, revealed the extremes of human behavior – bravery, self-sacrifice, sadism, treachery, cowardice" (26). Adamovich and Kosinski denounced the war and the aggression, violence and devastation it brings, though their purpose was different. Like his fellow writers who belonged to the so-called "lieutenants' prose",[4] the Belarusian writer focuses on the human spirit, which manages to overcome enormous suffering, and the everyday survival routine. The book *Out of Flames* is a collection of oral histories of over 300 survivors of the massacres in Belarusian villages and towns during the war that Adamovich and his colleagues had been gathering for years, moving from place to place across the whole country. Deming Brown is of the opinion that the purpose of the writers was "to augment and correct the record by providing largely eyewitness accounts of the facts about military events and wartime conditions that have heretofore been kept secret or distorted by official myth" (393). Having been a witness and participant of the most tragic episodes of the war in Belarus, Adamovich saw his mission in questioning Soviet war mythology. He focuses not so much on the heroism of the people (as was the Soviet tradition), but on the people's attempts to retain their humanity in inhuman conditions. The writer "exploded the war cult's "Glory to our partisans!" myth" (Tumarkin, 40), showed that the two totalitarian leaders did each other's work, and focused on an individual who is thrown into the disaster of the war and is called upon to make a moral choice that will determine his life. In one of his last stories, *Venus*, Adamovich describes the destruction of the village, which had given shelter to the partisans, by an NKVD[5] squad.

Kosinski's novel addresses dehumanization caused by war, ignorance, superstition, moral corruption and the psychological effects of violence and cruelty on a Holocaust survivor. The writer attempts to provide an insight into the feelings of a terrified boy who is lost and alienated in a godforsaken Polish village.

According to M. J. Martínez-Alfaro, "[t]here are topics which, because of their very nature, demand from the novelist a different kind of imaginative and ethical involvement" (154). In the case of the two writers examined here, their "imaginative and ethical involvement" found its expression, among other things, in the choice of the protagonist – a child or a boy in his teens. Remembering the massacre in the village of Beraznyaki, an uneducated old peasant woman in *Out of Flames* laments:

> "Well, one son who is at the front, well, he will be killed, but he has been fighting, hasn't he? But a poor small child? A boy, he, poor thing, had never been anywhere. But they beat him… This small child is running – why? He is so small, he is a child, running like an apple… But they kept beating him so hard – that he saw stars before his eyes!..
>
> What was this, what did they have in their hearts – I don't know.
>
> They were beasts, not people.
>
> They were not people, they were beasts." (Adamovich, *Ya z vognennai* 199)

The writers turned the war ordeal into a literary act. Though these texts are works of fiction, they strike the reader with an exceptional power of authenticity as they are based on the memory of the war. According to Daniil Granin, an outstanding Russian writer and WW II veteran, "a human's personality is first of all memory. There can be no personality without memory" (1). Memory is what determines the protagonists' attitudes and behavior in the face of the horrors of the war where they turned out to be not only witnesses but also agents of history – in spite of their young age.

The figure of the adolescent protagonist was chosen by the authors intentionally – not only because they were minors themselves when the war started, but also because the child helps readers to see the tragedy of the human predicament more clearly. The *Times* literary critic Tom Gatti points out that the child narrator is "a device that offers a level of emotional and imaginative directness unavailable to the baggage-laden adult" (14). The world seen from his perspective looks larger than life, but this is exactly what contributes to the dramatic nature of the war child's mindset. This is a formative age, and seeing the violent struggle between good and evil, which he understands in a straightforward way, the adolescent comes to discover the appalling darkness of the human heart.

In the "Afterword" to the second edition of *The Painted Bird* Kosinski wrote that "man would be portrayed in his most vulnerable state, as a child, and society in its most deadly form, in a state of war" (xii). The child can hardly defend itself; it is threatened and bewildered by what it sees around it, the violence and cruelty towards those who are weak and helpless. Kosinski chooses as his protagonist a displaced, alienated boy who travels the roads of the war-torn land with no one to guide or protect him from injustice and pain. And that is why the writer says: "I hoped the confrontation between the defenseless individual and overpowering society, between the child and war, would represent the essential anti-human condition" (xii). Young as they are, the boys in the novels are active performers, directly involved in the events that are going to change not only their lives but also the world around them. They are shown as actors of history, and the "innocent-eye point-of-view narration" as Z. Kolbuszewska calls it (75) is most effective in problematizing the issue of the nature of experience. This knowledge of good and evil acquired so early is

devastating, and the protagonists go through terrible pain and moral anguish before they can resume an ordinary life in the first post-WW II years. The writers explore how the tragic ordeal of the war affects young people who can hardly come to terms with the world and themselves.

Kosinski's nameless protagonist's heart is hardened like rock. As a result of the shock the Child experiences at the hands of the superstitious and illiterate peasants he loses his power of speech; he no longer can, or is no longer willing to, communicate with people, thus becoming isolated from the external world. S. Kolář insightfully writes that "*The Painted Bird* is a construction of the author's experience of the loneliness of a child in wartime, or, in other words, of his displacement from any kind of home" (44). He becomes as cruel as his torturers, but the problem, which aroused a wave of negative responses in Poland, is that they are the frightened miserable peasants from the villages where he tries to save his life during the Holocaust. They refuse to understand this strange Gypsy-looking boy who speaks literary Polish and tells "funny" stories. To them, he represents an alien world, which symbolizes negativity and menace. They refuse to accept him; there is no room for him in their world. All his attempts to become closer to them, to belong, end in disaster. It is impossible for him to be integrated into their world. It is only natural that after the dramatic scene in the church, when the angry peasants nearly drown him in filth, he should fall into silence. Sara R. Horowitz maintains that "[M]uteness instanciates a consistent movement of displacement – geographic, historical, linguistic, symbolic – that characterizes both the event and its subsequent reflections and depictions" (38). The trope of muteness emphasizes the impossibility of communication in a world shattered by violence and hatred: the trauma is too deep. Even a reunion with his family, which is hopelessly trying to reconnect him with his home, will not bring back his speech. Years will pass before something breaks through and he will feel an urge to speak, pouring out his heart to someone anonymous on the phone. In a way, he is reborn into a new identity, and this gives hope that he will begin a new life:

> "I felt an overpowering desire to speak.
>
> I opened my mouth and strained. Sounds crawled up my throat. Tense and concentrated I started to arrange them into syllables and words. […] The voice lost in a faraway village church had found me again and filled the whole room. I spoke loudly and incessantly like the peasants and then like the city folk, as fast as I could, enraptured by the sounds that were heavy with meaning, as wet snow is heavy with water, confirming to myself again and again that speech was now mine and that it did not intend to escape through the door which opened onto the balcony." (234)

Bernhard Malkmus makes an interesting observation, claiming that "[t]he intermeshing between the voices of the traumatized boy and the post-traumatic adult suggests a sense of composed selfhood that perpetually deconstructs itself" (94). The boy reinvents his identity; he has been trying to invent different identities that are imposed on him, but none has proved adequate. Paul Lilly observes that "by channeling the emotional pain he suffered as a child through the eyes of the boy, Kosinski forces the reader to make painful inferences" (194). The novel's open ending is intentional, as the reader knows neither who the boy is

speaking to, nor what he is saying. He saw so much cruelty and injustice that he became crippled by his wartime experience. Will he be able to start all over again?

Flyora is also physically affected: he loses his hearing in a battle, and there is a deeper meaning to this: he does not want to hear the sounds of the war and, above all, the news that his mother and sisters were killed: "I could hear no shooting, no human voice – dead silence that is falling into an invisible abyss (but it is nearby)" (Adamovich, *Khatynskaya* 183). This silence is like that of Andrei Bolkonski in L. Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, when he suddenly realizes that death is around the corner. It is an exceptional experience for an adolescent, and Flyora is transformed; after the terrible shock, he comes to realize that if he has remained alive it is not in vain. With effort, he regains his hearing when he understands that not only his, but also his beloved Glasha's life depends on his ability to get his bearings and find a way out to the partisans. Later he will lose his sight, keeping in his mind's eye only the sight of the burnt village of Perekhody. It will be forever connected with the sun, the infinity of the universe, and the brevity of human life. It will acquire mythological powers, adding a deep existentialist meaning to what the boy has gone through. The last thing which the people in the barn are going to see before being burnt alive is "the stripes of the sun, the pillars of light falling down." (Adamovich, *Khatynskaya* 132) Similarly, waiting for the attack, the exhausted Flyora is looking at the bright sun thinking of what might happen in a couple of minutes:

> Even the second of death is the same eternity as a million years ago. And a live sun is running its way above our heads; it has gone the bigger part of its semi-circle while we have been rolling up our millstone. It has been rolled up a lot of times before us… We shall walk around the forest a few more times before the sun sets down behind the smoky hills. And what then? It is not known what will happen then." (Adamovich, *Khatynskaya* 192)

The colours of the bright sun and the burning barn, as well as the screaming of the women and children locked inside it, will keep coming back in his dreams, never allowing him to forget what happened in the village. Flyora will never be the same again, constantly returning to that day in his memory.

Similarly, the sun looks down indifferently on the sufferings of the Child, who is panicky as he cannot get out of the river into which he was thrown by a group of peasants, who wanted to entertain themselves at the cost of his life. He is trying hard to find a force that could save him, a God, something to believe in and rely on, but "[t]he sun was slowly setting. Every time the bladder turned, the sun shone straight into my eyes and its dazzling reflections danced on the shimmering surface. It grew chilly and the wind became more turbulent" (Kosinski 27). The emotionless registration of the changes in nature runs contrary to the boy's extreme situation, intensifying the feeling of universal loneliness; this is precisely Kosinski's goal, as he wants to show the universality of violence in human history. After the terrible scene when the jealous miller blinded the young ploughboy in front of the miller's wife and the Child, the seven year-old boy comes to the dramatic conclusion that "[t]he world seemed to be pretty much the same everywhere, and even though people

differed from one another, just as animals and trees did, one should know fairly well what they looked like after seeing them for years" (Kosinski 40).

The victimized Child is made to look into the darkness of the human heart to learn of the fragility of humaneness in a world that is based on the oppositions "strength" – "weakness", "we" – "they", "superior" – "inferior", a world where difference, be it race, ethnicity, gender, or whatever, is a constant source of danger. He understands that the only thing that matters is power. Everything and everyone that looks suspicious, dangerous and undesirable does not have a chance to survive, because those in positions of power will not tolerate difference. And it makes no difference if power is represented by the Germans or by illiterate peasants who represent the majority. It is significant that the few characters who are sympathetic to the Child, helping him in his ordeal, also belong to the suspicious Other, full of their own superstitions, prejudice and challenging attitudes. They live in forests, marshes or huts at the back of the village – away from the local people who are afraid of them but would not dare to do harm to them, believing that they possess the so-called "magic spells." It should be noted that in spite of references to time (WW II) and setting (Eastern Poland), the novel acquires a universal ring: it could be the Middle Ages or it may be the future in any part of the world where people are subjugated and live in poverty, misery and hopelessness. Primeval instincts take over civilizational norms.

Persistent questioning of moral values is often manifested through details that refer to the world of nature – which is not only the background of the events in the protagonists' lives, but also presents a powerful metaphor of the opposition of "war" vs. "peace", "acceptance" vs. "rejection", "harmony" vs. "chaos". From early childhood, children take a special interest in animals, learning about the world by observing animals in different situations. Both Kosinski and Adamovich make use of this childish attitude, which helps us to understand how the innocent eye begins to see evil. Near the beginning of *The Painted Bird* there is a scene describing a hawk (a symbol of aggression) attacking a pigeon (a symbol of peace):

> The black ball fell like a stone on the flock. Only the pigeon had no place to hide. Before he even had time to spread its wings, a powerful bird with a sharp hooked beak pinned him to the ground and struck at him. The pigeon's feathers were speckled with blood. Marta came running out of the hut, brandishing a stick, but the hawk flew off smoothly, carrying in its beak the limp body of the pigeon. (Kosinski 6)

This scene is obviously an overture to what the novel will be about. The animals fall prey to human cruelty, aggression and violence – which are inevitable when one group of people is at war with another: a red squirrel burnt by peasant boys, rats eating one another, birds killing a bird of a different feather… The Child will go through terrible suffering; in his attempt to survive he is struggling to belong, not to be an outcast, but this is not to be, because he is the painted bird that is destined to be killed by the flock which cannot recognize their like in the brightly painted creature.

Most of the events in Adamovich's book take place in the woods. The writer is very careful about the description of the areas where Flyora finds himself – they are places connected with Adamovich's partisan past. Local people had to move to the marshes to save

their lives, taking with them their domestic animals and cattle. Scenes with animals also contribute to the book's message, creating a metaphorical plane. Aggression and violence are associated with dogs. During the punitive operation in the village of Perekhody, two sheepdogs of the punitive squad bite each other to death, and the soldiers cannot do anything about it; the dogs are no longer under control. The taste of blood is overpowering.

On the other hand, cows are domestic animals that symbolize peace, everyday routine and life itself. Flyora and his fellow partisan are taking a cow to the partisan camp to save the women and children from hunger, but the cow is killed on the way. It is a victim of war, and Flyora's reaction is intense:

> A host of bullets squelched and struck the body of the cow. It looked as if it swallowed them and seemed to hiccup, so big and awkward… There sparkled a rocket … and suddenly I noticed white streamlets of milk on the cow's udder. Don't know why but these white streamlets that seemed to be asking for forgiveness greatly affected me. I started to cry, no, I shouted in silence as if I had been deadly hurt… There lived in me such boundless childish resentment against the whole world that I could defend myself only by wishing that it could be even worse, that it could be terribly bad and that I could die – to the joy or sorrow of all of them. (Adamovich, *Khatynskaya* 113)

At this dramatic moment Flyora has his childish memories of his dead mother, his twin sisters, the cow and the milk that was a source of life for the children in the poverty-stricken village.

There is an unusual animal that Flyora's eye follows during the whole scene of the massacre – a monkey on the shoulder of the German officer who was responsible for the burning of the people. This is a very powerful detail in the novel. The officer seemed to be unaware of the criminality of what he and his squad were doing. To him the village people were a dangerous Other, they were inferiors, and their death did not arouse any feelings in him, while the monkey, whom he was gently stroking and who had seen the burning of the barn, "looked sad" (Adamovich, *Khatynskaya* 134). It is this difference between the responses of humans and animals that is of consequence for both Kosinski and Adamovich.

One might expect that seeing the horrors of the war and participating in the tragic events can make an adolescent de-sensitized; however, instead, awareness of injustice and cruelty is sharpened. The environment of the boys in the novels is different, and this explains the difference in their behavior. Kosinski's boy is always lonely; he feels totally different and alienated from the local people who cannot understand him and treat him as one who can bring them disaster. There is endless hatred and humiliation. It prevents him from acquiring an identity, and he is constantly trying to adapt to the changes in the environment. The Child is tormented by his otherness, realizing that in cataclysmic situations like his only the stronger people survive, and the appeal of force and violence that can ensure survival works its way into his soul, resulting in his transformation from a victim into a victimizer who becomes as cruel as his tormentors, reasserting himself through aggression. The Nameless One sees only injustice and cruelty and, little by little, turns immune to other people's anguish, which is reflected in uncontrollable outbursts of violence.

Flyora's experience is different. He does not allow himself to become locked into his pain. People's empathy, caring and his feeling of duty towards others enable Flyora keep

his dignity and overcome his hatred and wish to destroy, thus saving his soul. Camilla Stein, the editor of the English translation of Adamovich's *Khatyn*, sees one of the greatest merits of the book in the fact that "[t]he novel is composed from a standpoint of a young person, and youth is daring, youth is dashing, youth falls in love and romanticizes everything, even war. Youth is courageous, youth is bright, and youth is ever present on *Khatyn*'s pages. Youth is the future, and the reason why Ales Adamovich did the work – *Khatyn* is written for the next generation to stand strong." It is the mature narrator who remembers the traumatic experience of the burning of Khatyn; Flyora had to live for those who would never rise to life – so that they would not be forgotten and that their testimony would be heard through him. After all the disasters he had gone through, he understood one important thing: "Then I also understood that one may be afraid of one's own hatred which was like pain that had turned into stone: a person begins to distance it, to hold it in check, keep it inside oneself expecting and getting afraid of the moment when it is no longer possible to keep it" (Adamovich, *Khatynskaya* 154).

There are certain similarities in the structure of the books. Highlighting the most dramatic events in the life of the protagonists, they do not follow a logical course; instead they present a mosaic of episodes that look more like vignettes. Adamovich permeates his narration with a number of oral histories of the war years that he had been collecting, as well as various documents referring to the war period, authenticating his narrator's voice. It adds several layers of meaning to the book, making it speak for all those millions who lost their lives in the flames of the war. He embeds the narration with various facts of the Nazi atrocities in Belarus, reports of the punitive squads, philosophical discussions with Flyora's friend Barys Bokiy concerning the lessons of history, and essayistic reflections drawing parallels between the past and the political situation in the world at the time when the book was being written – including the massacre at My Lai in Vietnam, which immediately recalled the tragedy of Khatyn. Traditional plotlines are followed by fragmentary non-linear episodes – which, however, do not lead to a disintegration of the narrative structure. The narration jumps from the present, describing the partisans' journey to the site of their battles, to the past, when the world is seen through the perception of a teenager who is only beginning to acquire the knowledge of life. Even the love which he feels for Glasha is not the usual romantic kind, but something unknowable that bewilders him.

Numerous details describing the ordeal of the partisans emphasize the everyday reality of people who were thrown out of their regular routine to defend their home. They are based on Adamovich's real experience and reflect real events that took place in Belarus during the war. Quite often he blurs the line between documentary and fiction, resorting to non-literary discourse, as may be seen from the book's ending – in which the mature Flyora, his wife and son are walking across what once used to be the village of Khatyn when the toll of the bells is accompanied by a guide's story of the tragedy, various data concerning dead towns, villages and people, the son's questions and Flyora's metaphysical speculations about human memory that has to preserve the name of Khatyn.

Both books explore what happens if the ordinary man is – for various reasons – relieved of moral responsibilities and is given a free hand in dealing with people who are officially regarded as being inferior, and therefore are not expected to be treated like humans. M. J. Martinez-Alfaro draws attention to the ordinariness of Nazism, "It is hard to try and put

oneself in the place of a victim, but it is also an ethical exercise to open one's eyes to the terrifying commonality of the perpetrators. […] The monstrous face of Nazism was all the more monstrous because of its terrible ordinariness" (131). The books contain numerous scenes of massacres and death, but from the point of view of the "punitive squads" those who were doomed to die were worthless inferiors, and it seemed to numb their guilt, just as the peasants in *The Painted Bird* did not feel any remorse persecuting the Gypsy-looking boy or killing Stupid Ludmila, because they were the inferior Other. The result is radical evil. The chasteners use various tricks not to arouse suspicion concerning their aim, making jokes just before they set fire to the barn; after killing Stupid Ludmila the peasant women go away gossiping and laughing.

Both writers asked difficult questions that cannot be easily answered. In his analysis of the English translation of *Khatyn*, T. Snyder points out the target of the book: "Death is to be resisted and life to be prized not because of any good in us, but to thwart the greater purpose of the universe to humiliate and kill us" (10). Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov challenged God because of the sufferings of innocent children. The experience the protagonists of the novels by Adamovich and Kosinski went through had to emphasize the vulnerability of modern civilization and the grotesqueness of the world, which is based on domination, the power of the strong, and the silence of the weak. Adamovich's book is based on real facts, of which he was both a witness and a participant. Twenty years after the war, his blind Flyora revisits the sites of the writer's battlefields and the country's memorials, bringing back the voices of the dead and seeing in his mind's eye the world that is no more. "Never ask for whom the bell tolls," warns John Donne (Donne 108), and so ring the bells of Khatyn. In Kosinski's novel the fictionality of the survival tale intensifies the psychological effect of Holocaust memories that will forever remain traumatic because they mean displacement, persecution, racism, discrimination – phenomena which have not yet been eradicated.

Notes

[1] Snyder defines this as the area lying between Germany and Russia, covering Eastern Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic states and Western Russia. According to him, "the bloodlands were no political territory, real or imagined; they are simply where Europe's most murderous regimes did their most murderous work" (XVIII).

[2] All translations from Russian and Belarusian are mine.

[3] The place should not be confused with Katyn Forest near Smolensk, a place where Polish officers were executed on Stalin's orders in 1940. The choice of the village for the memorial in Belarus was deliberate as its name can easily be confused with Katyn.

[4] The term is used in reference to prosaic works that were written by former Red Army lieutenants who took part in the war when they were about 19, including such writers as G. Baklanov, V. Bykau, V. Astafiev, A. Bek, B. Vasiliev, K. Vorobyov, and others. A. Adamovich was not directly associated with them, but his attitude to the description of the war is similar to theirs; according to

M. Balina, "these writers provided common human dimensions to the tragedy, thus replacing the locality of *patrie* (Russia) with the universal image of human suffering" (156).

[5] NKVD – People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs Ministry, notoriously known for political repressions under Stalin.

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To All vertuous Ladies in Generall: Voicing Female Spirituality in the Poems of Aemilia Lanyer (1569–1645)

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Abstract

The present article deals with the poetry of Aemilia Lanyer (1569-1645), arguably the first professional English woman poet. It focuses on Lanyer's "feminist spirituality", i.e. her delineation of women's spiritual genius based on their specific dispositions. The article discusses Lanyer's strategy in reassessing the role of women in Christianity and the fields in which the female spiritual "organism" can develop without the necessarily polemical aspects of sexual differences. The article argues that Lanyer uses the genre of devotional poetry (and spirituality) to claim a space of autonomy for women that was unthinkable in other fields.

Keywords: Aemilia Lanyer, English Renaissance poetry, devotional poetry, poetry and spirituality

1. Introduction

In the history of English devotional writing, the year 1611 will forever be associated with the publication of the canonical Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible and Aemilia Lanyer's (1569–1645) collection *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. The latter work is remarkable from a number of perspectives, but two stand out as especially important: never before in the history of English literature had a collection of religious poetry been published with a woman's name on the title page, moreover with such a bold objective of offering a critical and thoroughly female view of the key issues of Christian spirituality. Mary Sidney Herbert's remarkable translations of the Psalms (written around 1600) were not

printed until 1823, and Rachel Speght's *Mortalities Memorandum with a Dreame Prefixed* appeared in 1621[1]. Aemilia Lanyer thus enjoys an extraordinary standing amongst early modern female poets: she voices her poetic vocation and her project of an independent, i.e. un-derived female spiritual destiny with a confidence that had not been seen before.

The recent critical assessment of her work has predominantly focused on the "protofeminist" aspects of her work and the discourse of femininity in early modern England[2]. In this article I want to reassess her work in the context of English devotional writing as a remarkable attempt to delineate the basic principles of female spirituality "to all vertuous Ladies in generall" (Lanyer 12)[3]. I will argue that Lanyer's poetry not only voices women's otherness in relation to men's writing, but also aims at defining a unique, female spiritual "organism." It thus restructures some of the basic principles of Christian spirituality and refreshes the language used by this spirituality.

2. Defining female spirituality: Lanyer's traditionalism and daring

The classical theological understanding of spirituality refers to the realization of one's own spiritual identity in relation to the salvific event.[4] In other words, the salvific event in its objective, ontological nature (in se) is "translated" into the language of individual experience; i.e. it is subjectified as a response that re-discovers both the "objective" core of the Revelation and its hic-et-nunc relevance in one's life. Spirituality can thus be defined as an individualized reading of the "newness" of the Christian experience, of the "reality" of the "new creature" (καινη κτισις, see Gal 6:15).[5]

However, this process necessarily involves a thorough reading of the situatedness of the believer, i.e. the individual spiritual calling which takes into account the givenness of their identity. In this context, Lanyer's "daring" in relation to the female specificity in spiritual matters is not necessarily a radical *relecture* of the tradition, but in fact represents a drawing of consequences from the basic presupposition of the salvific event being subjectified.

One of the striking facts about early modern women's poetry is the conspicuous prevalence of devotional writing. The norm was "to go divine,"[6] and the emergence of female subjectivity in this period was inextricably bound to the notion of the liberation that women could experience in the realm of religious verse. The symbolic nature of religious language and the autonomy of theological discourse based on analogical reference thus offered a relative freedom from constraints and from accepting masculine definitions of woman as "'other' in relation to man',"[7] and possibly exploring versions of this otherness in themselves.[8] It could be used to redefine notions of manhood and womanhood on a deeper, anthropological level, and thus raise a number of socially dynamic, if not subversive, ideas.

Lanyer's collection starts with a series of dedicatory poems; indeed, this was a well-established practice of Renaissance poets "who sought support through patronage."[9] All of these poems are dedicated to women, and Lanyer presents a gallery of exemplary patronesses whose spiritual integrity facilitated her own conversion. The crucial figure in this context was Margaret, the countess dowager of Cumberland, whose spiritual influence on Lanyer seems to have been essential. The dedicatory poems define the spiritual environment, accommodating Lanyer's meditations on the key contents of the salvific event *seen*

within this environment and *written for* that environment. The interpretative key to the effort undertaken by Lanyer in the text can be found in the prose introduction "To The Vertuous Reader." In the text, she identifies both her intended audience, as well as the effort to redefine femininity spiritually:

> I haue written this small volume, or little booke, for the generall use of all virtuous Ladies and Gentlewomen of this kingdome; and in commendation of some particular persons of our owne sexe […] this have I done, to make knowne to the world, that all women deserve not to be blamed though some forgetting they are women themselves […] (48)

With reference to a number of major women figures in the Bible, she postulates women's autonomy and significance in the project of salvation. Indeed, the major moments in the history are unthinkable without women's mediation:

> it pleased our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ, without the assistance of man, beeing free from originall and all other sinnes, from the time of his conception, till the houre of his death, to be begotten of a woman, borne of a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman; and that he healed women, pardoned women, comforted women: yea, even when he was in his greatest agonie and bloodie sweat, going to be crucified, and also in the last houre of his death, tooke care to dispose of a woman: after his resurrection, appeared first to a woman, sent a woman to declare his most glorious resurrection to the rest of his Disciples. […] (50)

The final goal of the work is to draw the conclusions out of these findings and thus show the paths of "virtue" to the ladies. In that sense, the "increase of virtue" stands for overall spiritual growth:

> To the modest sensures of both which, I refer these my imperfect indeavours, knowing that according to their owne excellent dispositions, they will rather, cherish, nourish, and increase the least sparke of virtue where they find it, by their favourable and beste interpretations, than quench it by wrong constructions. To whom I wish all increase of virtue, and desire their best opinions. (50)

In other words, "To the vertuous Reader" summarizes Lanyer's overall approach to the objective of devotional poetry: the spiritual calling is derived both from the "facts" of the Revelation (especially the position of Eve and Mary in the story of salvation), but also in the "created givenness" of femininity (i.e. the dialogical and mutually completing nature of the two sexes, the analogical nature of Christ's sexuality, and finally, the "female, motherly logic" in framing various social phenomena in a polemical tone, in terms of opposition to masculine conceptions). Lanyer reads the information in the Book of Creation and the Book of Revelation[10] and tries to draw the consequences of doing so: in this way she creates a thoroughly female world in her poems (including the remarkable final landscape poem A Description of Cooke-Ham), in which the sexes are given their respective relevance in framing the divine plan, yet which represents a world where female calling and "logic" are autonomous and un-derived from the masculine.

3. Female relationality: being a chaste bride, a compassionate wife and a loving mother

Lanyer's crucial concept for defining the female spiritual "organism"[11] is derived from women's relationality, i.e. from their orientation towards a full commitment to another being, either as a *chaste bride*, a *compassionate wife* or a *loving mother*. The first of these concepts – referred to as "virtue" or chastity – stresses the integral concentration of the self towards a "spiritual" partnership with God or, indeed, to the feast of the *sponsalia* between God and humanity. In one of the introductory dedications, *To all vertuous Ladies in generall*, this virtue/chastity is a crucial prerequisite for entering into the spiritual realm: a virtuous woman needs to "concentrate" her inner integrity to be ready for the Bridegroom to enter the banquet (cf. the parable of Ten Virgins, Mt 25,1–13):

> Each blessed Lady that in Virtue spends
> Your pretious time to beautifie your soules;
> Come wait on her whom winged Fame attends
> And in hir hand the Booke where she inroules
> Those high deserts that Maiestie commends:
> Let this faire Queene not unattended bee,
> When in my Glasse she daines her selfe to see.
>
> Put on your wedding garments every one,
> The Bridegroome stayes to entertaine you all;
> Let Virtue be your guide, for she alone
> Can leade you right that you can never fall;
> And make no stay for feare he should be gone:
> But fill your Lamps with oyle of burning zeale,
> That to your Faith he may his Truth reveale. (12)

In the main poem of the collection "Salve Deus, Rex Judaeorum," Lanyer expands on this idea by defining this chaste Bride, adorned for the Bridegroom, as "beyond" the earthly, "outward" concepts of Beauty. In fact, a whole section of "Salve" is entitled "An Invective against outward beauty unaccompanied with virtue." Beauty – or, using Lanyer's words, the "whiteness" of virtue – is also a trap, wherein a woman may ruin her spiritual dispositions:

> For greatest perills do attend the faire,
> When men do seeke, attempt, plot and devise,
> How they may overthrow the chastest Dame,
> Whose Beautie is the White whereat they aime. (60)

The tangible model for this "virtue/chastity" is the dowager Lady Cumberland, who acquired such skill in "controlling" the various things that stir her, so that they can all be directed towards "reckoning" the true "Husband" Christ:

This Grace great Lady, doth possesse thy Soule,
And makes thee pleasing in thy Makers sight;
This Grace doth all imperfect Thoughts controule,
Directing thee to serve thy God aright;
Still reckoning him, the Husband of thy Soule,
Which is most pretious in his glorious sight:
Because the Worlds delights shee doth denie
For him, who for her sake vouchsaf'd to die. (62)

In fact, Lady Cumberland is alluded to at a number of places in the text: she is called "Deere Spouse of Christ" or "Pure Thoughted Lady"; in other words, she seems to incarnate the ideal of an integrated woman, a bride waiting for the bridegroom.

Once Lanyer starts retelling the passion of Christ,[12] she focuses on the role of women in the story. The first notable woman is the wife of Pontius Pilate, who advises him not to sentence Jesus to death:

[…]heare the words of thy most worthy wife,
Who sends to thee, to beg her Saviours life.

Let barb'rous crueltie farre depart from thee,
And in true Justice take afflictions part;
Open thine eies, that thou the truth mai'st see,
Doe not the thing that goes against thy heart;
Condemne not him that must thy Saviour be;
But view his holy Life, his good desert […] (84)

Similarly the "Daughters of Jerusalem" showed their broken hearts and cried for the innocent victim. This "did mooue their Lord, their Louer, and their King,/To take compassion" (93) on them. The power of women's tears makes the final journey humanely bearable. The compassionate wife thus presents another form in which women can enjoy their spiritual autonomy.

In the following section, the focus moves to the "sorrow of virgin Mary," and the horror of Christ's crucifixion opens up another "feminist" theme: that of the *loving mother*. Mary is confronted with a double loss, since she loses both her son and her Redemeer; in other words, her drama is presented as that of a faithful woman (indeed, the former virgin fully concentrated on her calling) who totally surrenders to the incomprehensible. Mary's strength is her "submissive heart" to the will of her heavenly Father (and Husband). Mary's typological significance becomes clear from the close proximity to another section addressed "To my Ladie of Cumberland," where she is admonished to behold the scene of the crucifixion as the "Deere Spouse of Christ" and spiritually identify with the Saviour while taking part in the suffering:

This with the eie of Faith thou maist behold,
Deere Spouse of Christ, and more than I can write;
And here both Griefe and Joy thou maist unfold,
To view thy Love in this most heavy plight,

Bowing his head, his bloodlesse body cold;
Those eies waxe dimme that gave vs all our light,
His count'nance pale, yet still continues sweet,
His blessed blood watring his pierced feet. (101)

In that sense, Lanyer reiterates the maxim of Marian spirituality from the Gospel of St Luke: when faced with the incomprehensibility of the virgin birth, Mary responded with the inner movement of the heart: "And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." (Lk 2:19).

Lanyer's female spirituality thus stresses the autonomous nature of female spiritual dispositions; however, the relationship of the two sexes is not necessarily polemical and contrasting: they are interrelated. This brings us to another important topic.

4. Men and women: the measure of dependence of the two sexes

Lanyer accepts that women are physically weaker and supposedly inferior to men, however, that may precisely be the point of contention in understanding the lamentable state humanity seems to find itself in. The most widely anthologized part of Lanyer's poetry, the section of *Slave Deus, Rex Judaeorum* entitled "Eves Apologie," expands on the consequences of this supposed inferiority. If one asks the question who is responsible for the Fall, one needs to take into account the respective "natural dispositions" of a man and a woman:

Our Mother Eve, who tasted of the Tree,
Giving to Adam what she held most deare,
Was simply good, and had no powre to see,
The after-comming harme did not appeare:
The subtile Serpent that our Sex betraide,
Before our fall so sure a plot had laide.

That undiscerning Ignorance perceav'd
No guile, or craft that was by him intended;
For, had she knowne of what we were bereav'd,
To his request she had not condiscended.
But she (poore soule) by cunning was deceav'd,
No hurt therein her harmlesse Heart intended:
For she alleadg'd Gods word, which he denies
That they should die, but even as Gods, be wise. (85)

However absurd or scandalous the effect of such reasoning may be today, the point for Lanyer was ultimately the interdependence of the two sexes and mutual respect for their respective limits. Adam should have been aware of Eve's frailty, and therefore blaming the Fall on her is simply unfair and wrong. His "superiority," based on his "seniority" in the order of creation and strength, should have prevailed over Eve's fragile emotionality:

But surely Adam cannot be excus'd,
Her fault, though great, yet he was most too blame;
What Weaknesse offred Strength might have refus'd,
Being Lord of all the greater was his shame:
Although the Serpents craft had her abus'd,
Gods holy word ought all his actions frame:
For he was Lord and King of al the earth,
Before poore Eve had either life or breath. (85)

Ultimately, Eve's major fault was "too much love,/ Which made her give this present [i.e. the apple]to her Deare" (86). Since Eve typologically stands for the "ewig Weibliche," when Lanyer meditates on the scene of the trial before Pilate, she again stresses the scandal of "missing each other." Pilate surrenders to the trap of power ("*Pilate*, this can yeeld thee no content,/To exercise thine owne authoritie" (89), while not listening to the intuition of his wife, who recognizes Jesus as a "just man." The freeing of Barabbas only proves the point that this is a man whose limit is the hunger for power and the fear of losing it. By doing so, Pilate loses his "Honour," a quality which is the prerequisite of a just judge:

Base Barrabas the Thiefe they all desire
And thou more base than he, perform'st their will;
Yet when thy thoughts backe to themselves retire,
Thou art unwilling to commit this ill:
Oh that thou couldst unto such grace aspire,
That thy polluted lips might never kill
That Honour, which right Judgement ever graceth,
To purchase shame, which all true worth defaceth.

Art thou a Judge, and askest, What to doe
With One, in whom no fault there can be found?
The death of Christ wilt thou consent unto
Finding no cause, no reason, nor no ground?
Shall he be scour'd and crucified too?
And must his miseries by thy meanes abound?
Yet not asham'd to aske what he hath done,
When thine owne conscience seeks this sin to shunne. (88)

In order to understand Lanyer's interpretation of the interdependence of the two sexes and their respective weaknesses, we should refer to the consequences of the Fall as we find them in the biblical narrative in the book of Genesis. Although the text of "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum" does not openly refer to it, Lanyer conspicuously reiterates God's curse over Adam and Eve after they had eaten from the forbidden tree. The original mutual givenness of Adam and Eve, their harmonizing, pre-fall interdependence, is broken. From that moment on, Eve will be "ruled" by Adam and Adam will struggle in vain to regain his power over the rest of creation. Instead of being the sovereign lord of all, Adam the man is subjected to the vicissitudes of an uncertain fate:

> And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.
>
> And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. […]
>
> Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.
>
> And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Gen 3,9–19)

The broken parallelism of the two sexes runs through Lanyer's text: men are hungry for power – without ultimately being able to take hold of it – while women weep powerlessly over the fate of innocent victims. The story of Jesus being dragged through the streets of Jerusalem with the weeping "Daughters of Jerusalem" along the way, as well as the contrast between cruel, ruthless soldiers and compassionate women accompanying the scene of the crucifixion, is telling:

> When spitefull men with torments did oppresse
> Th'afflicted body of this innocent Doue,
> Poore women seeing how much they did transgresse,
> By teares, by sighs, by cries, intreate, nay prove,
> What may be done among the thickest presse,
> They labour still these tyrants hearts to moue:
> In pitie and compassion to forbeare. (94)

Lanyer thus provides her own conclusion to the problem of the relation between men and women in the *status naturae lapsae* (i.e. the state of the fallen nature): no-one is now born "without our paine" (87) and men's supposed power over women does not exonerate men from their cruelty and from all the other consequences of the Fall. This meditation over the interdependence of the two sexes leads to a postulation of a sense of new "Libertie" and equality in the spiritual realm:

> Then let us have our Libertie againe,
> And challendge to your selves no Sou'raigntie;
> You came not in the world without our paine,
> Make that a barre against your crueltie;
> Your fault beeing greater, why should you disdaine
> Our beeing your equals, free from tyranny?
> If one weake woman simply did offend,
> This sinne of yours hath no excuse, nor end. (87)

The consequences of this idea for the social aspects of women's spirituality are far-reaching: women are not only un-derived from men; their absence in public life is a sign of lack. In Lanyer's poetry, women subvert a male-dominated world through their "logic of powerlessness."

5. Beyond social boundaries: potentially subversive aspects of the powerless "female logic"

Lanyer's project of women's spirituality also takes into account the potentially subversive aspects of postulating the equal dignity and mutual interdependence of the two sexes. Women's capacity for compassion, based on their emotional intelligence and their bodily union with their offspring, tends to question institutions related to men's exercise of power. In the dedicatory poem "To the Ladie Anne, Countesse of Dorset," Lanyer questions the "givenness" of hierarchical orders in the society. Meditating on the value of various "Honours" typical for the contemporary society, she asks how much they actually relate to the divine design:

> What difference was there when the world began,
> Was it not Virtue that distinguisht all?
> All sprang but from one woman and one man,
> Then how doth Gentry come to rise and fall?
> Or who is he that very rightly can
> Distinguish of his birth, or tell at all,
> In what meane state his Ancestors haue bin,
> Before some one of worth did honour win? (42)

Lanyer talks about a man, a "he" who should question the "earthly" idea of honour, or rather associate it with the spiritual category of "virtue," related to the exercise of power respecting the weak and the poor:

> Nor is he fit for honour, or command,
> If base affections over-rules his mind;
> Or that selfe-will doth carry such a hand,
> As worldly pleasures have the powre to blind
> So as he cannot see, nor understand
> How to discharge that place to him assign'd:
> Gods Stewards must for all the poore provide,
> If in Gods house they purpose to abide. (43)

Nevertheless, the dedicatee that is truly "fit" for this "virtue" is a *woman* – the mentioned Anne, Countess of Dorset: "For your faire mind I hold the fittest place,/ Where virtue should be setled & protected"(41). In fact, women seem to have the capacity to "humanize" and subvert the logic of long-established orders of things or power itself.

When praising her patroness, Lady Cumberland, Lanyer contrasts the "wanton" life at the court with the kind harmony of her country retreat. By doing so, she serves the merciful order of "heav'nly powres":

Thou from the Court to the Countrie art retir'd,
Leaving the world, before the world leaves thee:
That great Enchantresse of weak mindes admir'd,
Whose all-bewitching charmes so pleasing be
To worldly wantons; and too much desir'd
Of those that care not for Eternitie:
But yeeld themselves as preys to Lust and Sinne,
Loosing their hopes of Heav'n Hell paines to winne.

But thou, the wonder of our wanton age
Leav'st all delights to serve a heav'nly King:
Who is more wise? or who can be more sage,
Than she that doth Affection subject bring;
Not forcing for the world, or Satans rage,
But shrowding vnder the Almighties wing;
Spending her yeares, moneths, daies, minutes, howres,
In doing service to the heav'nly powres. (58)

The archetypal biblical subversion of this type of order to which Lanyer alludes is the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55). Mary – "most beauteous Queene of Woman-kind" (95) – praises God's "reversed order" of the world, i.e. the paradoxical "power of the powerless": "For the Almightie magnified thee,/And looked downe vpon thy meane estate;/Thy lowly mind" (95).[13] Christ "joyes the Meeke, and makes the Mightie sad,/Pulls downe the Prowd, and doth the Humble reare" (54). For Lanyer, indeed, the spiritual order invites a major revisionism of the "glory" of the earthly orders:

But yet the Weaker thou dost seeme to be
In Sexe, or Sence, the more his Glory shines,
That doth infuze such powrefull Grace in thee,
To shew thy Love in these few humble Lines;
The Widowes Myte, with this may well agree,
Her litlle All more worth than golden mynes,
Beeing more deerer to our loving Lord,
Than all the wealth that Kingdoms could afford. (64)

This "power" is later associated with a number of women: Pilate's wife, Deborah, Judith, and indeed Lanyer's patroness, Countess of Cumberland. In contrast to these, men tend to be cold and calculating, idolatrizing the stiff orders of old. Typically, Caiphas represents a "wicked Man" of whom nothing is to be expected:

By this Example, what can be expected
From wicked Man, which on the Earth doth liue?
But faithlesse dealing, feare of God neglected;
Who for their priuate gaine cares not to sell
The Innocent Blood of Gods most deere elected,
As did that caytife wretch, now damn'd in Hell:

If in Christs Schoole, he tooke so great a fall,
What will they doe, that come there not at all. (82)

However, the Countess of Cumberland – with whom Lanyer contrasts these corrupt masculine manners and to whom she also dedicates the final part of the central poem of the collection – seems to embody the virtues of the Gospel. She is humble, modest, merciful, caring, compassionate, and fully committed to the works of charity. By that she almost manages to – so to speak – reverse the order of heavens: indeed, these works of love are, spiritually, equal to the keys of St Peter that open the gates of heaven:

These workes of mercy are so sweet, so deare
To him that is the Lord of Life and Loue,
That all thy prayers he vouchsafes to heare,
And sends his holy Spirit from aboue;
Thy eyes are op'ned, and thou seest so cleare,
No worldly thing can thy faire mind remoue;
Thy faith, thy prayers, and his speciall grace
Doth open Heau'n, where thou behold'st his face.

These are those Keyes Saint Peter did possesse,
Which with a Spirituall powre are giu'n to thee,
To heale the soules of those that doe transgresse,
By thy faire virtues; which, if once they see,
Vnto the like they doe their minds addresse,
Such as thou art, such they desire to be:
If they be blind, thou giu'st to them their sight;
If deafe or lame, they heare, and goe vpright. (109)

For Lanyer, women are spiritually mature and autonomous. However, their capacities can fully shine forth when their respective qualities are to be compared with Christ – the powerless, paradoxical "Rex Judaeorum." The ultimate source of women's spiritual identity is thus the measure of their identity with the passion and resurrection of Christ.[14]

6. Christ as a woman – the fluidness of divine sexuality

"One of the landmarks of Lanyer's lengthy poem is the emphatic feminization of Christ himself" (Dascal 217). He reflects the commonplace stereotypes associated with femininity – patience, mildness and silence,[15] as well as his "all-reviving beautie" (51). The latter quality is contrasted not only with the dubious cult of beauty in this "wanton age," but also with the "manly" qualities represented by the actors in the drama. Christ is not openly transgendered,[16] but the above-mentioned female characteristics are conspicuously emphasized.

In the central poem of the collection "Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum," Lanyer stresses Christ's obedience and surrender to the will of the Father. Unlike his apostles, he is faithful

to his identity of bringing new life to the world. As a pregnant woman in the hour of her delivery, she is fully determined to surrender to this mission:

> But what could comfort them thy troubled Minde,
> When Heaven and Earth were both against thee bent?
> And thou no hope, no ease, no rest could'st finde,
> But must restore that Life, which was but lent;
> Was ever Creature in the World so kinde,
> But he that from Eternitie was sent?
> To satisfie for many Worlds of Sinne,
> Whose matchlesse Torments did but then begin. (70)

The obedience and silence of Jesus takes on another major "female" feature before Caiphas. There he is presented as "sweet Iesus" (82) who will become a subject of violence: as with a raped virgin, Caiphas will make his "pray…of his most pretious blood" (82). He is stripped of his "roabes," and his "Innocency" is shown to the mob. The only spectators to understand the indignity of the moment are again women – the mentioned "Daughters of Jerusalem," Mary and, indeed, the "Maries" who are about to anoint the dead body.[17]

The resurrection represents the triumph of this feminized Saviour: the cruel order instituted by men is broken by Christ's kind and meek "female" qualities. It is no surprise anymore that even the one who is to continue in Christ's mission on this earth – the church – is feminized as well:

> For he is rize from Death t'Eternall Life,
> And now those pretious oyntments he desires
> Are brought unto him, by his faithfull Wife
> The holy Church; who in those rich attires,
> Of Patience, Love, Long suffring, Voide of strife,
> Humbly presents those ointments he requires:
> The oyles of Mercie, Charitie, and Faith,
> Shee onely gives that which no other hath. (107)

The church is the "faithfull Wife" desiring her husband. Christ's "new" beauty is modelled upon the Song of Songs (indeed, it is *a briefe description of his beautie vpon the Canticles*) and the process of the heavenly *sponsalia* presented in deeply eroticized language:

> Blacke as a Raven in her blackest hew;
> His lips like skarlet threeds, yet much more sweet
> Than is the sweetest hony dropping dew,
> Or hony combes, where all the Bees do meet;
> Yea, he is constant, and his words are true,
> His cheekes are beds of spices, flowers sweet;
> His lips like Lillies, dropping downe pure mirthe,
> Whose loue, before all worlds we doe preferre. (107)

The final stage – the admonition to Lady Cumberland – corresponds to the last stage of the Christian *lectio divina,* i.e. *contemplatio*,[18] which is meant to apply the "reading"

of the signs while tasting the fruits of grace. As I have mentioned above, it summarizes the relevance of the long meditation for an authentic female spirituality: integrating one's femininity into a new commitment to the spiritual union with the divine Husband. In that sense, the spiritual journey proposed by Lanyer comes full circle.

7. Conclusion

We have seen how Lanyer views women's devotional poetry as claiming and re-claiming women's autonomy in spiritual matters. For her, the "difference" between being male and female is the basis of two distinct spiritual destinies, and also the grounds for justifying women's equality. She stresses the interdependence of the two sexes; her original reading of the pre-Fall harmony of man and woman and the subsequent "broken parallelism" represents a remarkable attempt to reflect on the "gender problem" in the early modern period. Her vision of Christ's death and resurrection, seen through the lenses of powerless, female logic, seeks to reclaim the salvific event as being truly universal.

In fact, the polemical aspects of her poetry (especially the underestimated and generally overlooked female spiritual genius) are meant to affirm and re-affirm femininity in a field where women were granted relative liberty, i.e. in writing religious verse. Given the authority attributed to theological discourse at the time, this field offered a sense of anthropological and social experimentation which matches some of the major achievements of the secular literature of the age.

Studying the poetry of Aemilia Lanyer is more than just a curiosity in gender studies. It is a true literary event: by "refreshing" the language of devotional verse, it seeks to claim new fields of liberty. In that sense, it also reaffirms poetry as a major agent of freedom.

Notes

[1] Strictly speaking, there had been several attempts by women to produce religious verse in English prior to Lanyer. The first was probably Anne Lok's (or Locke, 1530–after 1590) *Meditation of a Penitent Sinner: Written in Maner of a Parphrase upon the 51. Psalme of David* (1560), which is now generally recognized as the first sonnet sequence in the English language. Unlike Lanyer's work, however, Lok's work was published unsigned. The second attempt was by Elizabeth Melvill, Lady Culros (c. 1578–c. 1640), whose *Ane Godlie Dreame* (1603) is strictly speaking a piece of Scottish literature "compylit in Scottish meter." Cf. Michael R. G Spille: "A literary 'first': the sonnet sequence of Anne Locke (1560) an appreciation of Anne Locke's Sonnet Sequence: A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner … with Locke's Epistle to the … Duchesse of Suffolke." *Renaissance Studies* 11.1 (March 1997): 41–55. A good summary of women's verse can be found in Susanne Woods' classic monograph on Lanyer (vii-viii).

[2] See e.g. Elaine Beilin. *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987); Kate Chedzgoy , Melanie Hansen and Suzanne Trill, eds. *Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Writing* (Keele: Keele UP, 1996); Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke. *"This Double Voice": Gendered Wrting in Early Modern Writing* (Basingstoke: Macmillan,

2000)*;* Marshall Grossman, ed. *Aemilia Lanyer: Gender, Genre and the Canon* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1998); Barbara Smith and Ursula Appelt, eds. *Write or Be Written: Early Modern Women Poets and Cultural Constraints* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), Susanne Woods. *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), , Barbra Kiefer Lewalski. "Writing Women and Reading the Renaissance." *Renaissance Quarterly* 44.4 (Winter 1991): 792–821; Constance Furey. "The Self-Undone: Individualism and Relationality in John Donne and Aemilia Lanyer." *The Harvard Theological Review* 99.4 (October 2006): 469–486.

[3] All citations from Lanyer are taken from the Oxford edition of her poems *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Ed. Susanne Woods (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993).

[4] In a recent companion to Christian spirituality, Sandra M. Schneiders starts her discussion of Christian spirituality with the following definition: "Christian spirituality as an academic discipline studies the lived experience of Christian faith, the subjective appropriation of faith and living of discipleship in their individual and corporate actualization(s)." Later on she specifies the definition, saying that spirituality is "the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the horizon of ultimate value one perceives" (Schneiders, 15, 17).

[5] In this classical formulation of Paul's letter to the Galatians, the relevant thing to define a true Christian is not his historical nor religious origin, but his new life in Christ. Cf. also his previous formulation of the same "experience" in Gal 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*." (Italics are mine.)

[6] "One of the characteristics of women's love poetry in early modern England was that, in order to appear at all, in many cases it had to go divine. With the exception of Lady Mary Wroth, the handful of English poets from this period whose work is currently anthologized and reproduced for the twenty-first century classroom are mostly religious poets…" (Miller 196).

[7] Cf. Miller, 196.

[8] See Irigaray, Luce. "The Sex Which Is Not One." *This Sex Which Is Not One.* Transl. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985), 26, 28-29.

[9] "Æmilia Lanyer" *Poetry Foundation.* http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/aemilia-lanyer# poet. Unfortunately I was not able to track down the author of this interesting article.

[10] I am now referring to the classical division used by Augustine in his treatise *De Doctrina Cristiana.* Cf. Augustine, Saint. *De Doctrina Christiana* Transl. by D.W. Robertson (New Jersey: Apprentice Hall, 1997).

[11] I am employing this term, which is used in theological discourse, to point out the organic, integrated quality of spiritual, i.e. "supernatural" life that corresponds to the organic organization of the body, i.e. of "natural" life.

[12] In the original version this is indicated by the inscription: *"Here begins the Passion of Christ."*

[13] The biblical text in KJV runs as follows: "My soul doth magnify the Lord,/ And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour./ For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

[14] "Lanyer's authority for her version of the passion […] in her identification with, and the ability to interpret, Christ's passion." Susanne Woods. *Lanyer – A Renaissance Woman Poet* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 149–150.

[15] Cf. Helen Wilcox. "Lanyer and the Poetry of Land of Devotion." *Early Modern English Poetry: A Critical Companion* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 245.

[16] A paradoxical device one may find in 17th-century devotional poetry, e.g. in Crashaw's poem "The Flaming Heart Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Teresa."

[17] "She [Lanyer] portrays that understanding as quintessentially female, from the voice of Pilate's wife which moves imperceptibly back to that of the narrator (ll. 749–912), through the tears of the daughters of Jerusalem and the sufferings of the Virgin Mary (ll. 968–1136), to that particular insight of the countess of Cumberland (ll. 1329–68). See Woods, 150.

[18] I am referring to the classical theory found in the *Scala Claustralium* (i.e. Ladder of the Monk) of Guigo II (before 1174–1193), which distinguishes four parts of the *Lectio Divina,* namely *lectio – meditatio – oratio* and *contemplatio*.

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Linguistics and Translation Studies

Western/Eastern in the Construction of Slovak National Identity

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Abstract

The paper is a case study of the construction of national identity in Robert Pynsent's preface to a collection of contemporary Slovak essays translated into English and published under the title Scepticism and Hope (1999). The discursive construction of the Slovak nation is viewed in the light of what Jeffries (2010: 28) calls "constructed opposition", which in Pynsent's text becomes Western and Eastern, as projected onto two historical personalities who played a crucial role in the formation of the nation – Ľudovít Štúr and Štěpan Launer. The analysis traces the textual features that establish the Štúrite/Launerite opposition which becomes the persistent narrative framing of the preface, as well as showing how this opposition is discursively endowed with positive/negative values, which, in turn, serve to reinforce a biased and over-simplified picture of the world.

Keywords: constructed opposition, image schema, construction of national identity, East, West

1. Introduction

The construction of national identity employs the currency of historical and cultural narratives, which, by their nature, are built on metaphors and treat facts from a certain point of view. Such a view has the capacity to either reinforce existing preconceptions and identifications, or to refresh them, while values can be reprioritized. The following paper is an attempt to analyze a narrative dealing with Slovak national identity.

It is based on a case study of how East and West are conceptualized as an opposition that is endowed with values and used as a gauge to pass judgements on historical and cultural events and personalities, which in turn serve to reinforce the evaluation of

geographical spaces. The analysis gives an insight into the cognitive and linguistic means employed for this purpose; it is argued that such a strategy is potentially dangerous as it helps entrench a polarity that oversimplifies the actual reality, diverting us from a more complex historical and cultural understanding.

2. Theoretical background

The analytical tools employed here are inspired by developments in cognitive linguistics, especially the theory of conceptual metaphor as set out by Lakoff (1980) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999). The key concept to ground the general notion of opposition is that of image schemas, defined as "rudimentary concepts like CONTACT, CONTAINER and BALANCE, which are meaningful because they derive from and are linked to human pre-conceptual experience" (Evans, Green 46). These are "flesh-imbued" rather than disembodied abstractions. Jeffries (120) argues that "one could even hypothesise that there is a generalised image-schema of opposition based on bodily experience […] with no specifics attached". This would mean that OPPOSITION, just like CONTAINER, PATH or FORCE, would serve as one of the basic mechanisms of conceptualization playing a crucial role in structuring any thought processes. Moreover, similarly to orientational metaphors such as UP/DOWN, OPPOSITION serves as a potent container for the metaphoric projection of "good" versus "bad", which makes it an indispensable pre-conceptual candidate for any cognitively-based analysis dealing with ethics.

To understand how opposition is constructed in text, a distinction has to be made between what Jeffries (117–118) calls conventional and unconventional, or constructed opposites; the former category would be reserved for the lexical items established in the long-term memory, while in the latter category, oppositeness is triggered "on the spot" as a one-off case, either formally by grammatical or lexical structures or semantically by a metaphoric mapping onto a conventional pair of opposites. It is the constructed opposition that has the potential to either reinforce or reconfigure the value judgements attached to specific social and environmental phenomena, especially if it is enhanced by repetition or other types of prominence in a text: "the local textual effect of an individually created opposite may have a much more generalized discourse meaning if it participates in either a series of […] created opposites, or if it occurs in significant places in texts to afford the reader a view of the kind of world the writer is envisaging through the text" (Jeffries 78).

It can be hypothesised that the textual organization of oppositeness and the metaphoric mappings it attracts might, in certain texts, constitute a gestalt narrative structure as envisaged by Johnson (44) who claims that "there are gestalts for complex categorical structures, for metaphorical projections, and for unified narrative patterns". The narrative unfolding and metaphoric enrichment of the OPPOSITION skeleton can thus serve as a carrier of value organization and fixation.

3. Data description

The analyzed text, *What about the Slovaks*, is Robert B. Pynsent's preface to the collection of Slovak contemporary essays translated into English and published under the title

Scepticism and Hope (1999), which aims at introducing contemporary Slovak thought and scholarship to wider audiences. Pynsent is a British academic with a specialization in Czech and Slovak literature – his text is thus a treatment of contemporary literary works, which he sets into a wider cultural context. In the introductory part, Pynsent's account offers a brief outline of the origin of the Slovak nation, associated with the codification of standard Slovak in the mid-19th century, and gives characterizations of the associated historical actors and the conflicts among them. This sets the scene into which contemporary Slovak literature (with its multifaceted representatives) is placed, thus culminating in a clear picture of the entire field as well as indicating a desirable future direction.

Although most recent critical linguistic work has focused on the language of the mass media (and understandably so due to the sheer intensity of their overall impact), a detailed analysis of a specimen from one academic genre in the field of humanities may potentially make a relevant contribution to the project of mapping the traps of oversimplification – even more so given the fact that the accommodation of complexity should be an essential feature of any intellectual endeavour. Another factor that makes the text a suitable candidate for analysis is the combination of the factual and the interpretative / evaluative facets that are present in the genre of the essay.

Besides the formal aspects associated with the genre, it is also the subject matter of the text that legitimizes it as a suitable candidate for analysis. The fact that the topic of the "Slovak question" is tackled from the perspective of the East / West opposition makes the text representative of a more general sociological phenomenon in which geographical dimensions play a crucial role in the construction of national identities. In this connection, Melegh (2006) arrives at the conclusion that it is an "East-West slope" that predominantly shapes identity narratives in Central Europe. His data show that there seems to be more weight on the "Western" side of the scales, and dangerously so:

> The "Western" dominance is rarely counterbalanced on an individual level, although, as has been observed regarding the narratives of ideological debate, there are "fundamentalist" answers from Eastern Europe which simply reverse the "Western" narratives of looking down on the slope by upgrading "Eastern" civilization understood in an essentialist manner. […] The East-West civilization seems to be digging its own grave or, to put it better, preparing its final outcome by constructing the cradle for new "fundamentalist" power arrangements in which there is no place for gradual civilization, but only for conflicts fought in the name of civilization. (187)

Gaining insight into the conceptual mappings that mirror the "East-West slope" can thus contribute to a better awareness of an important process on the social level.

4. Analysis

The first part of the text (roughly one third) constructs the political and cultural scene, which is grounded in the mid-19th century, when the Slovak national language was codified by Ľudovít Štúr. In line with the ideology of Fichte and Herder which aligns language with

nationhood, the formation of a Slovak nation indeed coincided with this historical step. In this sense, Štúr's role in the creation of a vital political organism is beyond any doubt:

> […] Štúr […] doslova vymyslel, vytvoril, vypeľhal slovenský národ ako politický v časoch, keď to nebolo také jednoduché, ako sa nám dnes zdá. Nešlo len o jazyk, nešlo len o kultúru. Išlo najmä o spoločenské vedomie dejinnosti, o vedomie národa. O faktické dokončenie jeho integrácie. (Chmel 626)

> Štúr […] virtually invented, created, nurtured the Slovak nation as a political nation in times when this wasn't as easy as it seems to us today. What was at stake wasn't just language or culture. It was above all the historical consciousness of the society, the consciousness of a nation that was at stake, indeed a factual finalization of its integration. [author's translation]

Although Štúr brought his philological "know-how" largely from his studies in Germany, the complexity of his personality as well as its development over time does not allow for a simple classification on an East/West scale. Chmel poignantly describes Štúr's character as a "wedding" of contradictions:

> Aj preto sa u neho snúbili zdanlivé protiklady – intelektuálny či básnický pátos, emocionalita, mystika, vizionárstvo s politickým pragmatizmom, konformizmom, ba oportunizmom. Bol romantikom v pravom zmysle slova, mal čosi z romantického mesiášstva a titanstva, ale aj autoritárstva a diktátorstva. Bol skutočný vodca. Svojou bibliografiou, dielom predurčený na legend, mýtus, na národného hrdinu. (628)

> That is also why seeming contradictions aligned in him – intellectual or poetic pathos, emotionality, mysticism, and visionary inclinations together with political pragmatism, conformism, even opportunism. He was a Romantic in the true sense of the word; there was something of the Romantic messianism and titanic character in him, as well as of authoritarianism and dictatorship. He was a true leader. He was preordained, by his bibliography and work, to become a legend, a myth, a national hero. [author's translation]

The ambiguity of Štúr's character makes it inevitable that the mapping of his personality onto the East end of the scale must exploit a conceptual metaphor related to a change in time:

> Štúr's mythopoeia *eventually led to his* ***TURNING AWAY FROM*** *the decadent* ***West*** *to the vital* ***East****, to* ***Russia*** […] (12)

The verbal group *turn away from* here acts as a lexical trigger of opposition, whose "semantics set up some kind of contrast. […] The contrast is then usually played out in the clause elements following the verb" (Jeffries 47). An OPPOSITION image schema is thus evoked by blending a physical change of position with opposing geographical correlates. This facilitates the conceptual metaphor INTELLECTUAL OPINIONS ARE POSITIONS AT OPPOSITE ENDS, which, together with the metaphor HISTORICAL PERSONALITIES ARE OPINIONS, allows for the codifier of standard Slovak to play the role of a member

of a contrasting pair – the so-called "Eastern" member – where the "Western" end is yet to be filled. This materializes in the same paragraph via parallel structures:

> Štúr *was a* ***Romantic nationalist****,* ***Launer*** *a* ***Realist****, and a supporter of* ***Hungarian liberalism****.* (12)
>
> *Where* Štúr *saw Slovak salvation in* ***Russia****,* ***Launer*** *saw it in* ***Germany****.* (12)

The parallelism, involving ellipsis in the first instance, sets up a relationship of equivalence between two personalities, thus making them legitimate representatives of the oppositional pair. Here it is important to realize that "[i]nterpreting the parallelism involves appreciating some external connection between these elements. The connection is, broadly speaking, a connection either of similarity or of contrast" (Leech 67).

In fact, however, the historical significance of Štúr and Launer does not bear comparison. Štěpan Launer, although certainly an inspiring writer, in fact played a very minor political role in the formation of the Slovak nation, and his influence was further undermined by his reputation as somebody who had emigrated to Hungary. Launer's "realism" has never actually been tested outside of his writing. It can thus be claimed that the opposition is set up linguistically rather than factually, which means we can speak of constructed opposition which turns what is asymmetrical in nature into a symmetrical pair. The symmetrical status is further reinforced by the mappings that are operationalized in the following quotation:

> […] *one may see in them the foundations of the* ***TWO CURRENTS*** *of thought that have afflicted Slovak thinking, created Slovak political* ***CAMPS****, through most of the twentieth century.* (13)

Here the metonymy of personality standing for its thought is first combined with the projection of the thinking process onto a separate current. Although the conceptualization does not involve a novel metaphoric mapping, the fact that two separate currents are involved actually elaborates on the schema of opposition activated in the preceding text. The second important mapping that interacts with the given opposition schema extends to the sphere of politics, where clearly distinct political camps arise from the two personalities. While in the case of Štúr the mapping is made effective by the historical facts, its other end, defined by Launer, actually feeds on the opposition schema, and on the symmetry thus created. By assuming the same hierarchical status, Launer's importance is parasitic on that of Štúr.

The conceptualization is reinforced by a parallel structure set within the context of the metaphor POLITICS IS A GAME:

> *On the whole,* Štúr*, the* ***Easternizer*** *HAS BEEN WINNING. In 1998, it appears that the* ***Westernizers****, the* ***Launerites****, TOOK OVER.* (13)

Together with a parallel structure, the opposition is triggered by a verb denoting "change", i.e. *took over.* While Štúr is explicitly placed on the Eastern side of the oppositional pair, the Western side is granted a plural form referring to Launer's followers. Concomitantly, singularity is opposed to plurality, adding further conceptual content to the East and West

respectively. There is very little historical justification for such a distinction, as both Štúr and Launer were dead during the 20th century – the period to which the comment mostly relates. Moreover, while the notion of the Štúrites is well established in the Slovak cultural context (cf. Chmel 628), the term *Launerites* is a nonce word.

At the end of the introductory part, the established constructed opposition serves to ground historical events in 20th-century Slovakia:

> ... Štúr*'s thought made up the* "*meaning" of Slovak history during the* ***Fascist*** *Slovak state, and, among the intelligentsia that supported the separatists of the period 1989-1992, the* ***Mečiar regime****. The* ***Communist period*** *also generally followed the* Štúrite *line, not simply in LOOKING* ***East*** *or in navelgazing like Tiso's and Mečiar's regime, but also in the emphasis on the Slovaks as a* ***plebeian*** *nation. Generally speaking, the* ***leading*** *Slovak* ***intellectuals*** *in the interwar period LOOKED* ***West****;* (12)

Here the Eastern end of the opposition is occupied, via the bridge of Štúr's thought, not only by 20th century totalitarian regimes, be it Fascist, Communist or Mečiarist, but also by the quality of "plebeian". On the other hand, the Western end assumes the democratic interwar period intermingled with the quality "intellectual", cleansed of any association with the "fascist".

Overall, as I have shown, the East collects the following mappings: Štúr - Easternizer, romantic nationalism, Russia, Fascist, Mečiar regime, Communist period, plebeian. On the other hand, the mappings attributed to the West are: *Launer, realism, liberalism, Germany, Launerites – Westernizers, 1998 elections, intellectual*. These act in a series of local textual manifestations and provide a basic frame for the coherence of the whole text, whose explicit goal is to "treat specifically Slovak literature".

In sum, the introductory framing of the text, which, from the point of view of narrative, sets the historical and cultural background, is conceptually grounded by the opposition of East and West. In the context of cognitive linguistics, narrative can be understood as "[a] putative cognitive system for interconnecting an assembly of mental experiences so as to form a single overall pattern […] This can be called the **pattern-forming cognitive system**." (Talmy 418) It can be thus claimed that for the reader to make sense of the text, the opposition schema with its East / West content not only needs to be activated, but also kept as an ongoing background cognitive pattern. Interestingly, in terms of evaluation the reader receives a simple "totality" picture with the positive on the West side of the scale and the negative on the East side.

The crucial role of the opposition pre-conceptual schema is further confirmed when we proceed to the paragraph that introduces the body of the narrative:

> *new writing, I mean particularly works by new writers, may also be interpreted as FALLING INTO TWO CAMPS, the* Štúrite *and the* ***Launerite****.* (14–15)

The series of mappings related to the East / West opposition here can be summarized as follows:

EAST		
Johanides	ON THE WAY TO	Štúrite
Podracká	TURNED TO	Štúrite nationalism
the Barbarians	LOOK	East

Here source metaphors of bodily orientation, essentially opposition triggers, are projected onto opinions based on which writers are categorized under the label East / Štúrite. On a more detailed level, the value imbued mappings include: *personal rancour, anti-liberal, peasant, danger, wily, manipulating, Mečiar, Štúrite cult, mythopoeic, peasant, pious, depraved, narrow-minded, politically apathetic, indolent, vulgar, narcissistic, would-be, narcissistic, (physically and mentally) unreadable, nationalism, Panslavism*, all of which bear qualities of either underdeveloped rationality or a negative aspect of subjectivity.

On the other hand, the label *West* attracts a wider array of source metaphors, most of which do not exploit the simple CHANGE OF BODILY ORIENTATION conceptual metaphor.

WEST		
Marenčin	LOOKS	West
Pišťanek	TARGETS	Štúrite easternizing
Pankovčín	ATTACKS	Štúrite Ferkos
the Genitalists	LOOK	West
Horváth	DECLARES	Launerism
Hvorecký	ANTI-Štúrite	
Balla, Hvorecký, Macsovsky	PEAK OF	Launerite new writing

Unlike LOOK or TURN, the semantics of TARGET, ATTACK and DECLARE highlight the mental and intentional dimension, especially in the context where the WEAPON, which is an indispensable part of the metaphoric extension, is projected onto writing. Although the opposition trigger ANTI is quite schematic, its stylistic value as a more formal morpheme of Latinate origin provides for a similar, more "sophisticated" evaluation. This means that overall, the writers categorized under the *West* label are imbued with more rationality, which is also manifested on a finer plane where value-imbued mappings include: *satirical, ironise, satirical, satire, modern Theory, apocalyptic, parodying, imaginative black humour, cynical idealist games, humour, satire, parody, productive sense of humour, whimsical sense of humour, peak of new writing*. This is in stark contrast with the "emotional" colouring of the writes falling into the *East* camp, as we have seen previously.

Apart from the way conceptual metaphors are employed in the classification of the writers, an important role is also played by word-formation processes, especially those responsible for the new coinages. After the personalities have been successfully matched to the East / West opposition, explicit use of the *East* / *West* lexemes becomes infrequent and the opposition is further carried on via Štúr and *Launer*. Interestingly, while in the first part of the text (historical and cultural background) selection of proper names is preferred to their derivatives (the number of occurrences being 7 and 2 respectively), the second part favours their derivatives (with 4 and 15 occurrences). This would indicate that the

process of entrenching the constructed opposition interplays with the dynamics of the lexico-grammatical system of language, with one supporting the other on the structural rather than the semantic level.

A closer look at the word-formation processes employed in this respect shows that the most frequent coinages are adjective and noun derivatives from the two proper names. These derivatives are formed primarily by the suffix *–ite*, denoting followers or supporters of the person concerned, and sporadically by the suffix *–ism*, referring to a system of political beliefs or intellectual movements: Štúrite, Štúrism, Launerite, Launerism. In terms of stylistic value, both of these suffixes are potentially derogatory: "Especially in the case of political personages, the *–ite* word is often coined by opponents, and hence tends to have a derogatory tone which is not found with comparable suffixes such as *–ist, –er*." (Huddlestone and Pullum 1693) In a similar fashion, this holds for the suffix *–ism*, where "there may be a derogatory tone" (Huddlestone and Pullum 1702).

In the analyzed text, the contextual use of the *Launer* derivatives is either neutral or directly deletes the derogatory label, such as in:

> *Tomáš Horváth* […] *declares his* ***Launerism*** *by Vilikovskýesque* ***parodying*** *of* ***Slovak nationalism and Panslavism****.* (23)
>
> *Macsovsky* […] *manifests a* ***whimsical sense of humour*** […] *With Balla, and perhaps Hvorecký, Macsovsky represents a* ***peak of Launerite new writing****.* (24)

This cannot be claimed in respect of the contexts related to the lexemes Štúrite and Štúrism, where the derogatory reading prevails:

> *At least implicitly, Pišťanek here shows the* ***dangers*** *inherent in* Štúrism*, for the* ***wily, manipulating*** *Vlado essentially constitutes a variant of Rácz and Dônč.* (18)
>
> *Another writer who used to* ***satirise Mečiar*** *and the* Štúrite ***cult of the peasant*** *was Václav Pankovčín* […] (18)
>
> *Pankovčín* […] *ATTACKS the Slovak* ***peasant*** *woman whom the* Štúrite *Ferkos invoke:* ***pious****,* ***depraved****,* ***narrow-minded****,* ***politically apathetic****, and* ***indolent****.* (19)
>
> *Dana Podracká* […] *TURNED TO* Štúrite nationalism […] *and even did a new translation from the original Czech of one of* Štúr's mythopoeic *essays.* (20)

In one instance, the derogatory meaning of Štúrite is directly opposed to *Launerite*, which is textually placed into the position of a desired goal:

> ***Personal rancour*** *towards a living* ***liberal scholar*** *politician OVERWHELMS any* ***parodic*** *intention. In that he is ON THE WAY TO being a* Štúrite *rather than a* ***Launerite****.* (15)

It can thus be claimed that rather than bearing derogatory evaluation as such, the suffixes serve to underline the opposition, which assumes the role of distributing value judgements.

In the conclusion of the essay, however, there is a return to the proper name in its base form, with a concretizing and individualizing effect:

> […] *intellectuals cease to be* ***intellectuals*** *if they grow too optimistic. Thoughts of happy morrows belong to the* ***Communist era*** *and* Štúr's dreams of Russia. (24)

By assigning a dreamlike attitude to the Communist era, Štúr and Russia, the Eastern end of the constructed opposition – to which the reader is already primed – is filled. This leaves the Western end open for the intellectual attitude, a slot to be filled in by the natural cognitive process taking place in the reader's mind. The implicit character of such a conclusion makes it ever more powerful, as it is not exposed to direct questioning. Even more importantly, the reader's identification is with the *intellectuals.*

5. **Conclusion**

Although no claims to a wider generalization are being made, the qualitative analysis presented in this paper shows how an identity narrative can be grounded by a simple pre-conceptual image schema – e.g. that of OPPOSITION – which in turn serves as a pertinent coherence mechanism. In this way, a biased and oversimplified picture of the world is painted. While such world-construction is appropriate in certain genres such as fairy tales, or even social activism, it needs to be recognized that OPPOSITION is not the only one and all-inclusive pre-conceptual structure, and it is partnered by other schemas that shape perception and events at an equally rudimentary level.

The OPPOSITION trap is ever more dangerous inasmuch as it works on the level of pre-conceptual structures that provide the basic coherence of the text. Moreover, these form the most hidden thought mechanisms, which not easily open to counter-argumentation and which may serve to foster fundamentalist views.

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Book Reviews

Deirdre Shauna Lynch
Loving Literature. A Cultural History
Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015

Loving Literature answers the question why those of us whose line of work is literature are not only required to love it but also ensure that others do too. Deirdre Lynch keeps a critical distance from her love of literature that allows her to engage with the texts that she analyses while at the same time reinvigorating the literary-critical enterprise of which she is both a part and a product.

Focusing on the literature of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, *Loving Literature* demonstrates that this period produced a new, romantic idea of literature. It is no coincidence that the period was a watershed in the history of the emotions and intimate life; its literature, argues Lynch, can only be understood when viewed in the context of the history of emotional practice. It was at this time that literature became available to readers as private, passionate people rather than as rational, civic-minded ones. Lynch views literature as an object that solicits its audiences' involvement, affection and fidelity. For literature to be taken personally, she argues, it demands love. Even when we aspire to scientific objectivity as critics, we do so because we love literature. This is a fundamental assumption of *Loving Literature*; it is also one that comes with a warning: love can be pleasant but it can also be confusing and painful.

While early discussions of literary history and the canon have focused on the conditions which established literature as an object of knowledge, Lynch focuses on how we "feel" literature: knowing and feeling, she argues, are inextricably linked.

In the eighteenth century, literary texts were bound up with their writers' identities. They placed emotional demands on the reader that made it difficult for critics to decide the extent to which they should allow their own feelings to impinge on their critique. She illustrates this challenge with reference to the battle between James Boswell, author of *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, and the poet Anna Seward. While Seward, a passionate reader and critic, accused Samuel Johnson of failing to love literature sufficiently, Boswell defended Johnson by arguing that critics should not be prejudiced or have favourite authors.

Lynch also discusses nineteenth-century book collectors and the concept of "bibliomania", a passion for collecting books that bordered on madness. She argues that book collecting was an amorous activity that reinforced literature's status as a love object. By conserving great books, the present and the past are kept in sync as readers return to their favourite books. Reading is a gentle pleasure and source of enduring companionship. The novel, argues Lynch, is the fullest expression of the love of reading.

A recurrent topic of *Loving Literature* is how the language of approbation or admiration of works of literature is found insufficient "and recourse is had to the stickier, subjectivity-saturated language of involvement and affection" (10). In the eighteenth century, the human heart was re-mapped and served to personalise the passions; in the nineteenth century, concepts of domesticity in literature brought what Lynch describes as "loving

feeling" into a new and potentially problematical relationship with habit and routine. As literary study was professionalised it became increasingly important to understand what Lynch terms the "personalisation" of literature and the practices and institutions of reading by which it was supported. Love of literature collapses time and connects the living and the dead. *Loving Literature* explores how this is done as it investigates what it means to have an emotional commitment to literature.

In part one, "Choosing an Author as You Choose a Friend", Lynch investigates the personalisation of literature, focusing on the earlier mentioned quarrel between James Boswell and Anna Seward. Part two, "Possessive Love", examines the fantasy of being left alone with the canon as it discusses eighteenth-century men of letters who wrote at a time when literary history was understood as an exercise in public service. This part considers anthologists and essayists such as Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt and Thomas De Quincy. Part three, "English Literature for Everyday Use", explores the regular, the routinised and the habitual in literature and how one forms a steady relationship with poems, letters and novels. The novel, more than any other literary form, has the potential to be a reader's companion for the long haul: it occasions a love that is uncalculated and habitual.

Loving Literature is cultural history at its best. Infused with enthusiasm, it is scholarly but also accessible thanks to the clarity of its style and the richness of its examples. Meticulously annotated and with carefully chosen illustrations, Lynch's study is a pleasure to read. *Loving Literature* is sure to attract readers from inside and outside the Academy who question the idea that literary scholars do not love literature and who wish to explore why and how they can refute this popular misconception. Loving literature entails close study of what literature has to say not only about the beauty of love but also its edginess and complexities; Lynch's study helps us do this, and to enjoy doing so as part of a voyage of discovery that is continuous and endlessly rewarding.

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Renata Jančaříková
Victims vs. Killers in the British Press. Naming Strategies in Murder Reports
Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2014

The titles of linguistics monographs rarely attract the attention of non-expert passers-by, let alone pique their curiosity to find out more. However, *Victims vs. Killers in the British Press* could well represent an exception. Not all the passers-by attracted by this striking title might ultimately find their expectations met, yet the scope and focus of the publication may find an appreciative audience even beyond the target readership of linguists, (critical) discourse analysts and media discourse specialists.

The study is grounded in mass media discourse – namely in the language of news reporting in three British daily newspapers – and it provides an analysis of the noun phrases in

the headlines, leads and body copy which refer to the main protagonists of the events – victims and killers respectively. However, before readers are acquainted with the research and a discussion of its results, they are gradually and systematically introduced to the field, with the author providing insights into a variety of current linguistic approaches and discussing a range of aspects that are pertinent to the extralinguistic context. This balanced and well-written account facilitates the reader's understanding of the detailed analysis which follows – even for less experienced scholars or for those experts whose specialization lies outside the scope of linguistics or discourse analysis. The author characterizes critical linguistics as well as critical discourse analysis (whose methodology she applies), and she gives a thorough description of an array of concepts used by contemporary grammarians to define the noun phrase and modes of its realization; it is Quirk's approach which she adopts in her analysis, as it corresponds best with the aims of the research.

The material surveyed includes four British newspapers: the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Mirror*, and the *Sun* – in other words two broadsheets and two tabloids. The selection of news articles consists exclusively of "reports on sentences and verdicts in murder cases involving children" (64), mostly involving cases in which children were the victims of their own parents or of juvenile delinquents. The composition of the corpus thus adds an extra layer to the research objective – an analysis of noun phrases representing the key actors of the events reported – inspiring three contrastive points of view: an exploration of contrasts between the ways in which reporters refer to victims and murderers, a comparison of the noun phrase realizations in broadsheets and tabloids, and finally a study of how the construction of the victim's and the killer's identity is developed in broadsheets and tabloids across the generic stages of newspaper reporting, i.e. from the introduction in the headline, through the specifying summary of the lead, to their presence in the body copy of the report. Whereas the first two contrasts receive close attention in the monograph, the last one remains on the margins, lacking a deeper discussion; this may be seen as an impetus for follow-up research elaborating on conventional features as well as individualizing elements in the structure of the genre under examination.

The relatively small size of the corpus – 10 reports, making up a total of approximately 25,000 words – is compensated by the use of two other corpora from two different research projects, which are brought into play as comparable research data. The comparison reveals some interesting distinctions: Jucker, surveying broadsheets and tabloids but including texts from a variety of thematically diverse sections containing more than 40,000 noun phrases, arrived at fairly similar quantitative results, indicating that simple noun phrases prevail over complex noun phrases. However, Biber's findings, based on a large corpus of almost 5,500,000 words, ignoring the differences between quality and popular papers as well as between sub-genres and topic areas, suggested the very opposite tendency, with modified noun phrases (about 60%) predominating over simple ones. As Jančaříková aptly observes, these contradictory results may indicate that the size of the corpus can influence the findings yielded by its analysis, at the same time documenting the inner diversity of news reporting discourse. The difference in findings may also be interpreted as an illustration of the fact that an analysis of an undifferentiated corpus (disregarding genres, topics and other contextual variables) may lead to a misrepresentation of the actual structure of its parts.

Taking advantage of the limited size of the corpus, the author offers a meticulous quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data. Even though the research objective focuses on noun phrases (exploring the choice of nouns and their modifications), the occurrence and distribution of pronominal reference is also taken into consideration and included in the quantifications.

The survey of the alternation of nouns and pronouns in reference to victims and killers demonstrates their important contribution to the construction of identity in the reports, showing the impact on the reader's stance towards the individuals concerned. In the representation of the victims the percentage of pronominal reference rises with the "tabloidization" of the paper, and throughout the corpus the pronominal reference to offenders exceeds the pronominal reference to victims; this eloquently complements the differentiation between the positions of the victims and killers that was shown by the nominal reference analysis. A comparison of the occurrence of pronouns in headlines, leads and body copy revealed the most conspicuous dissimilarities in the Sun: the emotionally loaded nominal expressions in the tabloid headline and in the lead are here in sharp contrast with the detachment of the frequent pronominal reference in the body copy, where emotionality is replaced with matter-of-fact brevity. Although registered and counted, pronominal references are not included in the qualitative analysis; their frequency is only explained in terms of their cohesive role. As the cohesion itself is created with equal effectiveness by lexical devices in the texts, this explanation would not sufficiently account for the frequency and distribution of pronominal references; the choice of cohesive elements is inevitably a stylistic choice.

The monograph is a valuable contribution offering an in-depth analysis of a number of essential aspects of mass media discourse and opening up new questions for further research. I heartily agree with Renata Jančaříková that "representation of people in newspaper discourse is a fascinating field of study" (153), and I am sure most readers of her book will feel likewise.

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News, Announcements

The National University of Ireland, Galway, looks forward to welcoming you to the 13th ESSE Conference in Galway, Ireland, Monday 22 August – Friday 26 August 2016.

Conference website: **http://www.esse2016.org**

DEADLINES

- For posters and individual papers at seminar and PhD students' sessions: **28 February 2016** (*new extended deadline*)
- Registration will begin on 1 March 2016

PROGRAMME FORMAT

SEMINARS

Proposals for seminars on specialised topics within our field should be submitted jointly by two ESSE members, preferably from two different National Associations. The degree of international appeal will be one of the selection criteria used by the APC. Proposals will not be entertained if they come from two people in the same institution. In exceptional cases, the APC may permit one of the two convenors not to be an ESSE member (e.g. because they come from outside Europe), if it is argued that their presence is especially important for the seminar. Seminar proposals must include the names, affiliations and e-mail addresses of the convenors and a 100-word description of the topic. Unlike round tables, seminars are not pre-constituted events and will therefore be included within the APC's future call for papers, although convenors may take an active role in approaching potential participants. The seminar format is intended to encourage lively participation on the part of both speakers and members of the audience. For this reason, papers will be orally presented in no longer than 15 minutes rather than read. Reduced versions of the papers will be circulated beforehand among participants. Further directions will follow in the call for papers.

NB: proposals for individual papers should NOT be submitted at this stage. The deadline for individual papers will be the 28 February 2016.

ROUND TABLES

The aim of round tables is to present topics and problems currently seen as shaping the nature of the discipline. At a round table a pre-constituted panel discusses issues of fairly general scholarly or professional interest in front of (and subsequently with) an audience. In other words, round tables are not sequences of papers, but debate sessions. Proposals should include a 100-word description of the topic and the names and affiliations of at least three participants (including the convenor), who must be drawn from more than one national association. The maximum number of speakers will be five.

LECTURES

A number of distinguished keynote speakers, including at least one representing each of the three main fields covered by ESSE (English Language, Literatures in English, and Cultural Studies), will give plenary lectures by direct invitation of the organisers. In addition, there will be approximately 12 parallel lectures given by ESSE members nominated by their National Associations. These parallel lectures are expected to have a wide appeal and to reflect recent developments in scholarship in one of the three areas mentioned above. They will be fifty minutes in length. National Associations should forward a description of their nominee's proposed topic together with a brief summary of his or her CV. Each national association can propose up to three lecturers, each of them in one of the three main fields mentioned above, so that the APC can have a wide range of options for the final selection. Please note that ESSE will not finance the parallel lecturers' costs of attending the conference, but that their conference fees will be waived.

POSTERS

Posters will be devoted to research-in-progress and project presentations. The aim is to provide additional opportunities for feedback and personal contacts. Further details will appear in a future issue of the Messenger and the deadline for posters will be the 31 January 2016.

SESSIONS FOR PhD STUDENTS

Young scholars who are writing their PhD theses in English studies may apply to make a brief presentation of their work-in-progress at one of three workshops in the fields of English Language, Literatures in English, and Cultural Studies respectively. These presentations should deal with the issues/hypotheses addressed in the thesis, the results so far obtained and above all the methodology applied, with the purpose of getting feedback from peers and established scholars in the field. Each workshop will be coordinated by two international experts, who will select from the applications and convene the corresponding sessions. Enquiries about this feature should be addressed to Professor J. Lachlan Mackenzie (VU University Amsterdam, NL and ILTEC, PT): <lachlan_mackenzie@hotmail.com>. Further details will appear in a future issue of *The Messenger*. The deadline for the submission of applications will be 28 February 2016.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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- Professor Lieven Buysse (University of Leuven, Belgium)
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- Dr Aoife Leahy (Independent Scholar, Ireland)
- Professor Biljana Mišić Ilić (University of Niš, Serbia)
- Professor Nóra Séllei (University of Debrecen, Hungary)
- Associate Professor Slávka Tomaščíková (P. J. Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia)

The address for...

- GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ESSE 2016 CONFERENCE
http://www.esse2016.org
info@esse2016.org

The European Association for American Studies is pleased to announce that its next biennial conference will take place in Constanta, Romania from 22nd to 25th April, 2016.

As President of the Romanian Association for American Studies (RAAS), it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2016 EAAS conference in Constanta, Romania.

Constanta is an ancient and beautiful resort city on the Black Sea coast, nowadays one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the country. A great attraction for the youth, in the summer it is a favorite holiday destination and for the rest of the year, a student metropolis. The ancient cultural tradition established in Tomis by Publius Ovidius Naso, the Roman poet exiled to the Greek-Roman city in the year 9 A.D., is continued today in the largest institution of higher education in the region, *Ovidius University*, the venue of the conference.

The easiest entry point for international visitors is Bucharest airport; accommodation and travel in Romania is not expensive and Constanta provides a great opportunity to add vacation and exploration time to your conference visit. This conference website will be expanded in due course to give full details of travel and accommodation options.

The EAAS officers and the local organizers are happy to announce the presence of three eminent key-note speakers who will focus on the latest developments in American Studies in their respective fields of expertise:

Rodica Mihaila

Professor Emeritus, University of Bucharest
Director, Fulbright Commission Bucharest

Garry Gerstle

Paul Mellon Professor of American Studies Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

Linda Cox

Executive Director, Bronx River Alliance/Bronx River Administrator, New York

On behalf of the EAAS and RAAS, I look forward to welcoming you in Constanta in April 2016.

Professor Adina Ciugureanu,
RAAS President
EAAS Treasurer
Professor of British and American Studies
Ovidius University Constanta, Romania




EAAS Conference Call for Proposals

Open Call for Presentations

To highlight the range and diversity of American Studies in Europe the EAAS is issuing an open call for proposals for the 2016 conference.

Proposers may wish to identify and explore long-standing, current and emerging intellectual debates in American Studies; to explore critically the varying practices and methodologies in American Studies; to bring to life current discussions and to posit potential paradigms in American Studies.

The various anniversaries of 2016 provide a variety of potential foundations for proposals.

- 150 years earlier marked the start of post-Civil War Reconstruction.
- The 1860s was the era of the dime novel, and Seeley Regester's *The Dead Letter*, credited by some as the first full-length American crime novel, appeared in 1866.
- 125 years will have passed since Thomas Edison patented the motion camera.
- 1916 saw the creation of the US National Parks Service;
- the opening of the nation's first birth control clinic;
- the election from Montana of Jeanette Rankin, the first woman to sit in the US House of Representatives;
- the release of D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*;
- the publication of Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems*.
- Shirley Jackson, Walker Percy, and Walter Cronkite were born in 1916.
- Henry James died in the same year.
- The National Organization for Women celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2016.
- Robert Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, its narrative echoing the American Revolution, also dates from 1966.
- *Star Trek* first reached TV screens in that same year.

Open Call for Presentations	Contemporary American Studies topics could include, for example: • discussion and exploration through various methodologies of the USA's strong, diverse and expanding literary canon; • the multi-dimensional character and seemingly endless inventiveness of America's cultural output; • the adaptability of American culture in an age offering radically new social media; • the heritage that might be left after the nation's first African-American presidency. **The EAAS conference encompasses topics across the disciplinary spectrum in American Studies, as well as interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the subject. The themes mentioned above are only indicative, and not in any way intended to be a definitive list.** **The conference content will be defined by the range and breadth of your suggestions and the conference committee looks forward to receiving many different and stimulating proposals.**
Format	The EAAS is moving away from its former Workshop format. Proposals are now invited that may use a variety of presentation styles. The conference structure is expected mainly to consist of traditional panel sessions with papers, and proposals for panels of papers are very welcome indeed, but submissions may also be proposed as roundtables, workshops, shop-talks, dialogues, interviews, performances, individual lecture presentations, readings or in other innovative formats. Proposals for individual papers are also welcome, and will be considered for inclusion in appropriate conference sessions. Anyone interested in putting together a panel would be welcome to use the EAAS elist to seek panellists. It is expected that the conference will be made up mainly of sessions lasting 90 minutes or 2 hours, but there may be opportunity for shorter sessions. All proposals are expected to include the opportunity for discussion.

Session chairs	Volunteers are invited to fill the role of chairs or facilitators for sessions where these positions are vacant. Volunteers to chair sessions should indicate their willingness in the submission form and include keywords outlining their areas of expertise. The conference committee will gratefully call on volunteers to add them to appropriate sessions where possible. EAAS has established the practice of publishing a small number of papers from each conference in an edited collection. The local conference committee looks forward to continuing this tradition, and may request session chairs to nominate work for consideration by the editors.
Selection	The EAAS is committed to a conference that reflects the broadest disciplinary range within American Studies, the multinational membership of the EAAS, and the international participation that its biennial meetings attract. The conference committee will take these aims into account in reviewing proposals and in constructing the conference programme.
	Small grants may be awarded at a later date by EAAS to help some presenters attend the conference. Such awards will be in an amount no more than €200, and eligibility to compete for support will be restricted to such categories as presenters who are members of the American Studies associations in low GDP countries, and postgraduate students without other financial support. Acceptance on to the EAAS conference programme does not imply the award of any financial support. ***http://eaas.eu/eaas-grants/eaas-conference-travel-grants***

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