MAPPING LITERARY SPACES: MEMORY, PLACE, LOCALITY

WYDAWNICTWO UNIWERSYTETU ŚLĄSKIEGO KATOWICE 2009

THEMES AND CONTEXTS

civilization and beyond

man and nature

urban space

displacement

mental / spiritual /
cultural / gendered space

metaphorics of space

identity

locality

memory

exploration

travel

tourism

MAPPING LITERARY SPACES: MEMORY, PLACE, LOCALITY

Editors of this book dedicate it
to the memory of Jerzy Stencel

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MAPPING LITERARY SPACES: MEMORY, PLACE, LOCALITY

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Reviewer
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LIST OF CONTENTS

PROBLEM LIST OF CONTENTS

CIVILIZATION AND BEYOND / MAN AND NATURE

Hebda
Kucała
Pochmara
Potvin
Wolny

GENDERED SPACE

Front
Pochmara
Smyczyńska

DISPLACEMENT

Bruś
Hebda
Kucała
Nowak
Popiel
Wolny

IDENTITY

Front
Kania
Nowak
Słonka
Wolny

LOCALITY

Bańka
Hebda
Nowak
Potvin

MENTAL / SPIRITUAL / CULTURAL SPACE

Nowak
Popiel
Słonka
Volceanov
Wolny

TRAVEL, TOURISM, EXPLORATION

Bruś
Guzowska
Rutkowska
Wolny

MEMORY / HISTORY

Kania
Nowak
Potvin
Rutkowska

METAPHORICS OF SPACE

Kania
Kucała
Popiel
Słonka

URBAN SPACE

Bańka
Nitka
Smyczyńska

PREFACE

Recently space has moved to the forefront of interdisciplinarily conceived humanities. After centuries of explorations of outer space, the eye of the scholar has fixed back on the mundane parameters of human existence, on the space that lies before the naked eye, at our fingertips, in the too-too-solid vicinity. With such groundbreaking ideas to lead the way as Heidegger's conception of being-in-the world, scholars have acquired a new boldness, which alone is needed to confront the nearest, the inner-worldly, rather than the Cartesian abstract extension. But then they soon realized that explorations of the close-at-hand has been conducted for ages, and have found their way into literary works. This realization has in turn led to another one, namely that the inner-worldly space is soaked with signification; that rather than being an unknown and hostile terrain, it lies there, soaked with identities — personal, national, ethnic — and with living memory; thus turning those literary works which have taken up the task of charting this territory, into living records of the lived time and space, of the lived chronotope. It is studies of such "abstract and brief chronicles of the time" that we offer the Readers for their kind perusal.

This volume is a post-conference collection of essays, and as such brings a yield of an effort of English-language scholars in, chiefly, Poland's literary departments determined mentally to wrestle with the many problems of human spaces as they have been wrought into the fine tissue of literary texts.

Due to the crisscrossing and overlapping thematic concerns and theoretical positions, we have decided not to use the usual division of a collection of essays into problem-sections. On the other hand, it has seemed advisable to give suggestions to the Readers as to what problems the individual texts have tackled. Hence, steering clear of both the Scylla of pigeonholing

and the Charybdis of indeterminacy, we have decided to complement the author-and-title list of contents with a descriptive-topical one, hoping that the bearings given will enable the Readers to come up with an itinerary of their own for their voyage across the pages of this volume. Hoping, further, that this voyage will not turn into sea-sick crossing and begging pardon with the Authors for taking these liberties with their names, which was only done for the joint sakes of utility and perspicacity, we bid this volume go forth into the world and prosper.

Wojciech Kalaga, *Jacek Mydla*

Ewelina Bańka
John Paul II University of Lublin

SHERMAN ALEXIE'S REPORT FROM AMERICAN INDIAN "URBANATION"

> American Indians have been in urban areas much longer than the mainstream society realizes, and they are thriving based on new values that very much resemble traditional ways.
>
> Donald L. Fixico, *American Indians and the Urban Experience*

Ever since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s advanced ethnic minorities, Native American literature has greatly enriched the American literary canon. The first wave of Native American writers devoted their works primarily to the theme of Indian struggle to choose between the white man's world and the reservation perceived as homeland and as the final place of one's identity quest. For many years reservation experience remained the focal theme of American Indian literature, despite the fact that Indian people have been systematically moving into urban areas ever since the time of the first relocation. The history of these less-known, urban American Indians has recently gained the attention it deserves. Within the past ten years, several Native American writers have devoted their works of fiction and nonfiction to the portrayal and analysis of American Indian urban experience. Most of these books are an attempt to understand and explain the reasons why so many Native Americans decide to make the city their home.

Recent fiction by a younger generation writer, Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian Sherman Alexie, explores the theme of urban Indian life and casts a new light on urban America as Indian country. Alexie's focus is on the second and the third generations of the relocated Indian people and on how the urban setting influences their sense of identity. Alexie demonstrates how, over the course of years, urban Indian people, gathering in places such as

bars and ghettos, have created pan-Indian urban communities which have become substitutes for reservation life. He also shows how urban Indians have adapted to the new conditions by combining indigenous traditions and values with elements of American culture (including pop culture) to perform their own, twenty-first-century ceremonies which help them define and manifest their contemporary sense of Indianness. This emergence of urban Indian communities together with hybridization of tradition through the adoption of elements of the mainstream culture are the evidence of American Indian people's gradual and successful acclimatization in modern urban America, calling for a reassessment of the "Native American idea of urbanness that [now, has come to — E.B.] express positive change and cultural vitality."[1]

The first-generation urban Indians were exposed to numerous negative effects of relocation. Not only did they have to fight with negative white-made stereotypes but also to confront the criticism of the reservation Indians who would often treat them as " 'fallen' or diminished Indians, 'sell-outs' who abandoned their tribal homelands."[2] Alienated, rejected and confused, many of them would slowly lose control over their lives. Some sank into white American culture, some went back to reservations; yet, there always remained a relatively numerous group of those who decided to strive for a better Indian life in the city. Although for a long time urban Indians were completely marginalized and devoid of public voice, they have endured by creating urban communities which provided them with a sense of belonging to a new "urban tribe."

Although contemporary urban Indians still have to face many problems characteristic of city life, such as poverty, racism, and alienation, they are gradually becoming a visible and vocal urban group. Paradoxically, it is this previously marginalized group that is becoming a public voice representing American Indian country, primarily because they are taking advantage of their direct access to urban America's facilities, especially to the mass media and the World Wide Web. As Stuart Hall claims:

> [M]arginality has become a powerful space. It is a space of weak power, but it is a space of power, nonetheless. Anybody who cares for what is creatively emergent in the contemporary arts will find that it has something to do with the languages of the margin, and this trend is increasing. New subjects, new genders, new ethnicities, new regions, and new

[1] Carol Miller, "Telling the Urban Indian: Representations in American Indian Fiction," in: *American Indians and the Urban Experience*, eds. Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters (New York: Altamira Press, 2001), p. 30.

[2] Terry Strauss and Debra Valentino, "Retribalization in Urban Indian Communities," in: *American Indians and the Urban Experience*, p. 89.

> communities — all hitherto excluded from the major forms of cultural representation, unable to locate themselves except as decentred or subaltern — have emerged and have acquired through struggle, sometimes in very marginalized ways, the means to speak for themselves for the first time. And the discourses of power in our society, the discourses of the dominant regimes, have been certainly threatened by this decentred cultural empowerment of the marginal and the local.[3]

This gradual "empowerment" of urban Indians has resulted in numerous reports on the contemporary urban American-Indian situation which, in turn, have made possible a better understanding of the ways in which Indian people preserve the traditions of their homelands and a higher awareness of the changes they have had to accept to survive in the city.

An interesting issue in this context is the transformation of the concept of tribalism in the urban setting and the sense of who belongs to "your own people," as well as the impact of this transformation on the process of the individual's self-identification. As Susan Lobo claims in her article "Is Urban a Person or a Place?" American-Indian city dwellers have had to modify their understanding of Indian identity as many of the reservation rules no longer applied in the new, urban environment.[4] In traditional homelands, the land and specific tribal ties play a vital role in the process of self-defining, whereas in the city the issues of tribalism and self-identification become problematic as Indian people are often isolated individuals or members of scattered multi-tribal groups living in concrete multiethnic ghettos, isolated suburbs, or white-dominated neighbourhoods. What aggravates the matter even further is the constantly rising number of intertribal and interracial marriages which have given rise to a generation of mixed-blood urban Indians. For this generation, understanding their culture(s) and developing a sense of belonging to "your people" have become crucial in the process of self-identification. Under the new circumstances, urban Indians have learned new ways to define their identity and maintain links with ancient traditions. They had to modify the concept of homeland so as to make it useful in the new environment. Thus a new understanding of Indian community has evolved. In Susan Lobo's definition it is "a widely scattered and frequently shifting network of relationships with locational nodes found in organizations and activity sites of special significance […] Community is not essentially a place, but rather it is character-

[3] Stewart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in: *Dangerous Liaisons. Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspective*, eds. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shoshat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), p. 183.

[4] Susan Lobo, "Is Urban a Person or a Place? Characteristics of Urban Indian Country," in: *American Indians and the Urban Experience*, pp. 73—84.

ized by relationships that bond people together and is therefore one of the ways that identity is established."[5] As Lobo explains further, in urban areas four factors have become central in the process of shaping Indian identity and providing individuals with a sense of belonging. These are: ancestry, appearance, cultural knowledge, and community participation. Therefore, gathering in "Indian-declared places," establishing Indian institutions, organizing public events such as powwows, where Indian ceremonies are performed, have all become important manifestations and celebrations of Indianness in the urban Indian country.

This pan-Indian character of contemporary urban Indianness has been criticized by some Indian activists as a diluting of tribal traditions. Nevertheless, pan-Indianism manifests the survival of urban Native Americans, who for years have resisted racism, oppression, their own people's criticism and entrapment in white man's stereotypes, but have finally come to their own to celebrate their sovereign communities in the twenty-first-century urban America. In the words of Diane Fraher:

> Cultural sovereignty is at the heart of identity. What it means to be an Indian must now be portable as contemporary Indian people move seamlessly between the two worlds of reservation and urban communities. Indian people are emerging from the invisibility of a romanticized past and mythological tipi and cowboy-killer culture confined to roaming the short grass prairie and uttering ecological and religious prophecies only. The voice that is emerging is a rich cultural mosaic that invites the listener in and shares a profoundly interesting and surprisingly universal story.[6]

This "rich cultural mosaic" of the contemporary Indian world is portrayed in Sherman Alexie's latest two short-story collections: *The Toughest Indian in the World* (2000) and *Ten Little Indians* (2003). Alexie provides the reader with life stories of a wide range of urban characters, creating in his books a specific urban multigenerational Indian saga. By writing of the lives of prosperous Indian politicians and businessmen, middle-class blue-collar workers and homeless street beggars, he lets the reader observe how urbanization shapes Indian experience in different environments and how it affects his characters' self-defining process. The leitmotif in many of these stories is the process of coming to an understanding of what Indianness is and developing a sense of belonging to the Indian world.

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[5] Lobo, "Is Urban a Person or a Place?," p. 70.

[6] Diane Fraher, "About American Indian Artists, Inc.," in: *Genocide of the Mind*: *New American Writing*, ed. MariJo Moore (New York: Thunder Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003), pp. 337—338.

A remarkable portrayal of this new urban Indian community is to be found in Alexie's story "What You Pawn I Will Redeem" from *Ten Little Indians* — a collection almost entirely devoted to urban Indian experience. The main protagonist Jackson Jackson — a homeless, yet "effective," as he describes himself, Spokane alcoholic — wanders the streets of Seattle in search of money, which he needs to buy back his grandmother's stolen powwow-dance regalia he accidentally discovered in a pawnbroker's shop. Through Jackson's "monomaniacal, twenty-four hour hapless pursuit of the money" the reader is given an insight into the community of homeless Indians inhabiting the streets of Seattle.[7] From the very beginning it is clear that what binds all of them together is a sense of being one tribe; it is not the person's tribal background that is important for them but the fact that one shares one's life with that person on that street.

At the very beginning of his story Jackson informs the reader: "Homeless Indians are everywhere in Seattle. We're common and boring, and you walk on by us, with maybe a look of anger or disgust or even sadness at the terrible fate of the noble savage. But we have dreams and families."[8] And it is not only the families left in the reservations that Jackson means but also new urban families which consist of homeless friends, people met in Indian-frequented bars, and Indians that share street life with each other. Although homeless, Jackson has his own Seattle family: "I wander the streets with a regular crew, my teammates, my defenders, and my posse. It's Rose of Sharon, Junior, and me. We matter to one another if we don't matter to anybody else."[9] This trio, together with other urban Indians make an intertribal community, where people come and go, and at least temporarily, look after one another in more or less intimate relationships. Although he may appear crazy and pathetic, Jackson is in fact a successful "family breadwinner." The minute he manages to scrounge some money from white or Indian people, he instantly spends almost all of it on some member of that extended family. He buys food for the homeless and hungry Aleuts, who in turn sing for him all the traditional grief songs. Later he spends eighty dollars on drinks for all the Indians at Big Hearts — "an all-Indian bar," and simply shares the money he wins at the lottery with a Korean girl he loves, telling her: "it's tribal. It's an Indian thing. When you win, you're supposed to share with your family."[10] Eventually he ends up at the pawnbroker's with only a five dollar bill; yet, to his surprise, he recovers the regalia from the white pawnbroker for free.

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[7] Daniel Grassian, *Understanding Sherman Alexie* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), p. 187.

[8] Sherman Alexie, *Ten Little Indians* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), p. 170.

[9] Alexie, *Ten Little Indians,* pp. 170—171.

[10] Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, p. 181.

However pitiable and sad these homeless urban Indians may seem to be, in Alexie's view they are not entirely homeless as they manage to create on the streets of Seattle "a setting that is 'like home' in the city."[11] They become an urban family because, as Jackson says: "Indians like to belong, so we all preten[d] to be cousins."[12]

Although Alexie devotes his recent fiction mainly to urban Indian experience, he does not ignore Native American traditions, showing how important they are in the process of self-defining. Yet he is also aware of the fact that Indian traditions practiced today in the urban context are rooted not only in old teachings but also in contemporary American culture. By modifying the traditional ceremonies, contemporary urban Indians find ways to (re)create and perform new ones and thereby to manifest their Indianness in the twenty-first century.

Jackson Jackson's mission to recover the stolen fancydancing regalia ends with a ritual meant to bring his grandmother's spirit back to life. He starts his quest for money believing in the heroic character of his mission, the understanding of which links him with his ancestors. When he eventually gets the regalia back for free, he performs his own ritual of fancydancing in his grandmother's regalia, which he believes reunites him with the past and, at the same time, brings the past into the present. Through the imaginary dance with his grandmother, Jackson not only honours his ancestors but also celebrates his present life and the lives of all the good people, white or Indian, who helped him to accomplish his mission.

In "Do Not Go Gentle," the shortest story from the *Ten Little Indians* collection, Alexie juxtaposes traditional Indian ways with modern popular culture and the way in which they affect Indian people. "Do Not Go Gentle" is a story of a healing ceremony performed at Seattle Children's Hospital by a young Indian couple to bring their comatose child back to life. The performance, although very traditional in its essentials, seems irrational in the modern hospital environment. It is also likely to strike the reader as unnecessarily obscene, as the object used to perform the healing ritual over little Baby X, as his parents call him, is "Chocolate Thunder" — a vibrator bought by the father who "feeling religious about [his — E.B.] mission" to save his son, mistakenly wanders in a sex-toy store.[13] At first, Alexie's story of the parents waving the vibrator around the sick child's bed, casting spells with its help, and using it as a drumstick to accompany the healing songs, may be read as ridiculing indigenous traditions. Yet in this somewhat bizarre way Alexie argues that for urban Indian people American popular culture can be as spiritual as old Indian ways, and that it plays a vital role in the

[11] Lobo, "Is Urban a Person or a Place?," p. 73.
[12] Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, p. 182.
[13] Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, p. 99.

manifestation of contemporary Indianness. As the young Indian father says: "We humans are too simpleminded. We all like to think each person, place, or thing is only itself. A vibrator is a vibrator is a vibrator, right? But that's not true at all. Everything is stuffed to the brim with ideas and love and hope and magic and dreams."[14] This twenty-first-century "Chocolate Thunder toy" becomes a shamanic artefact, symbolizing the act of procreation which, as the young Indian couple and all the parents in the hospital ward believe, can overpower death: "It was sex that made our dying babies, and here was a huge old piece of buzzing sex I was trying to cast spells with […]. Maybe it was stupid and useless, but we all were sick and tired of waiting for our babies to die."[15] By staging such a highly peculiar healing ceremony (which, remarkably, brings Baby X back to life) Alexie suggests that American Indians have been reinterpreting their traditions and adopting them to the new cultural circumstances where people tend to listen more attentively to Oprah Winfrey than to traditional teachings. After all, it is not an Indian song the father hears in his head at the revelatory moment of discovering the "miracle vibrator" but "that big old music from that *2001*: *Space Odyssey* movie."[16]

By saving their relatives through modernized rituals, Jackson Jackson and young Indian parents become modern heroes — figures which the contemporary Indian world is very much in need of. In his typical, provocative way Alexie argues that contemporary Native America needs new Indian heroes who would reinterpret old traditions and revitalize the concept of Indianness. His contemporary "warriors" empowered by their hybridized ceremonies become, as Joseph Campbell claims, "secondary heroes." As Campbell argues, "[t]here is a kind of secondary hero to revitalize the tradition. This hero interprets the tradition and makes it valid as a living experience today instead of a lot of outdated clichés."[17] In his two collections Alexie presents a gallery of such heroes: a drunken Jackson, who rescues from a pawnshop his family fancydancing regalia, a young Indian couple desperate to save their child, Frank Snake Church, a basketball player, Richard, an affluent lawyer, and Estelle Walks Above, an academic professor and a fervent feminist. Living by modern Indian values in the urban America of today, these new heroes epitomize contemporary Native American experience.

Through his portrayal of urban Indian life Alexie becomes a witness to the ongoing creation of American Indian urban nation which, shaped by

[14] Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, p. 101.

[15] Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, p. 100.

[16] Alexie, *Ten Little Indians*, p. 100.

[17] Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, ed. Betty Sue Flowers (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 141.

new circumstances of the urban setting, is rethinking and reinterpreting ancient traditions and construing the meaning of Indianness. At the same time, Alexie is well aware of the fact that there are more and more Indian city dwellers who gradually lose contact with their reservation roots, and who consciously abandon traditions thus sinking into the American "melting pot," and that a whole generation of urban Indians has emerged for whom reservation life and tribal traditions are only old superstitions, for which there is no place in modern urban reality.

Alexie's fiction also proves that, despite using the language of the dominant culture, modern Native American storytellers retain links with old Indian traditions, celebrating contemporary Indian values. As Carol Miller puts it:

> In addition to providing significant information about a consequential and ongoing Native American diaspora essentially ignored by mainstream white society, narratives about urban America as Indian country also reinforce the link between contemporary and ancestral storytelling traditions. And in doing so, they provide an important medium not only for sustaining culture but for creating a significant illustrative resource about the pragmatic business of "going along" in the world, just as the old stories always have done. Imaginative print-language "tellings" that explore intersections of Indianness and urbanization share the serious functionality of traditional Native storytelling, and functionality made even more important because of five hundred years of disruptions.[18]

Thanks to the rising number of writers and sociologists who explore and report on contemporary urban Indian experience, urban Indians are becoming an increasingly powerful group. In the fiction of such leading authors as Sherman Alexie, the reader can witness the process of American Indians' successful acclimatization in the urban setting. This process, as Carol Miller suggests, can be called a "(re)taking [of] place" by urban Native Americans in the city — "a double breaking out — both from federally designated boundaries historically intended to isolate and contain Native people and from an equally pervasive confinement within the anachronistic fantasy-wilderness of the white imagination."[19] In his recent fiction Sherman Alexie shows how in contemporary America Native American people celebrate their ethnicity "through remembrance, adaptation, and recreation."[20]

[18] Miller, "Telling the Urban Indian," p. 30.

[19] Miller, "Telling the Urban Indian," p. 29.

[20] Patricia Riley, "The Mixed Blood Writer as Interpreter and Mythmaker," in: *Mixed Race Literature*, ed. Jonathan Brennan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 67.

Ewelina Bańka

Raport Shermana Alexiego z amerykańsko-indiańskiej „urbaNacji"

Streszczenie

Od zarania działalności organizacji na rzecz obrony praw człowieka, Civil Rights Movement, w latach sześćdziesiątych XX wieku mniejszości narodowe Indian amerykańskich znacznie wzbogaciły kanon literatury amerykańskiej. Dzieła reprezentujące pierwszą falę literatury indiańskiej poświęcone były głównie tematowi poszukiwania tożsamości, z wyeksponowaną rolą rezerwatu jako celu zwieńczającego te poszukiwania. Przez wiele lat doświadczenia związane z rezerwatem były dominującym tematem w literaturze Indian amerykańskich. Od niedawna proza literacka przedstawiciela młodszego pokolenia, Shermana Alexiego, podejmuje temat miejskich doświadczeń Indian, co pozwala ukazać w nowym świetle procesy kształtowania się literatury etnicznej. W jednym z najnowszych zbiorów opowiadań Alexie koncentruje się na tym, jak miasto wpływa na proces poszukiwania tożsamości przez bohaterów, którzy należą do drugiego lub trzeciego pokolenia przemieszczonych plemion. Alexie pokazuje, jak współcześni bohaterowie ciągle określają i redefiniują swoje miejsce w miejskiej Ameryce. Niektórzy stopniowo integrują się z kulturą białych, podczas gdy inni rozpaczliwie poszukują w mieście zastępnika rezerwatu. Alexiego eksploracja życia miejskiego w kontekście poszukiwania przez Indian tożsamości zachęca do stawiania wielu istotnych pytań dotyczących współczesnego życia Indian. Artykuł pokazuje, jak takie miejsca, jak bary i getta, stają się wszechindiańskimi miejskimi rezerwatami, jak współcześni miejscy Indianie łączą plemienne tradycje z głównym nurtem kultury amerykańskiej w celu kultywowania własnych rytuałów należących już do nowego stulecia.

Ewelina Bańka

Sherman Alexies Bericht aus amerikanisch-indianischer „UrbaNation"

Zusammenfassung

Seitdem die zugunsten der Menschenrechteverteidigung handelnde Organisation Civil Rights Movements in den 60er Jahren mit ihrer Tätigkeit angefangen hatte, haben nationale Minderheiten der amerikanischen Indianer den amerikanischen Literaturkanon erheblich bereichert. Die die erste Welle der Indianerliteratur vertretenden Werke waren hauptsächlich der Suche nach einer Identität gewidmet, wobei als Ziel der Suche meistens das Reservat hervorgehoben war. Viele Jahre hindurch waren die mit dem Reservatleben verbundenen Erfahrungen zum häufigsten Thema der von amerikanischen Indianern geschaffenen Werke. Seit kurzem greift der Vertreter der jüngeren Generation der Indianerschriftsteller, Sherman Alexie, auf das Thema des Stadtlebens der Indianer, was die Entstehung der ethnischen Literatur in einem neuen Lichte erscheinen lässt. In einer seiner neuesten Erzählungssammlungen konzentriert er sich auf die Frage, inwieweit eine Stadt die der zweiten oder dritten Generation der umgesiedelten Stämme angehörenden Helden in ihrer Suche nach Identität beeinflussen kann. Alexie zeigt, wie sich die in der Gegenwart lebenden Helden ständig bemühen, ihre Stelle in städtischem Amerika von neuem zu bestimmen. Einige von ihnen integrieren sich allmählich mit der Kultur der Weißen, während die anderen verzweifelt in

der Stadt nach einem Ersatz ihres Reservates suchen. Seine Exploration des Stadtlebens im Kontext der Suche nach Identität ermuntert zu Überlegungen über das gegenwärtige Leben der Indianer. Im vorliegenden Artikel wird gezeigt, auf welche Weise solche Orte, wie Bars und Ghettos zu allindianer Stadtreservaten werden, und die heute lebenden Stadtindianer ihre Stammestraditionen mit dem Hauptstrom der amerikanischen Kultur zu verbinden versuchen, um die schon dem neuen Jahrhundert angehörenden, eigenen Bräuche zu pflegen.

Teresa Bruś
Wrocław University

TOURIST IN HIS OWN COUNTRY
LOUIS MACNEICE AND IRELAND

> For nothing is more proud than humbly to accept
> And without soaring or swerving win by ignoring
> The endlessly curving sea and so come to one's home.
> And so come to one's peace while the yellow waves are roaring.
>
> Louis MacNeice, "Ode"

I shall introduce Louis MacNeice as a writer for whom home became away. MacNeice belongs nowhere, not only by his own choice but also by the choice of his critics, who either try to place his writings in the Irish tradition (Terence Brown) or in the Northern Irish scene — denied by Darek Mahon any real being. By some the poet's presence is felt in in-between places. Seamus Heaney proposes to locate MacNeice in the sphere of the visionary Ireland of five towers. "Anthologies of Irish (or Anglo-Irish) poetry," says McDonald, "have always given MacNeice a grudging welcome, if they let him in at all."[1] Some English commentators acknowledge the fact that MacNeice was, after all, in his words, "educated and domiciled in England,"[2] but few feel they should accept him easily in the English literary scene.[3] Notwithstanding recent "Irish accounts of MacNeice when they have come at all," [4] they tend to make clear his separation from the country

[1] Peter McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*: *The Poet in His Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 5.

[2] Louis MacNeice, "Autumn Journal," in: Louis MacNeice, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 132.

[3] Roy McFadden, the Belfast poet, is most determined not to grant MacNeice allegiance to any place.

[4] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 5.

a separation which is yet a "vital conditioning factor in both the work and its value." [5]

As a "migrating bird" with no "perpetual dear place,"[6] Louis MacNeice should attract more critical attention, if not for the sake of our understanding what such a curiously hyphenated poet with notorious predilection for roving in the anomalous world of childhood Ireland gains by becoming, in his words, one of her "holiday visitors."[7] For a poet is allowed to be a tourist, as MacNeice repeatedly insists in his autobiography *The Strings Are False* (1965) and in such powerfully sceptical autobiographical poems as "Autumn Journal" (1939), "The Closing Album" (1939), and "Valediction" (1934).

"*Home* is a point which, even if access to it is difficult or impossible, acts as a kind of centre of gravity for MacNeice's imagination […], the imperative of 'Go back to where you came from' is important, pushing towards *home* (however hostile *home* may be) as opposed to being 'an addict to oblivion.' "[8] MacNeice's relation with Ireland is a life-long affair. Not only does *she* structure his fundamental strata of self, as often mentioned, but she is his artistic obsession, embodiment of creative struggles. It will not come as a surprise to discover that the poet negotiated his "various and conflicting" attitudes to and memories of Ireland in adequately various modes. Yet in the difficult 1930s, it is the tourist's eye-view which he finds to be most operative and which he later exchanges, especially under the pressure of international affairs, for more parabolic modes of expression.

Being a tourist implies the choice of a vantage point; it implies a spectatorial position from which a tourist will try to negotiate his vision of a crisis in reality. For tourism, as Kaplan explains, is a way of confirming reality for one who experiences the inauthenticity of the present moment.[9] Unlike modernist "houseless intel lectuals," MacNeice's insights are created not through distanciation but through attempted physical proximity to the familiar, by attempts to capture and affirm it. Also unlike many modernists he looks at home, not away from it, for markers of authenticity. As it is often the case with MacNeice, the proximity is paradoxical. When he visits Ireland, "insulated with comfort and private memories,"[10] he never connects with her and her time for he is there as if, in his words "suspended in a world without progress,"[11] "ousted," and "disfrenchized."[12]

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[5] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 5.

[6] Jon Stallworthy, "Irish Fathers and Sons," *Bullan*, Vol. 6 (1995), pp. 1—15.

[7] Louis MacNeice, "Valediction," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 53.

[8] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 71.

[9] Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Trave*: *Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 60.

[10] Louis MacNeice, *Zoo* (London: William Brendon and Son, 1938), p. 84.

[11] MacNeice, *Zoo*, p. 83.

[12] Louis MacNeice, "Western Landscape," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 257.

Writing on the tourist gaze John Urry suggests that it is directed to features of "landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary"[13] and require different social and cultural "patterning."[14] So the commitment to be a tourist in one's own country entails not only the anticipation of pleasure or the anticipation of involvement of the senses other than those usually applied.[15] Hence, perhaps, the plethora of visual imagery, but also a clear presence of what McDonald identifies as a "loaded purpose."[16] It is there, says McDonald, "to force rather than discover a division of allegiance within the self."[17] It will become clear that such exilic aesthetics is a failed removal from the political and the ethical. For MacNeice goes back to Ireland, "my Ireland," only to discover that Ireland, as any place is "our bridgeheads into reality / But also its concealment!"[18] Yet, significantly, it is a place where "the different uses of time, place, and belonging can come into an antinomical relationship."[19] It may be further extrapolated that being a visitor or a tourist in Ireland, as the fellow Irishman Neil Corcoran proposes, is the poet's "prelude to being a visitor or tourist in the world."[20] With MacNeice we need to be prepared to assume that the prismatic Ireland, a seductive but imagistic plenitude of his reportages, does not necessarily enhance the readability of the multifaceted home of the poet-tourist. His "away" is provisional and touristy.

This paper proposes an examination of a poetic way of mapping a troubled private place, a way which is provocatively steeped in circumstances of photography. It is a part of a larger project dedicated to tracing the connections between literature and photography in the British culture of the thirties.

It needs to be stressed that the poet-tourist readily engages with photographic terms of reference. This complex strategy is successively employed by him to singularize and to intensify his responses to questions of history, temporality, and the self. It surfaces in the age of a strong interlacing of photography and literature. Jefferson Hunter goes as far as to claim that we "can speak of a single style, to which photographers and writers usually aspired."[21] Often defined as a visual documentary, it is characterized

[13] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 3.

[14] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p. 3.

[15] Features suggested by Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p. 3.

[16] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 208.

[17] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 209.

[18] MacNeice, "Carrick Revisited," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 224.

[19] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 222.

[20] Neil Corcoran, "Varieties of Parable: Louis MacNeice and Edwin Muir," in: Neil Corcoran, *English Poetry Since 1940* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 17.

[21] Jefferson Hunter, *Image and World*: *The Interaction of Twentieth-Century Photographs and Texts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 21.

as a "single, particularized, low-key, realistic, and morally serious style"[22] reverberating in the history of both literature and photography. John Berger believes that in the thirties photography was still believed to be "the most natural" and "transparent" medium offering direct access to the real. Further, Berger claims that the unprecedented freedom of photography corresponded with the explosion of the private into the public.[23] "The war came down on us here."[24] The spacial reference, so fundamental to photography, is in MacNeice always culturally infected, is at the crossroads of the private and the public.

Even though like Yeats, MacNeice would like to share in "the glamour of minorities," he can never resolve the "it is easy," "it is difficult to be Irish" antinomy. In *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats* and in the "Prologue" to the unpublished *The Character of Ireland* he points to Irish "half envious contempt for England," "the identification of Ireland with the spirit and of England with crass materialism," "callous indifference to those outside the gate," "clannish obsession with one's own family," "constant desire to show off," and violence[25] — characteristics which not surprisingly map strong spiritual and cultural tensions within Ireland itself. The poet will contradict them with satirical claims to Irish glamour. It is to be found in the squalor of her cities and in the range of her shared imagination in "our sanctity, our heroism and our sterile want."[26] Problems with Ireland are magnified when we try to establish MacNeice's attitude to his nationality, his tyrannical Northern Irish connection. In Terence Brown's frequently quoted phrase, MacNeice's household, anomalously operating in Northern Ireland, produced spiritual hyphenation. "We were in our minds," says MacNeice's sister, a "West of Ireland family exiled from our homeland."[27] Put in other words perhaps, "for the young MacNeice, the emotional conflict is not [so much — T.B.] between Ireland and England but between Connemara and Carrickfergus, one way of being Irish and another"[28]. MacNeice's departures and alienation stem from the "split people" hyphenated and always dialectically tense life. Thus at the bottom of MacNeice's inheritance is a deep crisis of identity as well as an always displaced self.

Seamus Heaney diagnoses MacNeice's poetic engagement with Ireland by dissecting his *bifocal* point of view. Heaney says that on the one hand

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[22] Hunter, *Image and World*, p. 21.

[23] John Berger, "Understanding a Photograph," in: John Berger, *The Look of Things* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), p. 291.

[24] Louis MacNeice, "The Closing Album," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 166.

[25] Louis MacNeice, *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941).

[26] Louis MacNeice, "Valediction," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 53.

[27] Elizabeth Nicholson, "Trees Were Green," in: *Time Was Away*: *The World of Louis MacNeice*, eds. Terence Brown and Alec Reid (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1974), p. 14.

[28] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 204.

MacNeice sets to "vindicate" the physicality of Ireland — the aspect which assures certain continuity, while on the other hand the land itself becomes a "delusion" a sort of *spectacle* orchestrated "to outface the predatory circumstances." MacNeice's bifocal vision will issue from him knowing where he stands as well as watching himself take his stand. [29]

The poet's travels to Ireland are tourist in nature, short-term and pleasant. They are leisure activities of a determined outsider, detached journalist; "it is not unpoetic," he reminds us, "to be exact recorder" and to assume that the "poet's business is realism."[30] The nature of the detachment here is significant as MacNeice remains physically and geographically detached from Ireland most of his time. Yet, his returns are always marked by negotiations with loss (it is perhaps the reverse of a tourist experience). For, as McDonald postulates: "Ireland always functions to some extent as a parental presence in his work, in one way lost (the mother), and in another partially rejected."[31] Reasserting his freedom from such fundamental attachment, the poet moves about his destination "just seeing things," which he recalls is a pure "tourist activity." The chosen examples will throw some light on the specificity of the MacNeicean gaze. It betrays his accumulative imagination, his predilection to operate in pictures, in fragmented visual representations excluding interest in any momentous facts or Yeatsian hailstorm of data. Such practice aims to "poise" the "toppling hour" of the real, to interrupt it, and freeze it. It is a conscious aesthetic decision.

Ireland's natural beauty is deceptive. MacNeice writes: "Irish landscape is capable of pantomimic transformation scenes; one moment it will be desolate, dead, unrelieved monotone, the next it will be an undescribably shifting pattern of prismatic light. The light effects of Ireland make other landscapes seem stodgy; on the other hand, few countries can produce anything more depressing than Ireland in her grey moments.[32] We should acknowledge MacNeicean attention to the unstable character of her nature. As for ancient Greeks so for MacNeice, their "impresario," nature, is self-moving. It is not stodgy but in its own way it is participating in the life process. The poet believes in nature's "intellectual participation in the activity of the world's 'mind' " — not less than in its material participation. The spontaneous moving adds to prismatic attractiveness, but as MacNeice says in "Valediction," the prism performs a sort of "trick Beauty." Thus as a holiday visitor, MacNeice does not mind bathing his eyes in such illusive beauty. The journalist in him, however, is also determined to discern some markers of the authentic

[29] Seamus Heaney, "The Sense of Place," in: Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations*: *Selected Prose 1968—1978* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), p. 147.

[30] MacNeice, *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*, p. 6.

[31] McDonald, *Louis MacNeice*, p. 228.

[32] MacNeice, *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*, p. 44.

or special in what he sees — a photographic technique relying on our power to visualize.

"The Closing Album," written in the trying time between August and September 1939, reveals the drafting structure of the poet's memories modelled on a photographic album. It is a very personal album with private photographs which, unlike public ones, contribute, according to John Berger, to *living* memory, memory which assures continuity.[33] The poet tries to extend it through the panoramic perspective made obvious in the titles of its sections, "Dublin," "Cushendun," "Sligo and Mayo," "Galway," and "V," as well as through the temporal framework encompassing its broken narrative. "The war came down on us here" – thus MacNeice resolutely affirms the factual importance of his choice of perspective. Recollecting the memories of the presence in these familiar childhood places mitigates the anxiety of the approaching crisis. A personal reading of the images of Ireland on the brink of WWII, in a way de-realizes them. It is in a sense an unavoidable fate of documentary recording which, representing "the moment of its making," at the same time takes its object out of history,[34] renders the photographer as documentarian obsolete. In the last section of "The Closing Album" despite the approaching war, the poet notes that the sea nevertheless "maintains its turbulance" thus perhaps foregrounding the expectation of an experience beyond of the visual. Also, as a specific exercise in introspection, reading an album which gets us close to interiority, as Roland Barthes says, "without yielding intimacy" creates an air of "mystery."[35] And reality created by images becomes "atomic, manageable, and opaque."[36] Within the album framework it is also uneasily immobile and material.

"The Closing Album" is a set of visual images, metaphorical photographs, procured to attempt also some form of aesthetic connection, an effective reintegration; the dissociated and fractured parental Ireland is brought together — Dublin and Cushendun, Cushendun and Sligo, as is the old and the present self — all with a strong realization of the public effect of such a project. By recollecting images of places, (not particular people or particular moments), by naming these places and recollecting their physical profile, the poet hopes to retain their immediacy and their materiality.

Barthes reminds us that photographic images preserve what is lost. Albums are Heideggerian shelters: "things of this sort," says Martin Heidegger in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," are "*housings*; though not necessarily

[33] John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), p. 60.

[34] After Graham Clarke, *The Photograph*: *Oxford History of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[35] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage International, 1993), p. 84.

[36] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p. 11.

dwelling-houses of the narrower sense."[37] MacNeice is longing to preserve these images, to save them. And the way he understands saving is close to Heideggerian presencing. "Saving," says Heidegger, "does not only snatch something from a danger. To save really means to set something free into its own presencing."[38]

The content of the album discloses images of the domestic sphere. In "Cushendun" (II) the self recourses to the pleasant, candid images of domestic space: "[…] brass lamps and copper jugs / And home-made bread," "And a walled garden with plums on the wall." They anchor time and space, thus acquiring unexpected significance. Such a sublimated domestic frame needs to be further analysed in a wider aesthetic, cultural, and social context.

This rustic landscape is seen by a privileged observer, invariably the outsider. Nature in MacNeice is fenced off with a barrier, as in "Cushendun" where we have some "curtain drawn against the winds and waves." Joseph Hillis Miller commenting on Heidegger explains that a barrier does not need to mean closure, on the contrary, it may be a promise of a different presence. "A boundary is not at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing."[39] The poet is employing his touristic optics to initiate it.

For the self the natural environment of Ireland, inhumane, irrational, and atemporal is not habitable, and yet it is visitable. Therefore, perhaps, MacNeice's prismatic Ireland is such an amalgam of visual images constructed in a familiar frame of the picturesque. While Raymond Williams would consider the practice to be informed by a deep desire for stability employed to avoid the deep contradictions of the actual,[40] Deborah Bright suspects there to be more than a need for a "pastoral salve to lull us back to some primordial sense of our insignificance." [41] She suspects that the images of landscape should not be even regarded as "the loci of our modernist pleasure of arrangements of material objects" but rather that they are informed by some difficult personally inexpressive politics.[42]

"Country," explains Williams "as a word is derived from contra (against, opposite) and has the original sense of land spread out over against the

[37] Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), p. 158.

[38] Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 150.

[39] Joseph Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 241.

[40] Raymond Williams, *The City and the Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 45.

[41] Deborah Bright, "Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men: An Inquiry into the Cultural Meanings of Landscape Photography," in: *The Contexts of Meaning*: *Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), p. 125.

[42] Bright, "Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men," p. 125.

observer."[43] The Irish land in "The Closing Album" is depopulated and free from real identifications. Instead, it is written and manipulated with light. The poet depicts the changes of light thus: "all night the bay is plashing and the Moon / Marks the break of the waves," the changes of the sky: "and the shadows of clouds on the mountains moving / Like browsing cattle at ease." This semi-Arcadian viewing is interrupted by sudden drops of dark blotches perhaps carrying with them, in Williams's words, seeds of tensions resulting from "other kinds of experience," of "pleasure with loss."[44]

The landscape is structured rhythmically; such a repetitive rhythm of accumulation interested the most influential photography school of Neue Sachlichkeit. There are fragments here; there are very few organic connections. Images are manipulations of light.

Nothing looks at us from this landscape: "there were turkeys / Gobbling under sycamore trees," "heifers sitting in farmyard mud / And hydrangeas and the falling ear-rings." Animals are passive beings and, as expressed in a different poem "doomed to live."[45] They belong to a distinctive organic order. To use Berger's remark on observed animals, in no way do they "chart the experience of the world." What's more, in no way do they "positively" or "negatively" confirm man.[46] They are looked at and their unrelatedness further emphasizes the isolation of the self and the illusion of understanding, for the rich flora in the poems "deluges the sight."

Against such delusive background the poet sighs: "What a place to talk of War." There is no talking recorded, no naming of anxieties; there is only looking, a mere semblance of participation.

Dublin and Galway, like the Irish countryside, are flitting. Their physicality perceived at street level, with an optics of an informed tourist which is blurred with frequent referencing to mist and veils of rain, of negation rather than affirmation. They remind one of Atget's photographs of seedy Paris and create a sense of menace and uneasy presence. They are grey yet running into flower.

In "V," the closing poem of the album written after the war was proclaimed, the poet will extend his fear and hope of testing the referentiality of possible other places; "Should the atlas still be full of the maps of countries / We never shall see again?" Place is instrumental for MacNeice's identity. Like an experienced tourist, he always lives in anticipation of further possibilities of observing, of experiencing the momentary and paradoxical

[43] Williams, *The City and the Country*, p. 24.
[44] Williams, *The City and the Country*, p. 18.
[45] Louis MacNeice, "Dogs in the Park," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 496.
[46] John Berger, "Why Look at Animals," in: Berger, *About Looking*, p. 5.

event of his multiple self divided and integrated, of what he calls a "twitter of inconsequent vitality."

An examination of the use of photographic metaphors and the focus on the familiar reveals the difficult dissonance of the reality of MacNeice's "home."

> In my childhood trees were green
> And there was plenty to be seen.[47]

In his study of childhood patterns in autobiography *When the Grass Was Taller,* Richard Nelson Coe proposes a category of *trivia* to name these elements which in the autobiographical narrative constitute "the authenticity of the small world," and the category of *curiosa* for these objects which link the same world with the greater alien world of adults.[48] Definitely MacNeice's Ireland is visually complex. In his autobiographical poems, the poet sustains a view that: "Ireland is / A gallery of fake tapestries." [49] What's more, he first displays and then performs a decisive demolition gesture towards those received objects, myths of Irish authenticity, so often disseminated by tourism industry. He renounces these *curiosa,* renounces all her sham artefacts, her "sham Celtic crosses," "falsetto antiquities," and "each imposture." "On a cardboard lid I saw when I was four / Was the trade-mark of a hound and a round tower, / And that was Irish glamour"[50] — it is one of those memories which he later will typify as useless. Much space dedicated to the *curiosa* nevertheless is the poet-tourist's acknowledgement of this level of perception which he associates with various forms of playing. For Ireland, he says, is "a tiny stage."[51]

If we are to believe Terry Eagleton, the Irish "are notorious for their lack of visual sense. […] Traditionally […] they were too poverty-stricken to bother their heads about beauty. Landscapes were for sowing with potatoes, not for staring at."[52] From MacNeice's, no doubt, privileged vantage point, the immediate unattractiveness of Irish townscape is more than apparent. Irish cities are built on "reclaimed mud," "covered with grime"; Belfast, most strikingly, emerges as a sort of nightmare for any potential tourist if not through its "streetcars like catafalques" and "glimmers of spectral blue."[53]

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[47] MacNeice, "Autobiography," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 183.

[48] Richard Nelson Coe, *When the Grass Was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 240.

[49] MacNeice, "Valediction," pp. 52.

[50] MacNeice, "Valediction," pp. 53—54.

[51] MacNeice, "Autumn Journal," p. 133.

[52] Terry Eagleton, *The Truth about the Irish* (Dublin: New Island Books, 2002), p. 22.

[53] MacNeice, "Valediction," p. 52.

Ireland is a place where "each rich family boasts a sagging tennis-net / On a spongy lawn beside a ripping shrubbery."[54] Such images are experienced by the visitor and cleverly objectified along those reportorial ones which concern the sad social and historical dimensions of the Irish history – as he calls them "the blots on the page" that "cannot be covered with shamrock."

What the poet, however, does not want to cover, what he concentrates his visualizing powers on is the illusive, prismatic beauty of Ireland. In the recollections which he performs, the poet actually falls for this prismatic beauty, the much desired "tangents away from reality." The beauty is pictorial, written with light, with plants, and with animals. MacNeice begins and concludes his recollections of Ireland with pastoral scenes of lush vegetation. But looking at plants and animals is irresponsible. Animals always look sideways, they do not confirm us in their way of looking.[55] Says MacNeice: "When I look at an animal […] cannot communicate with him, do not envy him": and laments: "How few humans does one meet on these terms."[56]

This is his response to Irish irresolvable antitheses and a response to his personal anxieties; and it is what deluges the sight but also precludes vision. We need to remember that "no sign / Remains of face or feet when visitors have gone home."[57] MacNeice lost his.

Barthes directly expresses the paradox of photography when he writes that "by attesting that the object has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive, because of that delusion which makes us attribute to Reality an absolutely superior, somehow eternal value; but by shifting this reality to the past ('this-has-been'), the photograph suggests that it is already dead."[58] The Ireland from "The Closing Album" belongs, says the poet in Part V, to "another world." Yet its visitor, the poet, insists on having been there *in person*. "Photography […]," Barthes reminds us, "began, historically, as an art of the Person: of identity, of civil status, of what we might call, in all senses of the term, the body's *formality*."[59]

[54] MacNeice, "Autumn Journal," p. 133.
[55] Berger, "Why Look at Animals," p. 28.
[56] MacNeice, *Zoo,* p. 67.
[57] Louis MacNeice, "The Strand," in: MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, p. 226.
[58] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 79.
[59] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 79.

Teresa Bruś

Turysta we własnym kraju. Louis MacNeice i Irlandia

Streszczenie

Czytając poezje Louisa MacNeice'a (1907—1963), poznajemy poetę uzależnionego od powrotów do rodzinnej Irlandii i konsekwentnie budującego turystyczną optykę patrzenia w stosunku do dobrze znanych miejsc i przestrzeni. Irlandia MacNeice'a przyciąga, pozwala urzeczywistniać wewnętrzne, skłócone wymiary „ja". Przeciwnie do bezdomnych intelektualistów epoki modernizmu, poeta znajduje w „domu" znamiona autentyczności, bliskość jednak paradoksalnie zapowiada kolejne oddalenia. Za Corcoranem możemy powtórzyć, że MacNeice'a wakacyjne przyglądania się Irlandii stanowią preludium do przyglądania się światu. MacNeice w takich utworach, jak „The Closing Album" zamyka w formie metaforycznych zdjęć doświadczenia turysty fotografa, które zdradzają trudny dysonans rzeczywistości „domu" poety. Analiza fotograficznych obrazów ujawnia skłonność do koncentracji na iluzyjnym pięknie natury, na banalnym detalu, na grze świateł i cieni. Stanowi ona odpowiedź na nierozstrzygalne problemy Irlandii i równie niepokonane osobiste lęki.

Teresa Bruś

Ein Tourist im eigenen Lande. Louis MacNeice und Irland

Zusammenfassung

Wenn man die von Louis MacNeice (1907—1963) geschriebenen Gedichte liest, lernt man den von Rückkehren nach Heimatland, Irland, abhängigen Dichter kennen, der konsequent bemüht ist, die ihm gut bekannten Orte in Irland aus der Sicht eines Touristen darzustellen. Mac Neices Irland lockt an und erlaubt, die inneren, in Verwirrung gebrachten Dimensionen des „Ichs" zu verwirklichen. Im Gegensatz zu obdachlosen modernistischen Intellektuellen findet der Dichter „zu Hause" authentische Merkmale, doch paradox lässt die Nähe wiederum neue Trennungen erwarten. Dem Corcoran kann man nachsprechen, das von MacNeice unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Ferien betrachtete Irland sei ein Anzeichen von der Weltbetrachtung. In solchen Dichtwerken, wie „The Closing Album" fasst MacNeice in Form von metaphorischen Aufnahmen die Erfahrungen des Touristen-Fotografen um, die die schwierige Dissonanz der „Heim"-Wirklichkeit des Dichters offenbaren. Die Analyse der fotografischen Bilder zeigt seine Veranlagung, sich auf die illusionäre Schönheit der Natur, auf ein alltägliches Detail, aufs Helldunkelspiel zu konzentrieren, und ist eine Antwort auf unlösbare Probleme Irlands und eigene unüberwindlichen Ängste.

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"WRITTEN ON THE BODY IS A SECRET CODE" — BODY AS PALIMPSEST IN JEANETTE WINTERSON

In her writings, Jeanette Winterson remaps the formulas of desire, working towards a redrawing of the sexual landscape. The lovers' desire is here contingent upon crossing the boundaries which are usually constituted by taboo relationships, like homosexual and extramarital ones, and the dynamics of gender masquerade that makes identification ambiguous. The erotic tension ensuing from the necessity to cross the boundaries is grounded in the erotics of risk — risk of commitment and intimacy, of loss of control, of loss of the self in the other, and of being left. To delineate eroticism Winterson deploys the tropes of travel, gambling, cross-dressing, food, palimpsestic body, and others. This paper's object is to address the depiction of body as palimpsest.

Eroticism appears to Winterson's characters as the *lingua franca*, in contrast to language, since each person employs their own private subjective version of language, tinged with personal history and the individual view of the world. The sensual experience is the only authentic one, ensuring direct intimate contact with the other. The authenticity stems from the fact that the play of bodies is not contingent on the lovers' conscious will but on the inner experience of sexual plethora, as Georges Bataille points out. Violence of the flesh, independent of reason, takes control of the body, enlivens it and pushes to explosion,[1] to the "little death." The body can thereby become more expressive than words, since, as Roland Barthes believes, it is feasible to lie with words but not with the body; what one attempts to hide with their language, their body reveals.[2] It is the somatic that speaks; as

[1] Georges Bataille, *Eroticism* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), pp. 92—93.
[2] Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse. Fragments* (London: Vintage, 2002), p. 44.

in the case of Constance Chatterley, where, her breasts becoming eyes and her navel lips, Constance ponders whether the body can have its own life. Wintersonian characters realise that body language is the best way to get to know another human being: "How else can I know you but through the body you rent? Forgive me if I love it too much."[3] The body becomes one's laboratory; it is the place where one processes sensations and experience: "We know the world by and through our bodies. This is our lab; we can't experiment without it."[4] The corporeality is essential in the lovers' exchanges then, and in love the binary opposition body-mind is blurred. Octavio Paz elucidates the apotheosis of the body with the assertion that for a lover the desired body is a soul, therefore s/he speaks to it with a language which can be comprehended only with the body and skin, not with mind.[5] Margaret Reynolds posits the same: "Love recognises the existence of something beyond the self. It takes many shapes. But as our physical shape is rounded by the body, love must always be known on the skin."[6]

As in an erotic act one loses control of their body, they cover its announcement, nakedness,[7] for to be naked means to be exposed, as in Winterson's "The Poetics of Sex": "When she sheds she sheds it all. Her skin comes away with her clothes. On those days I have been able to see the blood-depot of her heart."[8] Or, as she puts it in *Written on the Body*, "I like to keep my body rolled up away from prying eyes. Never unfold too much, tell the whole story."[9] Nakedness is here far from the exploited and objectified type of female nudity; it is, rather, a state of openness to the other person, and signifies being oneself, unmasked, raw, which entails the risk of rejection and loss of control. In spite of that, one yearns to be naked as it is the condition of genuine feelings: "It's no good wearing an overcoat […] when what the body really wants is to be naked,"[10] "If this is going to succeed it will take years. I will have to find the years because I want to stand before you naked. I want to love you well."[11]

The fear of loss of control issues from the fact that a person's body is the diary of their personal history. Their lifetime experiences are layered on

[3] Jeanette Winterson, *Gut Symmetries* (London: Granta Books, 1997), p. 217.

[4] Jeanette Winterson, *Lighthousekeeping* (London and New York: Fourth Estate, 2004), p. 171.

[5] Octavio Paz, *Podwójny płomień*: *miłość i erotyzm*, trans. into Polish Piotr Fornelski [*The Double Flame*] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1996), pp. 134—135.

[6] *Erotica. Women' s Writing from Sappho to Margaret Atwood*, ed. Margaret Reynolds (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1990), p. xxviii.

[7] Bataille, *Eroticism*, p. 18.

[8] Jeanette Winterson, "The Poetics of Sex," in: Jeanette Winterson, *The World and Other Places* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1998), p. 32.

[9] Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 89.

[10] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 76.

[11] Winterson, *Gut Symmetries*, p. 206.

their body, forming a palimpsest: "Written on the body is a secret code only visible in certain light; the accumulations of a lifetime gather there. In places the palimpsest is so heavily worked that the letters feel like braille."[12] The narrator's body is the register of the past, particularly of the erotic one. The body, a map of one's experience, is also a map of one's identity. The body, which is the source of emotions, fantasies and passions, and where behaviour and actions of the subject are fulfilled, is for Grosz essential in forming identity.[13] For Sigmunt Freud the Ego is first and foremost of bodily nature; it is a projection of the body surface.[14] Also Ellyn Kaschack emphasises the interdependence between the body and mind. She claims that the body stores experiences in the same way as the mind does; experience is reflected on the face, hands, the musculature of the body, and even in the structure of bones. Consequently, we are what we experience, in all the aspects — material and symbolic, visible and hidden. Experience is included and expressed in the body, and the aspects encompass and influence each other. Memory is stored everywhere, not only in the mind.[15]

The desire to decipher the partner's body, to anatomise that territory is an attempt to understand the lover through learning about their past and their identity. On the other hand, reading and unravelling can aim at taking control. The narrator of *Written on the Body* refuses to permit to be read as this entails the risk of vulnerability,[16] of being disclosed, naked. As a result, her[17] relationships, both with men and women, appear evanescent. It is only with Louise, a married woman, that "I" feels something deeper. Reluctant to open the book of the body, the narrator strives to read Louise from cover to cover. When "I" learns about Louise's leukaemia, she leaves her with her husband, a cancer specialist, who has offered to properly take care of Louise. The narrator's disappearance is the husband's condition. In despair, the heart-broken lover reads medical literature, about anatomy and the illness, and the story breaks to make room for meditations on them. Each of the four sections, entitled "The Cells, Tissues, Systems and Cavities of the

[12] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 89.

[13] Elisabeth Grosz, "Corporal Feminism," in: Lynda Nead, *Akt kobiecy. Sztuka, obscena i seksualność*, trans. into Polish Ewa Franus [*The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*] (Poznań: Rebis, 1998), p. 124.

[14] Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in: Nead, *Akt kobiecy*, p. 24.

[15] Ellyn Kaschack, *Nowa psychologia kobiety*: *podejście feministyczne*, trans. into Polish Jadwiga Węgrodzka [*Engendered Lives. A New Psychology of Women's Experience*] (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 1996), pp. 60, 62, 63, 96, 181.

[16] Carolyn Allen, "Jeanette Winterson. The Erotics of Risk," in: Carolyn Allen, *Following Djuna*: *Women Lovers and the Erotics of Loss* (Bloomington, Indiana: IUP, 1996), p. 47.

[17] Although the narrator's gender is not revealed in the book, there are a number of reasons for which I read the narrator as a woman. Some of the reasons will be explained later on.

Body," "The Skin," "The Skeleton" and "The Special Senses," begins with a passage from an anatomy book and is followed by the narrator's memories and musings about the lost lover and her illness. Winterson constructs a textual universe in which all the formulations of the body are simulacral, in contrast to the lover's absent body.[18] Reading about anatomy and imagining herself inside Louise, "I" strives to find out about Louise's body as much as possible so as to map it; to come into an even more intimate contact with the beloved, "more intimately than the skin, hair and voice that I craved. I would have her plasma, her spleen, her synovial fluid."[19] Mapping the body signifies here subjugating, pinning down, categorising. The narrator obsessively longs to possess Louise in all possible dimensions: "I didn't only want Louise's flesh, I wanted her bones, her blood, her tissues, the sinews that bound her together."[20]

However, "I" only incipiently pursues the masculine paradigms of anatomical explorations, which aim at colonising and fixing; she analyses and parodies them, merely to repudiate them eventually:[21]

> Let me penetrate you. I am the archaeologist of tombs. I would devote my life to marking your passageways, the entrances and exits of that impressive mausoleum, your body. […] I can't enter you in clothes that won't show the stains, my hands full of tools to record and analyse. If I come to you with a torch and a notebook, a medical diagram and a cloth to mop up the mess, I'll have you bagged neat and tidy. I'll store you in plastic like chicken livers. Womb, gut, brain, neatly labelled and returned. Is that how to know another human being?[22]

The cold clinical dissecting language of male science[23] does not suffice to describe a human being:

> What are the characteristics of living things? At school, in biology I was told the following: Excretion, growth, irritability, locomotion, nutrition,

[18] Leigh Gilmore, "Without Names. An Anatomy of Absence in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*," in: Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography*: *Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2001), p. 134.

[19] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 111.

[20] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 51.

[21] Catherine Stowers, "Journeying with Jeanette: Transgressive Travels in Winterson's Fiction," in: *(Hetero)Sexual Politics*, eds. Mary Maynard and June Purris (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995), pp. 150—151. Also the narrator of "The Poetics of Sex" realises that labelling is not the way to learn about people: "Pin her down? She's not a butterfly. I'm not a wrestler. She's not a target. I'm not a gun. Tell you what she is? She's not Lot no. 27 and I'm not one to brag." (Winterson, "The Poetics of Sex," p. 33).

[22] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, pp. 119—120.

[23] Stowers, "Journeying with Jeanette," p. 151.

> reproduction and respiration. This does not seem like a very lively list to me. If that's all there is to being a living thing I may as well be dead. What of that other characteristic prevalent in human living things, the longing to be loved?[24]

It transpires that "[t]he logical paths, the proper steps led nowhere,"[25] as the traditional lover's discourse does not encompass fatal illnesses or human mortality. Pursuing the masculine models, the narrator rejects the stereotypical role of a woman as a passive object of penetration and exploration, and redefines the formula of heterosexual desire.[26] The lack of the narrator's gender expresses the refusal of "the patriarchal regime of names and the identities it compels."[27] In so doing, "I" accomplishes distinctly lesbian goals, although she is not rendered as a lesbian.[28]

The masculine patterns are replaced here with the feminine explorations, figured in terms of labyrinthine interior journeys: "My mind took me up tortuous staircases that opened into doors that opened into nothing,"[29] "Doors opening onto rooms that opened into doors that opened into rooms."[30] This psychic inward journey is also enacted in Winterson's *The Passion* by means of Venice, consisting in the visible mercurial maze of canals and "the city within the city," "the inner city,"[31] which constitutes a fluctuation of meanings and border transgressions forming a labyrinth, a rheumy space of liability and peril.[32] The female journeys "along the blood vessels" and coming "to the cities of the interior"[33] aim at discovering one's identity, which is not linear but labyrinthine, full of mazes and thus possibilities of interpretation, and whose "geography is uncertain."[34] Therefore it cannot be discovered by means of any guiding principles, including medical discourse, "the clinical language, through the dispassionate view of the sucking, sweating, greedy, defecating self."[35]

Contrary to masculine trophy hunting, demonstrated in the declaration, "I cannot allow you to develop, you must be a photograph not a poem,"[36]

[24] Stowers, "Journeying with Jeanette," p. 108.
[25] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 92.
[26] Stowers, "Journeying with Jeanette," pp. 150—151.
[27] Gilmore, "Without Names," p. 124.
[28] Stowers, "Journeying with Jeanette," p. 150.
[29] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 92.
[30] Winterson, *Lighthousekeeping*, p. 218.
[31] Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion* (London: Vintage, 2004), p. 53.
[32] Judith Seaboyer, "Second Death in Venice: Romanticism and the Compulsion to Repeat in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*," *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1997), p. 485.
[33] Winterson, *The Passion*, p. 68.
[34] Winterson, *The Passion*, p. 68.
[35] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 111.
[36] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 119.

Winterson proffers reciprocity: "No, it doesn't come under the heading Reproduction. I have no desire to reproduce but I still seek out love."[37] In this yearning, the narrator becomes an exemplification of the Barthesian figure of "fulfilment": "The fulfilled lover has no need to write, to transmit, to reproduce"; she is satisfied with what she has, and wants to keep it eternally the same.[38] "I" does not long to colonise the other, but offers herself as a source of pleasure,[39] which becomes, according to Helene Cixous, the augmentation of the results of desire's imprint on every part of the body and the lover's body.[40] Such intimate erotic exchanges between the bodies generate the erotogenic surface and imprint it, subsequently producing a singular intensity, which constitutes a process common to all lesbian relationships, as Elizabeth Grosz points out. Drawing on Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard, and others, she perceives desire and sexual exchanges in terms of bodies, pleasures, intensities, energies, surfaces, movements, inscriptions, and not in terms of lack, yearnings and wishes, characteristic of traditional psychoanalytical discourses of desire. Like Winterson, Grosz draws attention to the patterns and quality of the intensities, which are submitted to metamorphoses, evoke further intensities, and open up new spaces.[41]

The narrator converts the medical language into "a love-poem,"[42] the language of intimacy that turns into the language of self-recognition:

> "Explore me," you said and I collected my ropes, flasks and maps, expecting to be home soon. I dropped into the mass of you and I cannot find the way out. Sometimes I think I'm free, coughed up like Jonah from the whale, but then I turn a corner and recognise myself again. Myself in your skin, myself lodged in your bones, myself floating in the cavities that decorate every surgeon's wall. That is how I know you. You are what I know.[43]

Rendering the trauma of lost love is juxtaposed with rendering the self; the turn toward the other by means of memory entails a turn toward the self as the subject of mourning.[44] The narrator's body appears to be the register of the lover's presence and absence: "It was a game, fitting bone on bone.

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[37] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 108.

[38] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p. 56.

[39] Stowers, "Journeying with Jeanette," p. 151.

[40] After Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*: *British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princetown, New York: Princeton UP, 1977), p. 152.

[41] Elizabeth Grosz, "Refiguring Lesbian Desire," in: *The Lesbian Postmodern*, ed. Laura Doan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 72, 76—78, 81.

[42] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 111.

[43] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 120.

[44] Gilmore, "Without Names," p. 134.

I thought difference was rated to be the largest part of sexual attraction but there are so many things about us that are the same. Bone of my bone. Flesh of my flesh. To remember you it's my own body I touch. Thus she was, here and here."[45] The body of "I" is a map of the relationship; Louise left some marks including "hand prints all over my body,"[46] Louise's face "embossed on [the — S.F.] hands"[47] and "the L that tattoos me on the inside" which "is not visible to the naked eye."[48]

The reciprocity and intimacy produce such a strong bond that, together with resemblance, they pose a threat of shifting body boundaries to the point of losing the self in the partner. Resemblance is rendered by the tropes of mirroring, twinning, subsumption and engulfment, which can be read as a prompt to the narrator's gender but does not determine it univocally. The narrator declares the perfect communion of bodies with the lover:

> You said, "I'm going to leave him because my love for you makes any other life a lie." I've hidden those words in the lining of my coat. I take them out like a jewel thief when no-one's watching. They haven't faded. Nothing about you has faded. You are still the colour of my blood. You are my blood. When I look in the mirror it's not my own face I see. Your body is twice. Once you once me. Can I be sure which is which?[49]

Likeness imposes the narrator's body being the palimpsestic record not only of its owner's experience, but also of the lover's, since the partners are similar: "Your face, mirror-smooth and mirror clear. Your face under the moon, silvered with cool reflection, your face in its mystery, revealing me."[50] Having been the twins, the narrator ascertains to experience the same emotions as Louise: "[…] if Louise is well then I am well," "[…] if you are broken then so am I."[51] Also disease can be felt in both bodies; Louise has fallen ill but her lover suffers from bodily disintegration, too: "I am fighting helplessly without hope. I grapple but my body slithers away," "I am rid of life."[52]

Yet, the sameness and unity of feeling must turn out illusory in the end for there are no two people who are the same. The power of love cannot change it, as Barthes claims, and although one identifies oneself with the other's suffering, in fact the suffering takes place without them, dissociating

[45] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, pp. 129—130.
[46] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 106.
[47] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 189.
[48] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 118.
[49] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, pp. 98—99.
[50] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 132.
[51] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, pp. 154, 125.
[52] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, pp. 101, 119.

them from the amorous subject so she can only feel compassion[53] or empathy. The narrator thus realises she made a mistake leaving Louise, even if she "meant her good." In fact, she made the decision without Louise but now she reflects: "What right had I to decide how she should live? What right had I to decide how she should die?"[54] Therefore, she tries to find her; yet, to no avail.

Although the boundary loss is framed as risk, Winterson eroticises it, defining it as both danger and temptation.[55] The temptation relies upon the kind of unity in which the partners retain their singularity:

> I was holding Louise's hand, conscious of it, but sensing too that a further intimacy might begin, the recognition of another person that is deeper than consciousness, lodged in the body more than held in the mind. I didn't understand that sensing, I wondered if it might be bogus, I'd never known it myself although I'd seen it in a couple who'd been together for a very long time. Time had not diminished their love. They seemed to have become one another without losing their very individual selves.[56]

In the case of Louise, "I" hopes to achieve the kind of intimacy asleep in the body and woken in the act of recognition, like in Winterson's short story "How to Die:" " 'I love you' he said. 'You don't know me.' 'I recognise you.' I nodded. Love is recognition. Love is re-cognition; a re-thinking of all we know, and all we are, because someone stands in front of us like a mirror."[57] The narrator of *Written on the Body* feels similarly about Louise: "The odd thing about Louise, being with Louise, was *déjà vu*. I couldn't know her well and yet I did know her well. Not facts or figures, […] rather a particular trust. That afternoon, it seemed to me I had always been here with Louise, we were familiar."[58] It is perhaps this familiarity, this act of re-cognition that makes Louise capable of decoding the narrator's body, contrary to the previous numerous partners: "I didn't know that Louise would have reading hands. She has translated me into her own book," "You deciphered me and now I am plain to read."[59] The narrator hopes that lesbian reciprocity will be a release, "a space uncluttered by association"[60] offering freedom: "[…] you will redraw me according to your will. We shall cross one another's

[53] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, pp. 57—58.
[54] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 157.
[55] Allen, "Jeanette Winterson. The Erotics of Risk," p. 76.
[56] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 82.
[57] Jeanette Winterson, *How to Die*, at: 10 October 2009 <www.jeanettewinterson.com>
[58] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 82.
[59] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, pp. 89, 106.
[60] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 81.

boundaries and make ourselves one nation. Scoop me in your hands for I am good soil."[61]

The liberty comes from the fact that lesbian eroticism turns out the territory outside the dictate of patriarchal culture. It is a "wild zone" defined by Shirley Ardener as the area of female consciousness that does not overlap with that of the dominant male group since the dominant discourse lacks structures to articulate the female experience.[62] The women's, and especially lesbian, territory is thereby unmapped, unknown, undefined: "Some of the territory is wilder and reports do not tally. The guides are only good for so much. In these wild places I become part of the map, part of the story, adding my version to the versions there. This Talmudic layering of story on story, map on map, multiples possibilities but also warns me of the weight of accumulation."[63] Becoming "part of the map" and adding her "version to the versions there" may express the wild territory's respect for individuality, subjectivity and freedom. This is the territory that is not going to be tamed and colonised: "That's all right boys, so is this. This delicious unacknowledged island where we are naked with each other. The boat that brings us here will crack beneath your weight. This is territory you cannot invade," "On this island where we live, keeping what we do not tell, we have found the infinite variety of Woman."[64]

Freedom without boundaries is also emphasised in the final scene of the book in which Louise comes back into bursting space replete with tropes of textuality and circularity:

> This is where the story starts, in this threadbare room. The walls are exploding. The windows have turned into telescopes. Moon and stars are magnified in this room. The sun hangs over the mantelpiece. I stretch out my hand and reach the corners of the world. The world is bundled up in this room. Beyond the door, where the river is, where the roads are, we shall be. We can take the world with us when we go and sling the sun under your arm. Hurry now, it's getting late. I don't know if this is a happy ending but here we are let loose in open fields.[65]

The ending of the narrative, open, ambiguous and undefined, becomes the spiralling return to the beginning, the figure often deployed by female travellers,[66] as well as the "green world" metaphor and journey to the uni-

[61] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 20.
[62] After Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 322.
[63] Jeanette Winterson, *The PowerBook* (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 54.
[64] Winterson, "The Poetics of Sex", pp. 39, 41.
[65] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 190.
[66] Stowers, "Journeying with Jeanette," p. 152.

verse of "liberated desire and female authenticity, crossing to the other side of the mirror."[67] Being "loose in the open fields" may be construed as the longing to experience the limitlessness similar to that expressed by the lack of the narrator's gender or name.[68] It may be also interpreted as putting a woman back to her body, at the centre of her own sexuality, to explore the "wild zone."

Winterson's imagery of circularity, textuality and labyrinthine interior cities, set against the masculine paradigms, may be read as a response to Mary Jacob's appeal for women's writing to work within "male" discourse but trying incessantly to deconstruct it,[69] breaking free from "a prison-house of language."[70] Winterson's attempt to write in "white ink"[71] is an attempt to write "outside of the specular phallogocentric structure," and establish "the status of which would no longer be defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning,"[72] as advocated by Shoshana Felman. The signature of feminine writing should be sought, according to Nancy Miller, in those places of the text where writing and female body meet,[73] since a distinctly female writing should articulate the body, reconnect "the book with the body and with pleasure," as Chantal Chawaf argues.[74] This assumption echoes Barthes's idea of interpretation depicted in *The Pleasure of the Text* where he asserts that the text can be made an object of pleasure either through connecting it to the pleasures of life, and later adding "the personal catalogue of our sensualities," or through inducing the text "to breach bliss […] thereby identifying this text with the purest moments of perversion."[75]

In Winterson, the reconnection of the text, the body, and pleasure takes on the shape of the textual body. The body is translated into text and sexuality into textuality. In *Written on the Body* Winterson employs different forms in the three sections of the book, which represent different patterns of writing on the body, and constitute an experiment in the morphology of sexu-

[67] Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 324.

[68] Gilmore, "Without Names," p. 141.

[69] After Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 316.

[70] Winterson, *Written on the Body*, p. 318.

[71] Helene Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," in: *Feminisms. An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, eds. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), p. 352.

[72] Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 316.

[73] Nancy K. Miller, *Subject to Change. Reading Feminist Writing* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), p. 129.

[74] After Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 316.

[75] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, at: <www.tasc.ac.uk/depart/media/staff/Is/Modules/MED2350/Text.htm>

ality, of the lover's body and of the body of text.[76] The body becomes thus a fetish, as the displaced locale of embodied knowledge,[77] which becomes the reflection of Barthes's conviction that text is a fetish that desires the reader. The text having a human shape, corpus, it is the anagram of the body, but of the erotic one. Considering the implications of the etymology of the word "text," as the Latin word "textum" signifies "web," Barthes claims that "Text means tissue" that is generated in a constant interweaving, therefore interpreting the text is not tantamount to giving it a meaning, but appreciating "that plural which constitutes it. In this text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers."[78]

By the same token, to read the Wintersonian palimpsestic body with its personal history and identity inscribed on it, cannot result in granting it a "meaning" that is a label. The masculine paradigms must be repudiated because of "a galaxy of signifiers," the plurality of interpretations of the body and thus identity consisting in "interior cities," mazes and "zig-zags."

[76] Gilmore, "Without Names," p. 140.
[77] Gilmore, "Without Names," p. 135.
[78] Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*.

Sonia Front

„Na ciele zapisany jest tajemny kod" — ciało jako palimpsest w prozie Jeanette Winterson

Streszczenie

W swojej twórczości Jeanette Winterson dąży do przepisania dyskursu pożądania. Palimpsestyczne ciało to jeden z tropów, za pomocą którego pisarka oddaje erotyzm, wierząc, że kontakt cielesny to jedyna autentyczna forma komunikacji. Ciało stanowi tekst złożony z warstw osobistej historii, zwłaszcza erotycznej, a próba jej odszyfrowania to wejście w bardzo intymny kontakt z drugim człowiekiem, ale jednocześnie ryzyko bycia podporządkowanym. Artykuł omawia to zagadnienie głównie na podstawie powieści *Zapisane na ciele*, w której początkowe, identyfikowane jako męskie, paradygmaty pożądania, mające na celu kolonizację, ustępują miejsca kobiecym eksploracjom, oddanym za pomocą labiryntowych psychicznych peregrynacji. Zamiast pożądania stanowiącego wykładnię braku, jak w tradycyjnym dyskursie, Winterson proponuje wzajemność (*reciprocity*), gdzie jednostka nie dąży do kolonizacji partnerki, ale oferuje siebie jako źródło przyjemności. Łącząc tekst, ciało i przyjemność, Winterson stawia sygnaturę kobiecego pisarstwa, które według teorii feministycznych powinno mieścić się tam, gdzie spotykają się ciało i tekst.

Sonia Front

„Am Leib ist ein Geheimkode aufgeschrieben" — der Körper als ein Palimpsest in den Prosawerken von Jeanette Winterson

Zusammenfassung

In ihren Werken bemüht sich Jeanette Winterson, den Begehrensdiskurs zu verschreiben. Palimpsestes Leib ist eine der Spuren, mit Hilfe deren die Schriftstellerin den Erotismus wiedergibt; sie glaubt nämlich, der Geschlechtsverkehr sei die einzige authentische Form der Kommunikation. Der Körper bildet einen Text, der aus den Schichten der persönlichen und besonders erotischen Geschichte besteht. Der Versuch diese Geschichte zu entschlüsseln bedeutet einen sehr intimen Kontakt mit dem anderen Menschen und gleichzeitig die Risiko, sich dem Anderen zu unterstellen. Das Thema wird im vorliegenden Artikel am Beispiel des Romans *Am Leib aufgeschrieben* erörtert. Die zuerst mit den Männern identifizierten und eine Kolonisierung bezweckenden Begehrensparadigmata weichen den, mittels labyrinthähnlichen psychischen Peregrinationen wiedergegebenen weiblichen Explorationen. Statt des mit dem Mangel verbundenen Begehrens schlägt Winterson die Gegenseitigkeit (*reciprocity*) vor, wenn ein Partner seine Partnerin nicht zu kolonisieren versucht, sondern sich selbst als eine Genussquelle anbietet. Den Text, den Körper und den Genuss miteinander verbindend gibt Winterson der weiblichen Literatur den neuen Wert (laut feministischer Theorien ist diese Literatur im Treffpunkt des Körpers mit dem Text zu lokalisieren).

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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE: THE EXPERIENCE OF TRAVELLING IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

In late seventeenth-century Yorkshire there lived a yeoman whose name was Adam Eyre. He kept a diary in which he recorded the most notable events in his life. In the year 1647, his duties forced him to make a journey to London. On March 22, he wrote in his diary:

> This morning my purpose is, God willing, for Darby, and so for London, whither I pray God direct mee, and bring mee safe again; and my debts are at this instant, besides what I owe upon specialty, which in case I shall not returne safe again, are to be payd out of my goods and chatells by my sister and her husband, who have, I think, a will of myne, unrevoked, which I hereby confirme, so they pay all my debts according to my will.[1]

There follows a list of names of people to whom Adam owed money and the sums that should be paid back to them. He also remembered to write about his small library in which several books were not his own; so he made sure that they would be returned to their owners. The entry refers to the first of Adam Eyre's three journeys to London and it nicely exemplifies typical measures taken by the author each time he was going to make such a long trip.

Although Adam Eyre is one of seven authors referred to in this study and tells us openly of how afraid he was to never come back from his journey, his feelings about travelling as a traumatic experience were by no means

[1] Adam Eyre, *A Dyurnall, or Catalogue of All My Accions and Expences from the 1st of January, 1646(7)*, ed. Henry J. Morehouse (London: Surtees Society, 1877), pp. 22—23.

uncommon. The passages chosen for this paper will show that even though being on the move was for seventeenth-century Northerners a necessity, rarely was the journey itself perceived as a pleasurable experience. The aim of this paper, thus, is to illustrate from several selected English "ego documents" a variety of individual perceptions of travel in seventeenth-century England. The study does not include the records of the experience of travel abroad and it focuses only on the accounts of home travel written by men and women who had their estates and spent most of their lives in Yorkshire. Consequently, it also excludes accounts written by visitors to Yorkshire from other counties.

Seven sources have been used here: four of them may be described as diaries; the second group includes two memoirs; and the third category, represented here by one text, is an autobiography. Although different in form and character, all these sources share one important characteristic—they are a testimony to individual experience of everyday life. They are, as William Matthews put it, "written by people about themselves"[2] and they all offer "an individual perception of existence translated into words."[3] That is why they look particularly promising as gold mines of information about people's experience of travelling as one of the aspects of life.

The group of diaries comprises texts written by four authors: Adam Eyre, Lady Margaret Hoby, Sir Ralph Thoresby, and Sir Thomas Rokeby. William Matthews, the author of the celebrated *Bibliography of British Diaries,* defined a diary as "a personal record of what interested the diarist, usually kept day by day, each day's record being self-contained and written soon after the events occurred, the style usually being free from organized exposition."[4] Seventeenth-century diaries trace their ancestry back into the Middle Ages and early chronicles, annals, and books of accounts which with time gained more personal character.[5] Robert A. Fothergill proposes to divide early modern diaries into four classes, two of which appear in the present study.[6] The first is the category of travel diaries. However, there is no text that would meet the criteria established for the purposes of our analysis[7]. Another cat-

[2] William Matthews, *An Annotated Bibliography of British Diaries Written Between 1442—1942* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p. ix.

[3] Hariett Blodgett, *Centuries of Female Days. English Women's Private Diaries* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989), p. 7.

[4] Matthews, *An Annotated Bibiography*, p. xv.

[5] *English Family Life, 1576—1716. An Anthology from Diaries*, ed. Ralph Houbrooke (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 1—2.

[6] Robert A. Fothergill, *Private Chronicles*: *A Study of English Diaries* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 14.

[7] There are two famous diaries written by visitors to Yorkshire. The first one is a travel diary of a Cheshire gentleman, Sir William Brereton, published by Surtees Society in a volume *North Country Diaries* (Surtees Society, CXXIV, 1914, pp. 1—50). The other one is a diary

egory comprises public journals which are "regular-entry books, having in common the fact that the writing of them was essentially a task, whether officially imposed or self-appointed, performed for the sake of its public usefulness."[8] There are several diaries written by Yorkshiremen which belong to this category. However, most of them are military campaign annals, and since they focus on information which is of limited importance to this study, I have decided not to include them here[9]. The remaining two classes are "journals of personal memoranda" and "spiritual journals."

The diary of Eyre represents the third of Fothergill's classes, i.e. "journals of personal memoranda." Eyre was a Yorkshire yeoman of the better class and was even described on burial as "Adamus Eyre, generosus."[10] During the Civil War he served in the parliamentary army. He was married but left no offspring. He began to keep his diary at the beginning of the year 1647 and continued till January 1649. He described mundane details of his everyday life, mentioning frequent visits and occasions when he hosted guests at his estate. He also wrote about financial problems, relations with neighbours and kinsfolk, and about his troubles with his wife. His entries are of a "pretty pedestrian character,"[11] but the diary, on the whole, is believed to be one of the most valuable sources for English everyday life in the seventeenth century and it also provides us with many interesting observations concerning the subject matter of this paper.

The other three diaries are typical examples of Fothergill's fourth class, namely, "journals of conscience." According to Fothergill, "in the journal of conscience we arrive at a form of regular and often daily writing whose sole preoccupation is with the inner life of the writer."[12] Pious diarists were encouraged to record "experiences," i.e. physical manifestations of God's grace in their lives. This introspective character of journals of conscience often influenced their mood as well as their contents. On the other hand, we are likely to find in them numerous instances of everyday happenings, including journeys, which diarists recorded because they provided evidence for God' merciful dealings with the individual.[13]

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of probably the most famous female traveller in Stuart England, Celia Fiennes, a gentlewoman from Wiltshire, who visited Yorkshire at the end of the seventeenth century (*The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, ed. Christopher Morris, London: Cresset Press, 1949).

[8] Fothergill, *Private Chronicles*, p. 16.

[9] For example, *The Diary of Sir Henry Slingsby*, ed. Daniel Parsons (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1836); *The First and Second Sieges of Pontefract Castle*: *Nathan Drake's Diary*, ed. Alison Walker (Pontefract: Gosling Press, 1997).

[10] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 353.

[11] Fothergill, *Private Chronicles*, p. 19.

[12] Fothergill, *Private Chronicles*, p. 17.

[13] Elisabeth Findlay, "Ralph Thoresby the Diarist: The Late Seventeenth-Century Pious Diary and its Demise," *Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 17, Issue 1 (2002), p. 113; Fothergill, *Private*

The three spiritual diaries that have been used in this study differ considerably in their form.

Chronologically, the earliest is the diary of Lady Margaret Hoby (1571—1633), a pious Puritan and a wife to Sir Thomas Posthumus Hoby. She lived with Sir Thomas at Hackness, an estate purchased by the first of her three husbands. In 1599, she began writing her diary on the instruction of her spiritual adviser and continued till July 1605. She recorded daily rounds of prayers, Bible-reading and religious instruction, activities typical of strict puritan life in seventeenth-century Yorkshire.[14] Hoby's diary ends abruptly in July 1605 and H. Blodgett suggests that this is because the diarist realized that her entries were becoming more domestic and concerned with the management of her household and estate rather than her soul.[15] However, thanks to this "domestication" of Hoby's diary, we learn much more about things which will be of great interest in this study.

Ralph Thoresby's (1658—1725) diary is different from Hoby's, first of all, because it is much less repetitive and considerably less laconic. We can trace in it influences of seventeenth-century spiritual manuals which recommended to compose diary entries in such a way that they resembled prayer formulae.[16] Thoresby followed his father's, a Leeds wool and cloth merchant, advice and began writing his diary in 1677. The text clearly reflects its author's religious zeal of a devoted Presbyterian (even though in 1699 he publicly conformed to the Church of England), but it also provides many examples of Thoresby's antiquarian interests which inspired him to travel extensively during his life.[17]

A spiritual journal of Sir Thomas Rokeby (1631—1699), a judge, is again very different in its form from the previous two. Contrary to Margaret Hoby and Ralph Thoresby, Rokeby did not record his experiences on a regular, daily basis; sometimes he wrote in his diary only once a month. The first entry was made in 1688 and the last one ten years later, shortly before his death in 1699. He intended the book to be a record of his religious thoughts, but he also wrote about his judicial duties and the state of affairs in the kingdom. His occupation required making frequent journeys which, combined with his weak health, resulted in a series of comments and reflections which

Chronicles, p. 18; Sara Heller Mendelson, "Stuart Women's Diaries and Occasional Memoirs," in: *Women in English Society 1500—1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 187.

[14] John Trevor Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry. From the Reformation to the Civil War* (London: Athlone Press, 1969), p. 273.

[15] Blodgett, *Centuries of Female Days*, p. 29.

[16] Findlay, "Ralph Thoresby the Diarist," p. 120.

[17] William Carr, "Thoresby Ralph," in: *The Dictionary of National Biography*: *From the Earliest Times to 1900*, Vol. 19, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1885—1900), pp. 762—764.

illustrate the traumatic character of the experience of travel better than any other text used in this study.

The second group of sources, on which this paper is based, is a group of memoirs. As a genre, memoirs are thought to be a transition between a personal diary and an autobiography. Memoirs tend to be more selective than diaries, as their authors tend to record only really notable happenings, and the entries are more sporadic. Unlike in autobiographies, events are usually recorded shortly after they have occurred. The author of the first of the two memoirs analysed in this paper is Sir Walter Calverley (1670—1749), created baronet in 1711. The first entry in his book refers to the birth of his older sister in the year 1663. Calverley kept writing his memoir until his death in 1749. He wrote about the most important aspects of his relationships with the local gentry and kinsfolk and about his estate and family matters. The other memoir is a book by Sir John Reresby (1634—1689), who was definitely the busiest of all our authors. He served the office of High Sheriff in Yorkshire and then returned to the House of Commons and nine years later he became the governor of York.[18] His numerous functions and duties forced him to make frequent journeys, and in his memoir we find several lively descriptions of those which he thought worth recording. Although its form was very close to that of a diary, Reresby's memoir is in fact a collection of reminiscences written for the instruction of posterity towards the end of the author's life.[19] In William Matthews' bibliography it appears under the heading of "public diary" because of its focus on the author's official work and political life. However, since a considerable part of it is a record of Reresby's personal affairs, I have decided to make use of it here. The last entry is on May 5th, 1689; a week later Sir John Reresby died.

The writings of two women have been used in this paper. Lady Margaret Hoby has already been mentioned. The other one is Mrs Alice Thornton (1626—1707), the author of the only autobiography among my other sources. Alice Thornton spent a considerable period of her early childhood in Ireland with her parents, Christopher and Alice Wandesford. After Mr Wandesford's sudden death in 1640, Alice's mother took her children back to Yorkshire where Alice spent the rest of her life. In fact, her long homeward journey from Ireland, described in great detail in her autobiography, was the last long journey she undertook. Due to her reserved nature and her love of solitude, she only left the comforts of her home when it was abso-

[18] George F.R. Barker, "John Reresby" in: *The Dictionary of National Biography*: *from the earliest times to 1900*, Vol. 16, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1885—1900), pp. 916—918.

[19] John Reresby, *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*: *The Complete Text and a Selection from His Letters*, ed. Andrew Browning, 2nd ed. with a new preface and notes by Mary K. Geiter and William A. Speck (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1991), p. xvii.

lutely necessary. Nevertheless, she often wrote about more or less fortunate journeys made by her husband and other members of the family and for this reason, in spite of the lack of first-hand experience, her text may also be treated as a great source of information about English people's attitude towards travelling.

To sum up, all of our informants were the inhabitants of Yorkshire, the largest county in Stuart England, and most of their experience of being on the move was connected with this part of the kingdom. They all represented the higher strata of society; even Eyre, a yeoman, was relatively wealthy and he seemed to have good relationships with the local gentry. They lived and wrote their diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies in different decades of the Stuart period. The earliest diary is that of Lady Hoby, then the 1640s are covered in the book of Adam Eyre, and the remaining five texts tell us about the second half of the seventeenth century. This will enable us to see whether there was any change over time in people's attitudes towards travelling. Male writers definitely prevail among our informants, but the proportion visible in this selection is no exception to the general gender profile of available seventeenth-century English sources.

Some reservations should be expressed at this point. It is essential to bear in mind that we cannot assume that the attitudes and experiences of the authors of our sources are representative of those of the general population of England. They may not be representative even of the population of Yorkshire. One of the reasons for this is that, as indicated above, all our informants were members of the middle and upper classes, so their experience is, if at all, representative of these groups only. Moreover, five out of seven writers were men, which also distorts the general picture. What is even more important is the very fact that our seven individuals kept diaries, suggesting that they were, to some extent, exceptional at their social level as well as within their gender groups. It seems that not very many people feel the need to commit their thoughts to paper; therefore, we should not assume that the attitudes of those sensitive enough to describe their own lives were shared by the general population. Last but not least, it ought to be remembered that individual experience of any aspect of life, be it travelling or anything else, is unique and depends on a variety of factors determined by one's personal history. A diary, a memoir or an autobiography, being the record of one's personal history, are, therefore, reflections of the author's unique experience. Nevertheless, I believe that in spite of undisputed uniqueness of each individual experience, it is possible to make tentative generalizations if certain similarities between different accounts of this experience are found.

It is believed that the English have always had a particular disposition to travel. In the Middle Ages, John Mandeville wrote that English people

"are in a climate under the rule of the moon, which is a planet that moves quickly – the traveller's planet."[20] In the second half of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries, the number of English people on the move increased. Soldiers of fortune were seeking their chance in continental armies; the period also witnessed an increased activity of English merchants and diplomats travelling to the continent and shaping the image of early modern England as the economic and political power. There were also more and more individual travellers passing through the continent in search of knowledge, experience, adventure, or to satisfy their curiosity about foreign parts of Europe.[21] However, even though in real numbers Englishmen made a significant portion of all people travelling around Europe at that time, in their own country they formed just a small fraction. An average seventeenth-century Englishman rarely left his homestead and those who did travel, would "make their journeys as few and short as business, health and social intercourse permitted."[22] Home travelling was not an experience to be enjoyed for its own sake, and an Englishman who wished to travel for sight-seeing and pleasure, went abroad.[23] In spite of this reluctance to travel around the country for pleasure, men and women in Stuart England did occasionally undertake journeys for reasons which we will try to reconstruct on the basis of the works of our seven Yorkshire writers.

Among the most important motives that led people to travelling were their professional or public duties. Reading the diary of Adam Eyre, we learn, for instance, that he made frequent visits to his neighbours, but also longer journeys to more distant places to discuss the military situation in his county and to talk about its stance on matters of public importance.[24] Thomas Rokeby spent many years of his professional life moving from one town to another during assize weeks. The assizes were also the reason for Calverley's journeys to York and Leeds[25], but in his case they were not connected with his professional duties but with a well-established custom among Yorkshire gentry to go to towns where the event was in progress in

[20] Barbara Korte, *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, trans. Catherine Matthias (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Inc., 2000), p. 2.

[21] For more information on the subject of English foreign journeys see: John Walter Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad 1604—1667. Their Influence in English Society and Politics* (London, 1952).

[22] Joan Parkes, *Travel in England in the Seventeenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1068), p. 278.

[23] Charles Hughes, "Land Travel," in: *Shakespeare's England. An Account of Life and Manners of this Age*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 208.

[24] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 1.

[25] Walter Calverley, *Memorandum Book of Sir Walter Calverley, Bart.*, in: *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Durham: Surtees Society, 1883), pp. 56, 65.

order to attend the high sheriff and the judges, to socialize and exchange the latest news and gossip.[26] Public business also led Ralph Thoresby to make a journey to York in March 1679. He wrote in his diary: "March 2 […] we rid with much company to York. March 3. Made appearance for the election of the Lord Clifford and Lord Fairfax as Parliamentmen for the county."[27]

Sometimes our Yorkshiremen left their homesteads and travelled to more or less distant places to deal with various private and family matters. Walter Calverley, for example, undertook a journey to York in 1691 to settle the matters after the death of his father and then he made frequent visits to Cumberland to manage the estate he had inherited there.[28] One of the occasions for making a journey was to celebrate the rites of passage — marriage, christening, and burial. Attendance was very important to maintaining good relationships within the family and among friends and neighbours. Besides, weddings, christenings and funerals were good occasions for feasting and celebration that no one wished to miss.[29] Our sources provide us with ample evidence that travelling for any of these three reasons was also a common practice among our informants, with Adam Eyre and Walter Calverley being the most consistent in recording all their journeys undertaken for these purposes.

Another private matter that urged people to travel was shopping. On May 13th, 1647, Adam Eyre noted in his diary: "[…] after I came there [to York — D.G.] I bought 3 pair of hose which cost 12s, 1 pair of gloves 3s, inkle and a dyurnall 11d, an issue plate 4s 3d. other things for my wife 1s 2d, a ring for keys 3d, a booke at Wakefeild 1s 8d, and spent 7d."[30]

Three of our writers decided to undertake their journeys in pursuit of better health. Two of them followed the steps of other Englishmen, who believing in curative powers of mineral waters, sought health at famous spas.[31] Ralph Thoresby regularly visited the place that he called "the Spaws" and he spent there several days each year drinking water.[32] "The Spaws" might have been famous sulphur water springs in Scarborough to which Mrs Alice Thornton travelled with her husband in 1659 after a very difficult labour "for the cure of the said distemper."[33] A journey of a slightly different kind was made by Lady Margaret Hoby in the year 1600. She travelled with her

[26] Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry*, p. 20.

[27] Ralph Thoresby, *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S. … (1677—1724)*, ed. rev. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A.(London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830), p. 28.

[28] Calverley, *Memorandum Book*, pp. 47, 62.

[29] Houlbrooke, *English Family Life*, pp. 17, 103, 221.

[30] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 34.

[31] Hughes, "Land travel," p. 198.

[32] Thoresby, *The Diary*, pp. 54, 86, 128.

[33] Alice Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton, of East Newton, co.* (Durham: Surtees Society, 1875), p. 97.

husband to York where they visited friends and heard sermons, but it seems that the main reason for this journey was of medical character. During a fortnight spent in York, she consulted two physicians who applied treatments that actually made her so unwell that she was once forced to stay in bed for the whole day.[34]

Oftentimes, an individual who wanted to participate in some leisure activities also had to make a shorter or longer trip first. We read in our sources that Yorkshiremen would travel around the county in order to play or watch favourite seventeenth-century sports: bowls,[35] cock-fighting,[36] and football.[37] However, in the Stuart period "the most commonly recorded leisure activity was social visiting — the favourite diversion of both sexes, and of the middle as well as the upper classes."[38] More prominent families in Yorkshire made frequent visits to York and sometimes stayed there for several weeks or even months, spending time on social pleasures.[39] This is what led, for example, Lady Hoby to make her journeys to the northern capital[40], but all of our authors also made shorter trips around their neighbourhoods, to dine with friends and acquaintances.

From time to time all of our informants, except Alice Thornton, had an occasion to travel southward, to London. These were long journeys that took at least four days one way in good weather, and understandably, they had to be made for good reasons.[41] John Reresby, for instance, started travelling regularly to London after he had become an MP; we also learn from his memoir that he usually took his wife and family with him.[42] It might, of course, have been caused by a practical reason to avoid the expenses of keeping two households, but these seasonal travels might have also been treated as a means of establishing the family's status and gaining acceptance in high society.[43] Other diarists also had good reasons to go to London. Lady Margaret Hoby undertook her journey in April 1603 in order to participate in Elizabeth I's burial[44] and Adam Eyre, who set off on January 26th, 1649, was most probably aiming at witnessing the conclusion of Charles I's

[34] Margaret Hoby, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599—1605*, ed. Dorothy M. Meads (London: George Routledge, 1930), pp. 112—115.

[35] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, pp. 47, 50.

[36] Calverley, *Memorandum Book*, pp. 79, 88.

[37] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, pp. 106—107.

[38] Heller Mendelson, "Stuart Women's Diaries," p. 190.

[39] Cliffe, *The Yorkshire Gentry*, p. 20.

[40] Hoby, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby*, p. 190.

[41] Peter Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets 1640—1760. Families, Estates, and Fortunes* (Oxford: OUP for the University of Hull, 1980), p. 53.

[42] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 95.

[43] Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets*, p. 54.

[44] Hoby, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby*, p. 202.

trial, and if he travelled fast, he managed to reach London just in time to see the king's execution.[45]

All of the aforementioned motives for travelling show that journeys in the seventeenth century were not made for their own sake. However, among our Yorkshiremen, there was one exception to this rule. Ralph Thoresby spent a considerable part of his life travelling around the north of England and making occasional trips to some other parts of the kingdom just because he seemed to derive pleasure from the simple fact of passing from one beautiful place to another. Unlike other authors, he gave detailed descriptions of towns and residences he was passing on his way, and he needed no other reason but sight-seeing to undertake sometimes long and arduous journeys.[46] Nevertheless, his attitude towards travelling should not be taken as the norm. Other examples that have been quoted here appear to point to the conclusion that it was rare for seventeenth-century men and women to travel for other than strictly practical reasons, be it business, health, or maintaining one's status in the society.

Accepted as a necessity, travelling could not be totally avoided and was an important aspect of the lives of our seven Yorkshiremen. This is clearly shown by the amount of attention they paid to journeys in their writings. While it is true to say that the entries from which we learn that our writers were actually on the move rarely go beyond a very simple: "I took coach at Ferrybridge, with my sister Ramsden, for London, and got thither 26th the same,"[47] it cannot be denied that even such laconic passages, by the sheer fact of finding their way to a diary, memoir, or autobiography, prove that their subject matter was of certain importance to their authors. Careful analysis of all the entries in which travelling is mentioned shows us that this importance often derived from the fact that being on a journey was perceived as a disquieting, nerve-racking, sometimes even near-death experience.

In our materials, we find evidence that travelling was indeed a big matter in the lives of our Yorkshiremen, especially in those entries in which they describe preparations for their journeys. In all cases we can see that as soon as the decision about a trip was made, the prospect of leaving home and moving somewhere else was in the forefront of our informants' minds, and preparations often seriously disturbed their orderly lives. For Lady Margaret Hoby, for example, it took two days to prepare everything she needed to make a journey to London. On the second day she wrote: "All but the times of my ordenarie exercises of praier and readinge I was busie takinge order

[45] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 117. We do not know whether he saw the execution or not because the entry on 26th Jan. 1649 is the very last one in his diary.

[46] Thoresby, *The Diary*, pp. 87—88.

[47] Calverley, *Memorandum Book*, p. 49.

for my going to London, and packinge of thinges."[48] Ralph Thoresby complained openly in his diary that preparations for the journey forced him to neglect other duties, which he genuinely regretted: "And so to the end of this month, so thronged for the greatest part with the workmen and preparing for a voyage, that neglected diary, etc. for which I desire to be humbled."[49] We have already seen at the beginning of this paper how disturbing the idea of going to London was to Adam Eyre. Apart from arranging for his debts to be paid and his will to be executed in case he did not return, he also spent much time and money on ordering new clothes, having his hair trimmed, and arranging for his wife's future medical treatment.[50]

Going on a journey in the seventeenth century was, as we have seen, a major undertaking to which one had to prepare oneself very well. Moreover, we also learn from our informants that travelling was often uncomfortable, hazardous, and risky. In a seventeenth-century text we read that travelling is "a kind of warfare, accompanied with cares, diligences, and precautions, as well as with down-right labour and fatigue."[51] Although we are aware that it not always had to be like this, there are many fragments in the works of our Yorkshiremen which seem to prove this statement right.

Joan Parkes wrote in her book on travelling in seventeenth-century England that "[t]he roads, such was their state, even under the most favourable climatic conditions, accounted for much discomfort and many accidents."[52] In 1695, Ralph Thoresby travelled from Yorkshire to London; in his diary he noted that the journey was really perilous because "the ways were very bad, the ruts deep, and the roads extremely full of water, which rendered my circumstances […] not only melancholy but really very dangerous."[53] Thomas Rokeby, a man of very weak health, in comparison with other authors was least likely to write anything positive about his experience of travelling along seventeenth-century roads. The more extraordinary is therefore one of the entries in his diary in which he wrote that he had a very good and safe journey because of "good ways, such as have scarce ever been att this time of year."[54] The contents and tone of this unique fragment seem to suggest that one of the reasons why Rokeby detested travelling so much was the necessity of suffering the discomfort of dusty, rutted, slippery or muddy

[48] Hoby, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby*, p. 148.

[49] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 16.

[50] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, pp. 22, 104.

[51] Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England. The Cultural World of the Verneys 1660—1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 102.

[52] Parkes, *Travel in England*, p. 203.

[53] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 295.

[54] Thomas Rokeby, *A Brief Memoir of Mr. Justice Rokeby*: *Comprising His Religious Journal and Correspondence* (Durham: Surtees Society, 1861), p. 60.

roads, depending on the season of the year. The quality of roads accounted not only for discomfort but also for the cost of travelling. The higher it was, the less pleasant the associations travelling evoked. Riding even short distances but on rough roads with stones scattered all over the surface contributed not only to the vexation of travelling, especially in a coach, but also to the fact that horseshoes wore thin very fast. We read about it in the diary of Adam Eyre, who every three or four days recorded how much he was forced to pay for new shoes for his horse.[55]

Another important aspect of travelling that is often mentioned in our sources is the weather. There are occasional entries, like the one in Thomas Rokeby's diary mentioned above, in which the authors noted that they were lucky to enjoy good weather during their journeys. Much more often, though, we read about storms, floods, unbearable cold, or scorching heat. It should not, of course, come as a surprise, especially in a country of such unpredictable but, in general, mild weather, that people subconsciously paid more attention to all kinds of extremities and were more likely to write about bad than good weather during their journeys. It would also be too far-fetched of a conclusion to say that what our informants wrote about the weather proves that they always experienced travelling as a bitter struggle against unfavourable conditions. Nevertheless, we may assume that the person who once experienced adverse weather during his/her journey, would feel some apprehension at the thought of going through it all again. Among relatively harmless, though troublesome enough, conditions described by our Yorkshiremen was "the terrible mist" in which Adam Eyre and Ralph Thoresby's acquaintances got lost.[56] Our informants wrote also about heavy rains which made travelling very unpleasant[57] or sometimes even impossible.[58] In Thomas Rokeby's diary we read about one of the spring circuits which was, quite unexpectedly, disturbed by "great snows [that — D.G.] fell that week in many places, which hindered the passage of coaches, and made it very difficult for some of the Judges who went on horseback."[59] In February 1647, Adam Eyre also experienced extreme winter weather conditions and turned half way back from his journey "by reason of the extreme frost, which continued yet with greater violence than before."[60] Ralph Thoresby was already too far from home to turn back and he continued his journey to Lancashire even though "we had a sore storm of snow […] [and — D.G.] we found the snow so drifted that in some of the

[55] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 1.
[56] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 16; Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 218.
[57] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 117.
[58] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 27.
[59] Rokeby, *A Brief Memoir*, p. 55.
[60] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 11.

lanes it was as high as man and horse. In other places so thin that it served barely to cover the ice."[61]

Of all hazards caused by changing weather conditions, floods were by far the most dangerous. Ralph Thoresby was aware of that when he thanked God for preserving him from that danger during his journey from York to Stitnam.[62] Walter Calverley, on the other hand, was careful enough not to undertake a journey at all when he learnt that there was "a great floud at Esholt."[63] Alice Thornton's husband was not so predictive and she wrote with horror that "[i]n his journey when he was returning home, he escaped drowning at the waters near Newarke, when the floods was soe high that they had nigh have carried him downe with the streame."[64]

While the memory of bad weather conditions might have, at most, evoked the feelings of anxiety or uneasiness, accidents that actually happened to people, such as the one described above, were very likely to contribute to the creation of a conception of travelling as a risky and dangerous experience. In our sources we find more examples to illustrate this statement.

Riding on horseback was one of the safest ways of travelling in the seventeenth century. While some people kept their own animals, others could rent them at inns or borrow them from family or friends.[65] For most of our informants the experience of travelling on horseback was not negative. Lady Margaret Hoby, for instance, often wrote that she "took horsse and went" somewhere, and she never mentioned any troubles connected with this means of transport. Similarly Adam Eyre; although he frequently rode with his wife in the pillion-saddle, he only once wrote about "a dangerous fall, but God delivered us from danger."[66] It does not mean, however, that accidents did not happen. John Reresby remembered in his book one journey from Wakefield in 1682 when he "escaped a great danger, [his — D.G.] horse falling with [him] upon the edge of a precipice." [67] He managed to jump off the horse but he was well aware how lucky he was, especially that his horse's "hinder legs were already of the side of the banke."[68] Much less lucky was Ralph Thoresby during his unfortunate journey to Lancashire in February 1698. The ground was covered with ice and, as he wrote, "upon a slanting side of a hill, [his — D.G.] horse in a moment's time lost all his feet and fell upon [his — D.G.] left leg, in which [he — D.G.] had severe

[61] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 321.
[62] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 50.
[63] Calverley, *Memorandum Book*, p. 94.
[64] Thornton, *The Autobiography*, p. 144.
[65] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, pp. 9, 33, 34.
[66] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 34.
[67] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 277.
[68] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 277.

pain all night, and more or less for a long time after, but, blessed be God! no bone was broken."[69] In Thoresby's diary we find one more interesting description of an accident involving a horse. It did not happen to the diarist personally, but to a maid who "got a grievous fall" during their journey towards Newark. The thing which makes the short account of this misfortune so intriguing is Thoresby's comment that the accident was most probably a punishment for "travelling upon Lord's day."[70] In seventeenth-century England Sunday was to be given over exclusively to public and private prayer, Bible-reading, meditation and repetition of sermons. Travelling was forbidden.[71] An example of how seriously this Sabbatarian discipline was taken can also be found in Lady Hoby's diary where she wrote about her decision to delay her homeward journey from London in order to avoid travelling on Sunday.[72] Although puritan Sundays, void of any leisure activities, were never generally popular in England, and, especially in the second half of the century, greeted with open hostility, Thoresby's case proves that there were still people who perceived Sunday travelling as a breach of God's law.

Another means of transport, which was becoming more and more popular in the Stuart period, was the coach. Coaches had been introduced in the reign of Elizabeth I and the queen's lavish use of these vehicles very quickly turned them into status symbols. Stage coaches were introduced at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but both private and stage coaches were usually very slow, "cumbersome and clumsy and often extremely uncomfortable."[73] Owing to the state of the roads and primitive construction of early coaches, accidents happened quite often.[74] In our sources we read about one accident in which people got hurt. Walter Calverley described his unfortunate homeward journey in a calash, a kind of small open coach. He reported that the horses suddenly shied at something and started running fast. A man who was travelling with Calverley was tumbled off the vehicle and Calverley himself "with leaping out of the calash, strained [his — D.G.] anckle very sore, so that [he — D.G.] was lame of it, and could not stirr forth a three weeks or upwards."[75] In other entries in which travelling by coach is mentioned, the authors usually focus on the fact that it was an extremely uncomfortable and often inconvenient means of transport. Ralph Thoresby

[69] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 321.

[70] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 46.

[71] Christopher Durston, "Puritan Rule and the Failure of Cultural Revolution, 1645—1660," in: *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560—1700*, eds. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp. 213—114.

[72] Hoby, *Diary of Lady Margaret*, p. 165.

[73] Maurice Ashley, *Life in Stuart England* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1967), pp. 160—161.

[74] Parkes, *Travelling in England*, p. 205.

[75] Calverley, *Memorandum Book*, p. 94.

wrote about one thing which seemed particularly troublesome from his point of view, namely the fact that he had no influence upon who he was to travel with in a stage coach. He wrote that when thinking of his journey he was "somewhat concerned about company, fearful of being confined to a coach for so many days with unsuitable persons and not one I know of."[76] Intellectual sufferings of Ralph Thoresby would probably seem completely irrelevant to John Reresby when compared with the physical tortures of his coach journey from London to Yorkshire in 1681. He wrote in his memoir: "[…] it was some addition to my illness, which encreased soe fast that theday I got home I fel again into my rhumatisme, kept my bed fifteen days, and tooke noe nourishment but milke fo a whole month."[77]

There is one aspect of travelling which in our materials is always described as potentially or actually dangerous — crossing the river. Whenever our authors write about it, they either describe terrible accidents that happened to them or to people they knew, or they sigh with relief that, against all the odds, they managed to reach the other bank. We find good examples of the former in the works of Alice Thornton and John Reresby. In 1644, Mrs Thornton was riding on horseback to her sister who had just delivered a baby boy and invited Alice to become his godmother. In order to reach her destination, she had to cross the river near Middleham Castle. As she reported many years later in her autobiography: "[…] the river proved deeper than we expected it, and soe I kept up my horrse as well as I could from standing, and soe could not turne backe, the river proved past riding and the bottom could not be come to by the poore maire […] soe I saw myselfe in such aparant danger, and begged God to assist me and the poore beast I rid on, and to be merciful to me and deliver me out of that death, for Jesus Christ his sake."[78] Fortunately, Alice's horse managed to swim "above a quarter of a mile crosse that dreadful river" and our writer had been saved from premature death.[79] Much less lucky was her brother who several years later was crossing the river on his way to Richmond. As Alice wrote, the family was later informed by two witnesses that they saw "only his horrse getting out of the river […]. They got hold of his bridle but missed the person that rid on him."[80]

In John Reresby's memoir we find two entries in which he described crossing the river and in both cases it proved to be a harrowing experience. One of them cost Reresby his health when he put his shoulder out of joint af-

[76] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 154.
[77] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 228.
[78] Thornton, *The Autobiography*, p. 48.
[79] Thornton, *The Autobiography*, p. 48.
[80] Thornton, *The Autobiography*, p. 65.

ter his horse had lost balance as they were going out of the ferry.[81] The other crossing almost cost him his life, but the reason was not water. This time it was a quarrel about who was to go first to a boat, which quickly turned into a regular fight with the use of swords and cudgels.[82]

The last aspect of travelling which seemed to cause much anxiety among our informants was the prospect of encountering evil men. Almost all our writers associated travelling with the threat of being robbed by highwaymen or being otherwise attacked by some wrongdoers. For this reason Adam Eyre sent up a short prayer before his journey and he asked God to "keepe [him — D.G.] out of the hands of wicked men."[83] Also John Reresby travelling in 1676 to London "went well guarded for fear of some of [his — D.G.] back friends and highwaymen, haveing [sic] caused one of the chiefe of them to be taken not long before."[84] And finally, we read Thomas Rokeby's prayer in which he gave thanks to God for preserving him "from all dangerous accidents and robbers and thieves" during his journey from London to Yorkshire.[85] We do not learn from our materials whether any of the writers had actually been exposed to attacks of highway robbers, which might have consequently caused their fear of encountering them. But even if it had not been so, it appears that their apprehension was not so completely irrational as the plundering of travellers, especially in the less populous and less civilized North, was indeed a serious problem in seventeenth-century England.[86]

One person among our seven informants did actually have first-hand experience of encountering hostile men. It was Alice Thornton, travelling with her mother, siblings, and servants from Ireland to Yorkshire in 1643. It was a very difficult time for travellers and the major threat were not highway robbers but soldiers. Alice remembered in her autobiography that her mother and others were stopped "with harsh language and abuses by a parliament corporal and his gang"[87] who refused to honour their pass. "Swearing and threatening that [the travellers — D.G.] should be striped,"[88] they took them to a "pittiful house" where they were forced to stay all night. It was only thanks to the intervention of a man who had issued the pass that the whole company was freed.[89]

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[81] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 200.
[82] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 33—34.
[83] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 107.
[84] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 110.
[85] Rokeby, *A Brief Memoir*, p. 43.
[86] Ashley, *Life in Stuart England*, p. 2; Hughes, "Land Travel," p. 207.
[87] Thornton, *The Autobiography*, p. 37.
[88] Thornton, *The Autobiography*, p. 37.
[89] Thornton, *The Autobiography*, p. 37.

When we read seventeenth-century "ego documents," such as the ones that have been used it this study, we often wish that their authors were more expansive in communicating their feelings. We regret that we often do not learn more from this material than that Lady Hoby "took her coach and went abroad" or that John Reresby made another safe journey from London to Yorkshire. We are given facts, but the writers do not tell us openly how they felt about these facts. What conclusions can we draw, then, from these laconic entries about the way people experienced travelling in seventeenth-century England? First of all, the fact that journeys, the long as well as the short ones, were recorded, seems to prove that they were experienced as something important, memorable, and relevant. They were perceived in such a way because they were not made very frequently and, inevitably, they were some kind of change from the day-to-day routine. Unlike many other undertakings, going on a journey was fraught with a variety of potential difficulties and dangers. That is why travelling was perceived as an experience which demanded not only physical strength but also heavenly protection in situations when human power was not enough. No wonder that almost each entry recording the fact of making a journey included also devout phrases and ejaculations in which travellers either asked God for help ("Now the God of Heaven and earth be my speed, and bless mee and keepe mee out of the hands of wicked men, if it be His holy and heavenly will. Amen."[90]) or gave thanks for holding back numberless calamities ("I returned back to my own hous at Thriberge without any accident. God be praised!"[91]; "I had a good journey into Yorkshire this summer […] blessed be my gracious God for it. Amen."[92]; "Came from London to Royston, wherein experienced the goodness of God, in preservation from innumerable evils."[93]; "I came home safe, I praise God." [94]) As we can see, neither gender nor chronology played a significant role in determining the attitude towards travelling. Regardless of who they were and when they lived, seventeenth-century inhabitants of England experienced travelling as a disturbing, sometimes even unpleasant, but important and inescapable fact of life.

[90] Eyre, *A Dyurnall*, p. 107.
[91] Reresby, *Memoirs*, p. 303.
[92] Rokeby, *A Brief Memoir*, p. 62.
[93] Thoresby, *The Diary*, p. 14.
[94] Hoby, *Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby*, p. 195.

Dorota Guzowska

Ludzie w ruchu, czyli o doświadczeniu podróży w siedemnastowiecznej Anglii

Streszczenie

Niniejszy tekst jest próbą przedstawienia, do jakiego stopnia podejmowanie i odbywanie podróży było wydarzeniem niezwykłej wagi w życiu kobiet i mężczyzn żyjących w Anglii epoki Stuartów. Analizie poddano wybrane pamiętniki, autobiografie i księgi pamiętnicze autorstwa osób zamieszkujących w ówczesnych granicach hrabstwa Yorkshire. Choć wszyscy oni reprezentowali wyższe warstwy społeczeństwa angielskiego, różnili się co do pozycji i roli odgrywanej w lokalnych społecznościach, religii, sytuacji rodzinnej i finansowej. Autorka podejmuje próbę odpowiedzi na pytania: Jakie czynniki sprawiały, że podróż odbierana była jako wydarzenie niezwykłe w życiu jednostki? Jakie elementy podróży pojawiają się w zapiskach i dlaczego? W jakim stopniu sposób pisania o podróży oraz selekcja materiału wartego utrwalenia na piśmie mówią nam o tym, jak podróżowanie postrzegane było przez poszczególnych autorów?

Dorota Guzowska

Die Menschen in Bewegung oder vom Reiseerfahren in England des 17.Jhs

Zusammenfassung

Im vorliegenden Text möchte die Verfasserin untersuchen, welche Bedeutung dem Reisen von den in England unter Stuarts Regierung lebenden Frauen und Männern beigemessen war. Sie befasst sich mit ausgewählten, von den in damaliger Yorkshire County wohnenden Autoren verfassten Memoiren, Autobiografien und Tagebüchern. Obwohl alle Autoren den höheren Gesellschaftsschichten angehörten, unterschieden sie sich voneinander in den in der Gesellschaft erfüllten Funktion, in der Konfession, in materieller Lage und im Familienstand. Welche Faktoren verursachten, dass eine Reise als ein ungewöhnliches Ereignis im menschlichen Leben betrachtet wurde? Welche Elemente der Reise und warum kommen in genannten Aufzeichnungen zum Vorschein? Inwieweit beeinflussen die Art und Weise auf welche eine Reise beschrieben wurde und der Auswahl des literarischen Stoffes die Beurteilung des Reisens von den einzelnen Autoren?

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ROOTEDNESS AND APPROPRIATION OF SPACE IN BARBARA KINGSOLVER'S *PRODIGAL SUMMER*

The theme of the relationship between man and nature has always been resonant in American fiction. It became central in the twentieth century and there exists a body of works described as environmental fiction or ecofiction. As ecofiction may seem a vague term, Lawrence Buell in his *Environmental Imagination* identifies four traits which are characteristic of books in this particular category. As Buell points out, in an environmental novel,

> 1. the nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history, 2. the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest, 3. human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation and 4. some sense of the environment as a process rather than a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text[1].

Barbara Kingsolver is a representative of this trend and an original environmenalist. She is an author with an agenda, which centers around locality, nature, and family values. These three concepts seem particularly important for modern Americans who live in a culture which has always upheld mobility, challenge of authority, and displacement. In her novels Kingsolver presents ways of reestablishing a sense of place-connectedness. Moreover, her prose is ecological in its motivations, concerns, and persuations. As one of her critics puts it:

[1] Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 7—8.

> Barbara Kingsolver brings her deep knowledge and respect for nature to fiction. She has made humanity's troubled relationship with the rest of life on earth her signature theme, culminating in *Prodigal Summer*, which any ecocritic would tag as a work of ecofiction. A term coined in the latter third of the last century once the full extent of our impact on the environment became clear, ecofiction refers to short stories and novels that foreground nature and our self-serving and stubbornly destructive responses to it.[2]

Kingsolver's ecological concerns are eloquently expressed in *Prodigal Summer*, in which she seeks to bridge the gap between ecological theory and practice. Moreover, it is Kingsolver's first *conspicuously* environmentally oriented text, which clearly meets Buell's description. In the environmentally conscious weave of *Prodigal Summer* the concepts of rootedness and appropriation of space are prominently explored.

Prodigal Summer comprises three interconnected stories that, although each story concentrates on its own set of characters, communicate with one another. All of them take place in Appalachia and in the whereabouts of the Zebulon Mountain. Each of them offers an imaginative inquiry into the human perception of nature and the sense of place, proving that the two are inextricably linked to each other. Rootedness and appropriation of place is a theme that reverberates in all the stories; yet, in each Kingsolver concentrates on a different aspect of place-connectedness and shows a variety of motivations and responses that produce a sense of belonging.

One way of becoming rooted in a place, in an environment a person is initially indifferent to, is through a conscious, deliberate effort. This is the theme of "Moth Love," the longest part of *Prodigal Summer*, which tells the story of Lusa Maluf Landowski, a young wife, who finds herself on her husband's farm, a place completely unlike her previous urban habitat. Away from the city she feels detached and out of place. She merely observes the daily routines of her husband, and spends her time studying the biology of moths, which are her scholarly interest. Lusa, who is half-Jewish and half-Palestinian, comes into a close-knit Kentuckyan family of Cole's possessive sisters as a stranger and an outsider. As she finds it difficult to communicate with them, her alienation and estrangement deepen. Soon she is widowed, as Cole dies in a crash, and Lusa is left alone to fend for herself. Bereaved and alienated, she is haunted by feelings of guilt occasioned by memories of the rows she and Cole had before his death, and is in desperate need to find a place for herself in a hostile environment. She quickly realizes that in order to maintain the significance of her marriage to Cole and to safegueard

[2] Donna Searman, "Many Shades of Green, or Ecofiction is in the Eye of the Reader," *TriQuarterly*, No. 113, 9—28 (2002), p. 6.

her memories of him, she must stake her claim to his — and her — piece of Appalachia. In this way a slow process of spatial appropriation starts in her life.

Lusa begins to associate the farm with the memory of Cole; the farm gives her a semblance of his presence. Therefore, she rejects the option of leaving the farm and going back to the city; she begins to understand that to live in a place Cole loved means prolonging their short-lived relationship. That is why Lusa decides to stay, against all odds and against the hostility of the sisters. Her decision is virtually subconscious, as she feels numb and does not know how to deal with her widowhood. However, she is soon entangled in the web of daily duties on the farm, which is now claiming her attention as its rightful owner. The farm is facing bankruptcy and Lusa has to give it another lease of life. She considers her options and wants to find a way of keeping it. Discussing the future of the farm with Cole's sister who urges her to cut down and sell for instant cash some old trees growing in the nearby pasture, she says:

> "I will not cut down those trees. I don't care if there's a hundred thousand dollars' worth of lumber on the back of this farm, I'm not selling it. It's what I love best about this place."
>
> "What, the trees?"
>
> "The trees, the moths, the foxes, all the wild things that live up there. It's Cole's childhood up there, too. Along with yours and your sisters'."[3]

This is the way Lusa becomes involved with the landscape. The driving force behind her desire to keep the farm is the love for her husband. As the feelings she had for Cole are now vested in the land that embodied his ambitions, the process of spatial appropriation gains momentum. She gradually becomes rooted in the place that she appropriates as a repository of her dearest and fondest memories.

Rootedness here is a product of bereavement, of the need to belong in a hostile community that Lusa never belonged to when Cole was alive. And as Buell puts it "an awakened sense of physical location and of belonging to some sort of place-based community have a great deal to do with activating environmental concern."[4] Thus, place-connectedness coincides with a need to uphold Lusa's love for her husband. Her environmental concern is manifested by her refusal to grow tobacco on the farm or cut down the trees for lumber. She must find a way of keeping the farm that will not be abusive

[3] Barbara Kingsolver, *Prodigal Summer* (Perennial, 2001), p. 123.

[4] Lawrence Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 56.

of the land and that will not encroach on the wholeness of the farm as Cole left it.

Involvement with the land brings the grieving Lusa consolation and hope. She learns to inhabit the place and allows it gradually to inhabit herself. Barry Lopez asks how it is possible to obtain such reciprocity in his article on the literature of place: "The key […] is to become vulnerable to a place, if you open yourself up you can build intimacy. Out of such intimacy will come a sense of belonging, a sense of not being isolated in the universe."[5] As a result, Lusa becomes vulnerable to the farm and by appropriating this particular place she gradually overcomes her sorrow and her sense of bereavement. Eventually, the farm succeeds — economically and ecologically — when she decides to breed meat goats on it, a venture which everyone thought would fail. Lusa's place-connectedness has further implications, though. She is finally embraced by the clan of Cole's sisters as she decides to adopt the children of one of them, who is dying of cancer.

In Lusa's case, appropriation of place implies place-connectedness and *vice versa*. Here it is a gradual, peaceful evolution that seems to be a natural consequence of her need to belong to the place that she shared with her husband. This need arises after rather than before Cole's death, and is symptomatic of landscape awareness that functions as a substitute for her painful loss. Therefore, Cole's death means the beginning of Lusa's belonging. However, Lusa's determination to belong in the farm is not motivated by her lack of belonging anywhere, as she used to live happily in the city, but by her need not to succumb to the ostracism of the family. When she adopts two children of her dying sister-in-law, her connection to the place is confirmed and the process of appropriation is complete.

In the story of Deanna Wolfe, the protagonist of another ecotale in *Prodigal Summer*, Kingsolver considers place-connectedness from a different angle. Deanna is a 40-something wildlife biologist who works for the Forest Service in the Appalachian Mountains. After the failure of her marriage she removes herself from society to live a solitary life in a log cabin, and now devotes her time to the observation of the forest and to tracking a coyote that may be breeding again in the Zebulon County. Like Lusa, Deanna initially sees nature from a biologist's perspective. Yet, unlike Lusa, Deanna eventually surrenders to nature not deliberately and intentionally but by giving in to natural instincts she cannot control or resist.

An interesting twist in her approach towards her occupation is that she appropriates the forest entirely and develops a sense of the woods being her property. It is not just a deeply felt need to protect and understand it but

[5] Barry Lopez, "A Literature of Place," *U.S. Society & Values, Electronic Journals of the U.S. Information Agency*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (1996) at: 15 June 2005 <usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0896/ijse/tablcon.htm>

a psychological compulsion to assume responsibility for it. She is not only passionate about the predators she tracks in the forest but she also feels that she herself belongs to the forest as its inseparable fraction. Moreover, she is in tune with her environment and pays little attention to herself or her needs, while she is entirely focused on the needs of the forest. This is how Kingsolver introduces her:

> She loved the air after a hard rain, and the way a forest of dripping leaves fills itself with a sibilant percussion that empties your head of words. Her body was free to follow its own rules: a long-legged gait too fast for companionship, unself-conscious squats in the path where she needed to touch broken foliage, a braid of hair nearly as thick as her forearm falling over her shoulder to sweep the ground whenever she bent down. Her limbs rejoiced to be outdoors again, out of her tiny cabin whose log walls had grown furry and overbearing during the long spring rains. The frown was pure concentration, nothing more. Two years alone had given her a blind person's indifference to the look on her own face. [6]

She is so devoted to the workings of the forest and to tracing every sign of coyotes that when Eddie Bondo, a young hunter, a sworn enemy of coyotes and her soon-to-be lover, comes along, she feels he is encroaching on *her* territory. She belongs to the forest as she lives and breathes it, while he does not. He is an external, predatory element that comes into the woods to hunt and therefore tip off the balance that she tends to. She feels he is "an outsider, intruding on this place like kudzu veins."[7]

Deanna develops what Buell calls a strong "place-based territorial identity,"[8] an identity that clashes with her identity of a woman and a lover. Thus, when the love affair begins, she finds herself in conflict between her loyalty to the forest and her own physicality. However, her instincts win her over. Deanna continues to feel obliged to protect the predators even as she begins to luxuriate in her passionate relationship with the predatory Eddie Bondo. She yields, feeling confused and overpowered by the natural forces that drive her. Yet, her place-connectedness provides her with a feeling of stability and certainty. The natural cycle that she observes in the woods reassures her when she becomes befuddled and disoriented by the physical desire she feels for Eddie. Therefore, her rootedness in the environment and place-connectedness function as a galvanizing force that provides Deanna with psychological balance in her unpredictable relationship with Eddie,

[6] Kingsolver, *Prodigal Summer*, p. 2.
[7] Kingsolver, *Prodigal Summer*, p. 4.
[8] See Buell, *Writing for an Endagered World*, p. 58.

who comes and goes whenever he wishes and refuses to make any commitment.

Even so, the conflict between Deanna's sense of responsibility for the space she has appropriated — and this includes the coyote — and Eddie's hunting imperative is clear. The resolution of this conflict comes when Deanna subconsciously accepts the fact that she is a part of the natural world and is subject to the same principles of reproduction as the animals that she observes. Thus, she comes to see herself as a valid link in nature, which she has so far merely observed and admired. Her perspective shifts from that of an observer and a curator of the appropriated space, in which the natural cycles regulate everything, to a participant and an element of this space. She realizes that physically and psychologically she belongs there. What she has learnt about the reproductive cycle of the coyotes now becomes a part of her own experience, which she rejected by living alone in the mountain cabin. Her pregnancy is a surprise to her; she even mistakes it for the menopause, but she eventually accepts the fact that she has been claimed by nature, too.

The third story in *Prodigal Summer*, "Old Chestnuts," presents place-connectedness from yet another perspective. The story of two elderly people, Nannie Rawley and Garnett Walker, two feuding neighbors, shows the great reverence for appropriated space that has developed through the right of prescription. The feud between the neighbors springs from their dramatically different views on farming methods on their adjacent plots of land. Garnett is a great believer in pesticides, while Nannie practices natural farming and organic gardening. Garnett's resentment is moreover a consequence of his belief that Nannie's methods result in spreading vermin, which will destroy his chestnuts, which he is trying to breed in a mission to restore the blight-destroyed tree to America. Thus, the feud between them is one over the right to operate on their appropriated space as they see fit.

In Garnett's case, his efforts to grow a blight-resistant variety of American chestnut are a direct consequence of his rootedness. He grew up in a landscape of which the chestnut was a fundamental element, and now he tries to reclaim it by trying to give it another lease of life. Garnett, a lonely, bitter widower, stakes everything on his ambitious undertaking. The chestnut becomes a symbol of the life he once knew and wants to live again. This is how Kingsolver writes about him:

> He was haunted by the ghost of these old chestnuts, by the great emptiness their extinction had left in the world, and so this was something Garnett did from time to time, like going to the cemetery to be with dead relatives: he admired chestnut wood. He took a moment to honor and praise its color, its grain, and its miraculous capacity to stand up to decades of weather without pressure treatment or insecticides. Why

> and how, exactly, no one quite knew. There was no other wood to compare with it. A man could only thank the Lord for having graced the earth with the American chestnut, that broad-crowned, majestic source of nuts and shade and durable lumber. Garnett could recall the days when chestnuts had grown so thick on the mountaintops of this country that in spring, when the canopies burst into flower, they appeared as snowcapped peaks. [9]

Therefore, his project is aimed at restoring the idyllic past. So, his rootedness is of a nostalgic kind and signifies his yearning for the strength and value epitomized by the trees. This is why he is ready to fight to defend his ideal, even if it means constant discord between him and his good-natured and quite harmless neighbor. He escapes from his loneliness and bitterness into a lofty ideal, as his everyday existence and relationships with others suffer as a result.

In order to protect his trees, Garnett feels he needs to extend his control onto Nannie's adjacent farm. Otherwise, his feeling of rootedness and safety are threatened. He becomes self-righteous, as he feels his project is far more important than Nannie's organic apples. Fighting for territory is central in their troubled relationship. As it continues, they try to proselytize and the questions of God and evolution are often used in the letters they begin to exchange in order to communicate, instead of just talking over the fence. Nannie, a strong-minded woman, is not ready to assume Garnett's point of view all too easily. She responds shrewdly to his arguments and feels as protective of her own land as he does. Undoubtedly, both of them are ecologically conscious and devoted to their respective missions. Though in conflict, they also share a sense of being the land's owners. They have lived on their farms all their lives and neither of them will be told how to use it best.

Rootedeness in the case of Nannie and Garnett is a result of their lengthy inhabitation. The more they feel bound to their farms, the more vehemently they bicker over their differences. It is because of their deep attachment to their place, which Passi defines as "a deeply personal phenomenon founded on one's life-world and everyday practices,"[10] that their convictions collide. Their sense of belonging to one place is so strong that they will not allow alien, and potentially dangerous forces, to encroach on their long-established relationship with their individual spaces. As a result, they become deaf to argument. They identify with the place and, as Buell puts it, "the more a site feels like a place, the more fervently it is so cherished, the greater the poten-

[9] Kingsolver, *Prodigal Summer*, pp. 128—129.

[10] Anssi Paasi, "The Institutionalization of Regions: A Theoretical Frameowrk for Understanding the Emergence of Regions and the Constitution of Regional Identity," *Fennia* 164 (1/1986), p. 131.

tial concern at its violations or even the possibility of violation."[11] The feud between them is motivated precisely by this concern.

Surprisingly, Garnett and Nannie manage to resolve their differences through acts of good will. Nannie discloses that there are two chestnut trees growing in her woodlot, at which Garnett rejoices and decides to do her a good turn by offering her roof shingles that she desperately needs and that he secretly stores. Ultimately, warmer feelings are born between them and the individual spaces that they vigilantly guarded are finally unbarred. Those acts of kindness make it easier for them to understand that they share a feeling overriding all discrepancies — love of place. Once the boundary separating their plots has been crossed, neither of them feels the need to guard it against the other any more. The value of human relationships finally reveals itself to them.

In all three stories Kingsolver explores ways in which place-connectedness manifests itself, how it can be achieved, what its benefits and traps are; she also dwells on the significance of rootedness. The fact that all her characters are already or finally become rooted, allows them to arrive at an understanding of who they are and find their place in life. Rootedness has a cleansing capacity in Kingsolver's view and it is through placedness that the ripples in all her characters' lifelines smooth over. Once Lusa, Deanna, Garnett, and Nannie acknowledge their place and their role in life they become settled and placid. Lusa becomes a respected member of her dead husband's family and a mother of two adopted children, Deanna comes to live with Nannie to have her child and prove herself as a mother, and Nannie and Garnett finally make peace and find solace in their relationship. As one of the critics put it: "Kingsolver, who herself grew up in Kentucky and settled in Tucson, knows the subtle ways that landscape marks us. She is adept at drawing the reader into that place."[12] Moreover, "each of the protagonists in Kingsolver's novels must come to acknowledge the authority of seasoned customs, which is variously embodied in an appreciation for continuity, a sense of place, and family-values that prevail over danger and instability in their fictional world."[13] As Kingsolver suggests, by taking roots in a place we become rooted in ourselves. To have a sense of place is a source of strength for an individual; it helps him/her to identify and clarify his/her goals, but most of all, enables him/her to persevere against all odds.

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[11] Buell, *Writing for an Endagered World*, p. 56.

[12] Amanda Cockrell, "Luna Moths, Coyotes, Sugar Skulls: The fiction of Barbara Kingsolver," *Hollins Critic*, Vol. 38 (2001), p. 2.

[13] Maureen Ryan, "Barbara Kingsolver's Lowfat Fiction," *Journal of American Culture*, Vol. 18 (4/1995) at: 17 Aug, 2005 <vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com.sculib.scu.edu>

Magdalena Hebda

Zakorzenienie i przyswajanie przestrzeni w powieści *Prodigal Summer* Barbary Kingsolver

Streszczenie

W powieści *Prodigal Summer* Barbara Kingsolver bada zagadnienie związku człowieka z naturą, który rozwija się w kontekście przywiązania do miejsca i „przywłaszczenia" przestrzeni. Bohaterowie trzech powiązanych z sobą opowieści zyskują tzw. tożsamość terytorialną, owoc rozwijającego się związku z otaczającą przyrodą i wzrastającego poczucia przynależności. Zaangażowanie w pracę na farmie, spuściźnie po zmarłym mężu, przynosi ukojenie i nadzieję osamotnionej i wyobcowanej bohaterce pierwszej opowieści, Lusie Landowski. Deanna Wolfe, bohaterka drugiej opowieści, zyskuje świadomość własnej kobiecości przez poddanie się cyklom i prawom natury, które dotychczas jedynie obserwowała jako strażnik leśny i badacz odradzającej się populacji kojotów. Trzecia opowieść przedstawia parę sędziwych sąsiadów skłóconych z sobą z powodu odmiennych poglądów na temat uprawy ziemi; odkrywając wzajemne poczucie przynależności i szacunku dla ziemi, nawiązują przyjaźń. Wszystkie historie obrazują to, jak rodzi się przywiązanie do miejsca, oraz sposoby osiągnięcia takiego poczucia, jego zalety i niebezpieczeństwa. Fakt, że wszyscy bohaterowie odkrywają znaczenie przynależności do miejsca, umożliwia im zrozumienie własnej tożsamości i spełnienie w obcowaniu z naturą.

Magdalena Hebda

Die Verwurzelung und das Raumerwerben in dem Roman *Prodigal Summer* von Barbara Kingsolver

Zusammenfassung

In ihrem Roman *Prodigal Summer* erforscht Barbara Kingsolver die Beziehung des Menschen zur Natur im Kontext der Bindung an den Ort und der „Aneignung" von dem Raum. Die Helden der drei miteinander verbundenen Romane erlangen die sog. territoriale Identität, die Frucht der Beziehung zur Umwelt und des steigenden Zugehörigkeitsgefühls. Die Bewirtschaftung der vom gestorbenen Mann geerbten Farm besänftigt die einsame und entfremdete Heldin des ersten Romans, Lusie Landowski und gibt ihr Hoffnung. Deana Wolfe, die Heldin des zweiten Romans wird sich ihrer Weiblichkeit bewusst, wenn sie sich den Naturzyklen und dem Naturrecht aussetzt, die sie bisher als Forstwächterin und Erforscherin der sich erneuernden Kojotenpopulation beobachtete. Die dritte Geschichte handelt über zwei verfeindete Nachbarn, die miteinander wegen unterschiedlicher Ansichten von der Ackerbau zankten, doch im Laufe der Zeit sind sie beide der Gebundenheit an der Scholle und der Achtung vor dem Boden bewusst und werden Freunde. Alle Geschichten zeigen Vor- und Nachteile der Bindung an einen Ort. Da sich alle Helden über die Bedeutung der Bindung an den Ort klar werden, sind sie im Stande, eigene Identität zu begreifen und sich selbst im Umgang mit der Natur zu verwirklichen.

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TRAPPED BY THE GHOST OF A TYPEWRITER: DAVID BASCKIN'S "THE ROSINED AREOLA OF MRS. MTETWA BY BUCKS CAMPBELL"

In "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," contemporary South African writer and psychologist David Basckin[1] exemplifies the intricate nature of the relationship between South African space and history. The connection between these two entities has been established by means of the mediating power of language that enabled the transformation of space into an archive of memory. Archival space houses a variety of documents such as photographs, maps, letters or official papers, etc. All of them share at least one common characteristic, namely, they are preserved in the form of written records of past events and, therefore, they can serve as a source of historical information. In Basckin's story the issues of space, history, and language are inseparably linked; their constant interaction is scrutinised in numerous aspects of ordinary people's lives. "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," then, is a narrative of multiple (hi)stories of individuals connected with their personal space.

Similar views on the subject are presented in *The Road to Botany Bay* where Paul Carter differentiates between two types of history: "spatial" and

[1] David Basckin worked at the former University of Natal in Durban, South Africa, where he did research on animal behaviour. He now works fulltime as a writer, journalist, and filmmaker. A regular critic and columnist for five South African mainstream newspapers and magazines, he has published in *New Contrast, Porno-Literature, Sesame, Staffrider* and *Upstream* and has received literary awards for his fiction. The analysed story comes from a forthcoming collection and page references refer to the MS. The text of the story is used by author's permission.

"imperial."[2] Carter claims that "imperial history" relegates space to the background. The separation of history from the spatial context creates an illusion of its universal dimension, for it does not relate to any individual forms of experience. Thus, such history exists irrespectively not only of space, but also of people who have been deprived of any ability to exert influence on their surroundings. In his extended definition of "imperial history," Carter uses the metaphor of theatrical performance to demonstrate the passivity of people who have been reduced to the role of spectators:

> History is the playwright, coordinating facts into a coherent sequence: the historian narrating what happened is merely a copyist or amanuensis. He is a spectator like anybody else and, whatever he may think of the performance, he does not question the stage conventions. […] Such history is a fabric woven of self-reinforcing illusions. But above all, one illusion sustains it. This is the illusion of the theatre, and, more exactly, the unquestioned convention of the all-seeing spectator. […] Nature's painted curtain is drawn aside to reveal heroic man at his epic labour on the stage of history.[3]

The grandness of "imperial history" does not let itself deal with unimportant and ordinary matters, hence its exclusion of the quotidian aspects of human existence and its appeal to the lofty rhetoric that mythologises "heroic deeds," "momentous events" and "historic moments." It also attaches, as Carter maintains, a lot of importance to "fixed and detachable facts" because they are like "durable objects which can be treated as typical, as further evidence of a universal historical process."[4] And thus, documents, ordinary objects or any other records gain in value, for as props they prove to be indispensable in the theatrical performance of history whose "primary object […] is to legitimate."[5] Such objects are idealised and elevated to the status of cultural artefacts, since unique historical quality is ascribed to them.

In "spatial history" space and history exist on equal terms; what is more, they interact and influence each other. The strong attachment to spatiality brings it closer to ordinary people, to individuals who "coexist" with(in) that space. Paul Carter defines "spatial history" as

> a prehistory of places, a history of roads, footprints, trails of dust and foaming wakes. […] Against the historians, it recognizes that our life

[2] Paul Carter, "Spatial History," in: *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 375—377.

[3] Carter, "Spatial History," p. 375.

[4] Carter, "Spatial History," p. 376.

[5] Carter, "Spatial History," p. 376.

> as it discloses itself spatially is dynamic, material but invisible. It constantly transcends actual objects to imagine others beyond the horizon. […] What is evoked here are the spatial forms and fantasies through which a culture declares its presence. *It is spatiality as a form of non-linear-writing; as a form of history*. […] Such spatial history — history that discovers and explores the lacuna left by imperial history — begins and ends in language. [6]

Despite the fact that both types of history (imperial and spatial) pay special attention to documents and artefacts, in the case of the latter they no longer function as mere empirical data or evidence. They should not be limited only to material objects either. The "spatial forms and fantasies" invoked by Carter concern not only artefacts *per se*, but also all instances of interrelatedness between people, people and cultural objects, time, their sensory experience, etc. These "spatial forms" incorporate all forms of human communication such as, for instance, interpersonal, intrapersonal, verbal, nonverbal (e.g. kinesics, proxemics), the relationships between an individual and his/her personal space, etc. In other words, as Carter argues, they include all forms through which a given culture manifests "its presence." Since all such cultural manifestations act as signs or inscriptions, they manage to transform the space into "a form of non-linear-writing; […] a form of history." To follow Carter's argument, while the task of imperial history is "to legitimate," the object of spatial, textual history is to "understand or interpret."[7] Thus, "spatial history" is inexhaustible because it offers multiple re-readings of "imperial history." In fact, such history uncovers, recalls, and, as Carter observes, "explores the lacuna left by imperial history."

In "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell" Basckin depicts some fragments of reflections and recollections from the life of a fictitious character Bucks Campbell, who in the story performs the role of its author, narrator, and the protagonist. On the fictitious level, i.e., read from the perspective of Campbell as an author, the narrative is written in a form of an article which — as we learn from a brief biographical note[8] preced-

[6] Carter, "Spatial History," p. 376, my emphasis.

[7] Carter, "Spatial History," p. 376.

[8] The biographical note reads: "Gentleman naturalist, big game fisherman, sugar farmer, Nguni linguist, amateur historian of the Zulu Wars, self-taught bassoonist, is there nothing Bucks can't do? And of course, this says nothing of his rugger achievements way back in the Seventies, when Buck's in-scrum strategies broke many a manly nose. Today his wild bird egg collection, the biggest outside of a museum anywhere on the African continent, continues to attract serious twitchers as well as the unwelcome attention of international agitators and animal welfare demonstrators whose efforts would be better spent cleaning the streets in their own countries." In: David Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 1.

ing the text — was published in *The South African Amateur Birder* magazine. However, Basckin's story as such belongs to the subgenre of memoir. Therefore, as the term "memoir" implies, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell" is a subjective, intimate, and written account of past events composed from one's own memory.[9]

The chaotic and fragmentary structure of memoirs reflects the narrator's identity crisis. As Isak Dinesen once wrote: "[W]hen a man has lost his memory, […] he doesn't know who he is."[10] Indeed, in the case of Bucks Campbell, a descendant of British colonisers to Zululand, it is the painful awareness of his own irretentive and selective memory that prompts him to analyse the past. Hence, Campbell rummages through the annals of official colonial History and of his own personal, familial past in order to re-store information that has been missing from both.[11] The procedure of writing memoirs, then, which at the same time signifies the re-writing of history, functions as an antidote to his troubled and restless mind. Moreover, the need to record the flow of events and reflections set against the background of South African history, is a means of coming to terms with the acknowledged burden of colonial past, which turned out to be permeated with serious concealments and understatements. For Bucks Campbell, the reevaluation of the past is thus a *sine qua non* of the ability to find his place within South African space.

In "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell" the issues of space and memory are united through the medium of writing, which is represented by a recurrent motif of an antique typewriter. The anachronistic machine appears for the first time in memoirs when Bucks faces a serious crisis of "recording […] data."[12] Despite the difficulties he consistently claims: "I use, have used, and will continue to use Roy's old Remington

[9] It is interesting to trace the etymological roots of the word "memoir" and "memory" in order to see their connection with the notion of writing. In *Online Etymology Dictionary* we find that "memoir" and "memory" stem from the same root *memorie* (Anglo-French) and Latin *memoria* meaning, "note, memorandum, something written to be kept in mind." The meaning of "memoir" as "person's written account of his life" was first recorded in 1673. And the plural form *memoirs* as "personal record of events" is from 1659. On the same subject, see also: Kevin Cryderman, "Ghosts in the Palimpsest of Cultural Memory: An Archaeology of Faizal Deen's Poetic Memoir *Land Without Chocolate*," *Jouvert*: *A Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 6, Issue 3 (2002) at: 10 Sep. 2005 <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v613/cryder.htm>

[10] Isak Dinesen, *Daguerreotypes and Other Essays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 21.

[11] On a similar subject of simultaneous coexistence of both levels of the past in postcolonial literature, i.e. of official, colonial History intertwined with personal history, see: Cryderman Kevin, "Ghosts in the Palimpsest of Cultural Memory" and Vennarini Lucia, " 'Sugar in Your Tea?' Apocalyptic Visions of the Future on a Natal Sugar Farm: John Conyngham's *The Arrowing of the Cane*," in: *Ebony, Ivory & Tea*, eds. Zbigniew Białas and Krzysztof Kowalczyk-Twarowski (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2004), pp. 164—179.

[12] Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 3.

Portable Number One which I found abandoned at Peace Cottage a couple of decades ago."[13] For recording and storing his own memories he makes use of the old typewriter,[14] which used to belong to his ancestor, Roy Campbell, an actual South African Anglophone poet, to whom the machine must have served a similar purpose.

The choice of Remington typewriters for recording histories is ambiguous, if not suspect. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Philo Remington's Company apart from the mass production of typewriters, ruled also in war industry as a leading maker of firearms. Thus it is inevitable that the very name "Remington" brings to mind an association of typewriters with guns and wars.[15] This, in turn, automatically triggers the earliest memories of the ways in which "imperial relations"[16] were established, namely, through dispossession, bloodshed and cruel wars but also through the operation of language. According to Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, the editors of *De-scribing Empire. Post-colonialism and Textuality*, "[I]nstitutional colonialism was maintained by language as much as by guns."[17] What follows is their claim that "colonialism […] is an operation of discourse, and as an operation of discourse it interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation. They are always already written by that system of representation."[18] In his story, Basckin points to this fact by suggesting that not only guns were dangerous weapons in the hands of British colonisers, but also the typewriters through the medium of which they managed to transform the South African space into text.

One of the discursive strategies adopted by the new incomers to South Africa was to posit the land as an empty space or, by analogy, a blank sheet. In the history of South African Anglophone literature there exists a long tradition of describing the landscape in terms of its reputed vacuity. J.M. Coetzee in *White Writing. On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* claims that this method resulted from the colonisers' inability to establish "any kind of relation at all that consciousness [could — A.K.] have with it."[19] The process of constructing or describing the land as empty has produced an important

[13] Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 3.

[14] Collectors know the model as Remington Portable, No. 1 (1920).

[15] Bucks Campbell is well aware of this fact: "Thank God for the robustness of the Remington, made from the same bright steel as the cowboy rifles." In: Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 4.

[16] Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, "Introduction," in: *De-scribing Empire. Postcolonialism and Textuality*, eds. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 3.

[17] Tiffin and Lawson, "Introduction," in: *De-scribing Empire*, p. 1.

[18] Tiffin and Lawson, "Introduction," in: *De-scribing Empire*, p. 3.

[19] J.M Coetzee, *White Writing. On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 7.

result. As Simon Ryan rightly observes: "A blank sheet, of course, intimates that there has been no previous history, but also teleologically constructs the future as a place/time for writing."[20] South Africa as a blank sheet must have awakened the explorers' desire to fill it, inscribe it, or to leave some traces of their presence by writing their own version of history. Simultaneously, however, the same space signifies the erasing and neglecting of the pre-colonial past and the existence of its indigenous inhabitants.

The history constructed as an interchangeable series of erasures and overwritings resembles the structure of a palimpsest, which originally signified a "parchment from which earlier writing has been removed to clear it for new writing."[21] However, the previous inscriptions can never be completely erased from its surface and, as a result, the parchment always bears their traces. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin analyse the trope of the palimpsest as one of the key concepts in postcolonial discourse: "The concept of the palimpsest is a useful way of understanding the developing complexity of culture; as previous 'inscriptions' are erased and overwritten, yet remain as traces within present consciousness. This confirms the dynamic, contestatory, and dialogic nature of linguistic, geographic, and cultural space as it emerges in post-colonial experience."[22]

What is more, according to Kevin Cryderman, for whom the palimpsest "emblematises colonial history,"[23] there exists an important connection between this concept and the subgenre of memoirs. The palimpsest, he argues, "seems to embody the historiography and geography of the post-colonial condition — the Imperial composition of history and inscription on an assumed *terra nullius* — as well as the action of the memoir writer."[24] Both the palimpsest and memoirs are orientated towards the reconstruction of the past. The main focus of this reconstruction is the recovery of fainter imprints of history which unfairly hidden beneath the official version of "imperial history" were consigned to oblivion. Moreover, in this context, as Cryderman maintains, memoirs acquire the unique status of a testimony — not in the sense of a formal document, but rather "of bearing witness to the silences and over-writings of historiography and colonial history."[25]

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[20] Simon Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness. Cartography, Exploration and the Construction of Australia," in: *De-scribing Empire. Postcolonialism and Textuality,* eds. Tiffin and Lawson, p. 127.

[21] Harper Douglas, *Online Etymology Dictionary* (2001) at: 10 Sep. 2005 <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=palimpsest>

[22] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 176.

[23] Cryderman, "Ghosts in the Palimpsest of Cultural Memory."

[24] Cryderman, "Ghosts in the Palimpsest of Cultural Memory."

[25] Cryderman, "Ghosts in the Palimpsest of Cultural Memory."

In Basckin's story, the trope of the palimpsest is explored on both levels: as the aforementioned multi-layered image of colonial history, and on a personal level, as the narrator's recollections. The old Remington's case contains some interesting writings:

> The wooden case — fragile with borer — held a couple of manuscripts, each one annotated by a fountain pen once filled with Radiant Blue ink. On the platen was the second or third page of a letter. "[…] cannot be sure of Plomer's commitment to a broad South Africanism. His English mind is in one place, his cock in another. Van der Post on the other hand, is completely reliable. His every word is measured, his relationship to truth a straight and narrow line running from his chilly Calvinist brain to his honest Boer heart."
> […]
> My stocks of typing paper, foolscap would you believe it, came with the typewriter. It was only after I began the ribbonless typing that I became aware that there were other, fainter impresses on the page. On examination, I deduced that the foolscap had largely served as backing paper for the original owner of the machine, which explains why it was in the case to begin with.
> Some of them were bits of prose, or maybe correspondence, about some children's adventures in the Umhlanga Lagoon which lay adjacent to Peace Cottage. Others were poems, works in progress I suppose. There was even a close analysis of Nicaea, with remarks that indicated a small yearning for gnosis.[26]

The old manuscripts used to belong to the "original owner of the machine," the poet Roy Campbell, who in the story apparently plays the role of the narrator's ancestor. The memory of Roy Campbell manifests itself in numerous allusions to the names of authentic places where he spent his childhood, for instance the Umhlanga Lagoon or Peace Cottage and to the names of such figures as William Plomer and Laurens van der Post, who, in the 1920s, along with Campbell, edited the South African literary magazine *Voorslag*. In this context, the typewriter, once again, functions as a medium. But this time it is a medium of a different kind. Now the anachronistic Remington and the records serve as intermediaries between the worlds of the living and the dead. The discovery of the old faded manuscripts revives the memory of a man who has been dead for a couple of decades and who, by now, has been almost forgotten.[27]

What mostly seems to relate the South African poet to Bucks Campbell is a great passion for animals. In a poem entitled "To a Pet Cobra," from his

[26] Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 4.

[27] On the life of Roy Campbell, see: Peter Alexander, *Roy Campbell. A Critical Biography* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1982).

collection *Adamastor* (1927) Roy Campbell identifies himself with a venomous snake.[28] The poet describes the reptile as deadly and yet he discovers that they have a lot in common. Bucks Campbell in a few episodes in "The Rosined Areola" also identifies himself with a snake, but in this story, it is an egg-eating snake native to South Africa. Such identification can be read as the acknowledgment of one's predatory nature. The narrator, like the snake, hunts for wild birds' eggs. Bucks attracts the birds' attention by imitating the sounds and songs they produce. Once their location is known, he sends his "timeless companion,"[29] Mrs. Mtetwa, to raid the nests and gather the eggs. At home he weighs them, measures their diameter and records the information with the old Remington. When he has finished recording the data, Bucks continues to blow the contents of the eggs which he uses later as food. And the empty shells serve as exhibits in his famous wild bird egg collection.[30]

The wild egg hunt is the essence of Bucks's life. It is the only way to achieve a relative integration of the past and the present:

> In the early evenings, we like to sit on the veranda together and examine the past. I drink cane; she turns the pages [of a photograph album — A.K.]. The images are only of me, or rather, of my personal portfolio of selves. I gaze out of the little squares, standing beside a marlin. Or holding a rugger ball. Or operating an irrigation system. Or upon a peak, looking down at a battlefield. Or with a woman, sometimes with children. Each photograph reveals an ecosystem I no longer colonize. Memory is sloughed off like a snake's skin, dead, complete, inside out. Save for the integrative function of the wild egg hunt, every day like the photographs consists of a radical disjuncture: each one discrete, discontinuous, a class of one.[31]

[28] Alexander, *Roy Campbell*, p. 62.

[29] Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 2.

[30] "Back at the homestead, I settled down in my laboratory, preparing to blow the eggs. I ordered a cup of rooibos tea without sugar from Mrs. Mtetwa, impatiently waving away her gestural offering of milk.

Blowing an egg is an exacting process, needing much practice and a strong stomach. What you do is this: with a needle you pierce the egg at its north and south poles. Placing a thin glass tube in your mouth, you position the open end over one of the pierced holes in the egg and blow gently. The force of the air displaces the contents of the egg, leaving an empty shell, its integrity of form near perfect, violated onaly by the tiny holes.

Practice on something as extraordinarily rare as the sugar thrush egg was daunting in its own right. The strong stomach was a separate issue, based entirely on the relative freshness of the egg. Some, inevitably, might have rotted. Others, equally inevitably, might be partially developed with a living, blind, embryo within. No problems in themselves, of course: just the gut churning proximity of such things to one's mouth." In: Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," pp. 7—8.

[31] Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," pp. 4—5.

The photograph, another method of recording and storing data, divides space and time into fragments, and as such, it brings discontinuity to Campbell's life. Each photograph represents a different moment from Bucks's past life with which he no longer identifies, or which he has already forgotten. In this respect the photograph and the palimpsest share the same quality — both of them bring the memories of past events back to his mind. Recollections, which are like a snake's skin "dead, complete, inside out," have been abandoned and consigned to oblivion. Here, the narrator's identification with the egg-eating snake is made manifest once again. Basckin suggests that a man sheds his memories as naturally as a snake sloughs off its skin. In order to remember the past events, Campbell records and stores them in the form of something material as, for instance, words on paper, photographs or exhibits.

Bucks's wild egg hunt has a twofold nature. On the one hand, it provides him with essential food, a source of life; but on the other, it satisfies the needs of Buck as a collector. His greatest aim is to

> locate the rare sugar thrush on her nest and so collect the first eggs of that species for my collection. On the topic of the sugar thrush the latest journals are univocal: the bird is rare, some say apocryphal, the eggs unknown save for some possibly mislabelled specimens in the Berlin Museum, donated by one of the many evangelical Lutheran missionaries to British Zululand so long ago.
> As they so often are, the journals are wrong. I have seen the sugar thrush, I know her song. These truths were revealed to me as a boy, wandering with my border collie across the sugar fields, single barrelled .410 in one hand, an inferior British birding scope in the other.[32]

In fact, such a bird as a sugar thrush does not exist. In "The Rosined Areola" the true existence of that bird has also been undermined. Some say, Bucks admits, that the bird is apocryphal. The official journals have never recorded any evidence that would prove its existence, yet the sugar thrush remains so important for Bucks, who persistently insists on finding it. Perhaps for him the bird emblematises the missing link in the "imperial history" of Zululand. A thrush is a very common bird, but a sugar thrush, in a quite obvious way, alludes to the vast South African plantations of sugarcane. Sugar, in turn, as Cryderman claims, is "a bittersweet reminder of colonialism."[33] Thus, it also serves as the reminder of the history of sugar production which abounds in instances of colonial exploitation and abuse.

[32] Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 5.
[33] Cryderman, "Ghosts in the Palimpsest of Cultural Memory."

In "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell" David Basckin rewrites the colonial history of South Africa. Using such tropes as the Remington typewriter, photo*graph*s, and palimpsests, he gains access to the past and manages to reverse the course of writing from that which signifies colonial appropriation to that which stands for the symbolic excavation of colonial concealments. In the last paragraph of the story, Bucks provides the readers of *The South African Amateur Birder* with a recipe for an omelette prepared from the eggs of "the near-extinct sugar thrush."[34] He suggests that the omelette should be served with "some fresh leaves of wild *mfinu* spinach which may be found growing amongst the graves, near the burnt-out Pondo barracks."[35] This fragment recalls some events form the recent history of South Africa. Namely, the graves are the remainders of the Pondo Revolt, which took place in the early 1960s, and resulted from the resistance of Pondo people against the implementation of new Bantu authorities appointed by the Nationalist government. The government brutally suppressed the revolt. As a result, tens of unarmed peasants lost their lives. In 2003, the remains of those murdered, were exhumed for proper reburial. Campbell's writing and the old Remington, it seems, have the power of moving back and forth in time. Together they establish a space where the past and the present are interwoven, where food — a source of life, is gathered near the places of burial, and eventually, where the living dwell amongst the dead.

[34] "Making a successful omelette, whether it be of chicken eggs or those of the near-extinct sugar thrush, requires the same careful routine.

Using a fork, or better, a ball whisk, whip the eggs until the liquid is a uniform yellow. Select an unscratched heavy based saucepan from your collection, place it on the hob and bring it up to a medium heat. Add a knob of butter and 15ml of extra virgin olive oil. Allow these to melt and combine, then in one movement pour in the whipped sugar thrush eggs. As the eggs hit the pan, lower the heat by a third. Let the eggs become partially solid then flip the mass over. Remove from the hob as soon as the eggs have set to your liking, and serve with either a paste made from chillies gathered near the abandoned Indian cane cutters' housing, or some fresh leaves of wild *mfinu* spinach which may be found growing amongst the graves, near the burnt-out Pondo barracks." In: Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 8.

[35] Basckin, "The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell," p. 8.

Aleksandra Kania

Więziony przez ducha maszyny: analiza opowiadania Davida Basckina „The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell"

Streszczenie

W artykule podjęto próbę analizy współczesnego opowiadania południowoafrykańskiego „The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell" autorstwa Davida Baskina. Celem artykułu jest prześledzenie związku zachodzącego pomiędzy przestrzenią jednego z regionów Afryki Południowej a jego historią. Wykorzystano teorię Paula Cartera (*The Road to Botany Bay*) z jej kluczowymi pojęciami „historii przestrzennej" (*spatial history*) oraz „historii imperialistycznej" (*imperial history*). Punkt wyjścia interpretacji stanowi analiza jednego z kluczowych motywów pojawiających się w opowiadaniu — przenośnej maszyny do pisania marki Remington z drugiej dekady dwudziestego wieku. Właścicielem owej maszyny, jak sugeruje Basckin w „The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell", jest Roy Campbell (1901—1957), autentyczny pisarz i poeta południowoafrykański. Maszyna do pisania Campbella to zatem symbol, który pełni funkcję ogniwa łączącego teraźniejszość z przeszłością regionu czy fikcję z elementami rzeczywistymi; w rękach bohatera opowiadania — tytułowego Bucksa Campbella — staje się również narzędziem, które umożliwi mu „zapisanie" historii (spojrzenie na historię) Zululandu z nowej, odmiennej perspektywy.

Aleksandra Kania

Vom Maschinengeist gefangen: die Analyse der Erzählung „The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell" von David Basckin

Zusammenfassung

Die Verfasserin analysiert David Basckins gegenwärtige südafrikanische Erzählung „The Rosined Areola of Mrs. Mtetwa by Bucks Campbell". Sie hat zum Ziel, den Zusammenhang zwischen dem Raum einer südafrikanischen Region und deren Geschichte zu erforschen. Dabei stützt sie sich auf Paul Carters Theorie (*The Road to Botany Bay)* mit deren Hauptbegriffen: „räumliche Geschichte" (*spatial history*) und „imperialistische Geschichte" (*imperial history*). Ein Ausgangspunkt ist die Analyse eines der wichtigsten, in der Erzählung auftretenden Motive — der tragbaren Schreibmaschine „Remington" aus der zweiten Dekade des 20.Jhs. Ihr Besitzer war — so David Basckin — Roy Campbell, der in den Jahren 1901—1957 lebende, südafrikanische Schriftsteller und Dichter. Campbells Schreibmaschine ist ein Symbol, ein Glied, mit dessen Hilfe die Gegenwart der Region mit deren Vergangenheit, oder fiktive Elemente mit den wirklichen verbunden werden. In den Händen des Titelhelden der Erzählung, Bucks Campbell, wird sie zu einem Werkzeug, das ihm möglich macht, die Geschichte von Zululand aus einer anderen Perspektive zu betrachten.

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MAPPING THE LIMITS OF CIVILISATION: J.M. COETZEE'S *WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS*

Commenting on the characteristic non-specificity of settings in J.M. Coetzee's novels, Rita Barnard said: "What is at stake for him is not place or landscape as an object of mimesis, but the discursive and generic and political codes that inform our understanding and knowledge of place."[1] In *Waiting for the Barbarians* space is used metaphorically in the exploration of what appears to be the book's major concern: drawing the boundaries of civilisation. Although the book does tell a story which unfolds in time and depicts the transformation of the protagonist, it is the presentation of space and its function in the plot that are foregrounded.

The secondary importance of the temporal dimension stems from the predictability of the plot, which traces the decline and fall of an unnamed empire. In an allegorical shortcut the novel charts several stages of the process. The frontier town featuring in the story is not invaded by barbarian hordes but the anticipation itself sets in motion the mechanism of self-destruction: the sense of obscure menace lurking beyond the borders of the empire materialises into rumours which in turn cause the empire to make a pre-emptive strike. The misguided and futile attempts to confront the enemy lead to economic decline, depopulation, plunge into chaos and anarchy. The protagonist and narrator of the story is the unnamed magistrate of the town who shares "a solitude that is both spatial and social"[2] with Coetzee's

[1] Quoted in: T. Kai Norris Easton, "Text and Hinterland: J.M. Coetzee and the South African Novel," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1995): Academic Search Premier. Jagiellonian Library, Kraków, at: 28 March 2002 <www.bj.uj.edu.pl/zb/bazy/ASP.htm>

[2] Julian Gitzen, "The Voice of History in the Novels of J.M. Coetzee," *Critique*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1993): Academic Search Premier. Jagiellonian Library, Kraków, at: 28 March 2002 <www.bj.uj.edu.pl/zb/bazy/ASP.htm>

other central characters. He deeply resents the intrusion of history into the town's peaceful, uneventful existence. To him, the encroachment of history consists in forceful conversion of cyclical to linear time. Yet he also acknowledges the overarching cyclical pattern under which the supposed linearity is subsumed:

> I did not mean to get embroiled in this. I am a country magistrate, a responsible official in the service of the Empire, serving out my days on this lazy frontier, waiting to retire. I collect the tithes and taxes, administer the communal lands, see that the garrison is provided for, supervise the junior officers who are the only officers we have here, keep an eye on trade, preside over the law-court twice a week. For the rest I watch the sun rise and set, eat and sleep and am content. […] But last year stories began to reach us from the capital of unrest among the barbarians. […] Of this unrest I myself saw nothing. In private I observed that in every generation, without fail, there is an episode of hysteria about the barbarians.[3]

The universality of the pattern is underscored by the likelihood that the ruins excavated near the fort testify to a similar story:

> Perhaps in bygone days criminals, slaves, soldiers trekked the twelve miles to the river, and cut down poplar trees, and sawed and planed them, and transported the timbers back to this barren place in carts, and built houses, and a fort too, for all I know, and in the course of time died, so that their masters, their prefects and magistrates and captains, could climb the roofs and towers morning and evening to scan the world from horizon to horizon for signs of the barbarians. […] Perhaps ten feet below the floor lie the ruins of another fort, razed by the barbarians, peopled with the bones of folk who thought they would find safety behind high walls. Perhaps when I stand on the floor of the courthouse, if that is what it is, I stand over the head of a magistrate like myself, another grey-haired servant of Empire who fell in the arena of his authority, face to face at last with the barbarian (pp. 15—16).

By the end of his narrative the magistrate has grown convinced that the history of his own town indeed follows the pattern once enacted by the other, obscure settlement, and his decision to write memoirs stems from his recognition of this affinity. Hence the essential timelessness of the experience described in the narrative (for which the present tense is used) situates *Wait-*

[3] J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 8. All subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the main text in parentheses.

ing for the Barbarians in the category of novels with a spatial focus, where, according to Edwin Muir, time reaches an equilibrium and an almost mythical permanence, giving the stationary spatial world an air of universality.[4]

The town where the action is set is unnamed and undistinguished — apart from its location. It is referred to as an oasis, a fort or a frontier town; each of these categories implies a different aspect of the settlement but all of them are related to its isolation and entail a sharp difference between the town and what lies beyond it. Significantly, it is the only place of human habitation depicted in the book. The lake and the river make this place the only habitable one over the vast surrounding country. This is how the protagonist recounts his return to the town:

> From as far away as ten miles we can make out the jutting watchtowers against the sky; while we are still on the track south of the lake the ochre of the walls begins to separate out from the grey of the desert background. I glance at the men behind me. Their step too has quickened, they can barely hide their excitement. We have not bathed or changed our clothes in three weeks, we stink, our skin is dry and seamed in black from the beating of wind and sun, we are exhausted, but we walk like men, even the boy who stumps along now on his bandaged foot with his chest thrown out. It could have been worse: it could have been better, perhaps, but it could have been worse. Even the horses, their bellies bloated with marshgrass, seem restored to life (pp. 75—76).

The very existence of the town as an oasis determines its commitment to agriculture and trade, both dependent on the change of seasons. The life of the residents revolves around the cycle of nature, where survival and continuity are both the aim and their own reward. The settlement nourishes a closed community, largely independent and unaware of the world outside. The presence of water makes life possible amidst the desert. This perception of the town as an oasis constructs the space outside it as a wasteland incapable of sustaining life. Inside the walls living is tranquil and relatively untroubled, which prompts the magistrate to describe the place as "paradise on earth":

> No one who paid a visit to this oasis […] failed to be struck by the charm of life here. We lived in the time of the seasons, of the harvests, of the migration of the waterbirds. We lived with nothing between us and the stars. We would have made any concession, had we only known what, to go on living here. This was paradise on earth (p. 154).

[4] Edwin Muir, *The Structure of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1953), p. 83.

However, the narrator offers this description only *after* the place has irrevocably lost whatever semblance of paradise it embodied. Inscribing it in the myth of paradise is merely a narrative convention, immediately dismissed by the narrator himself as a plea rather than a realistic account. Yet, if the biblical plot of the fall were to be imposed on the story, it might be justifiable by the expulsion of the protagonist into experience of evil, painful self-knowledge, and historical time.

Identification of the town as a fort redefines it as a place committed not so much to growth and continuity but confinement and self-defence. The walls, apart from delineating the boundary of the settlement, perform the function of protecting it from the outside since redefinition of the town entails redefinition of the space beyond it. The emptiness and barrenness of the desert is now charged with enmity and malevolence. The desert is thought to be the abode of barbarians antagonistic to the inhabitants of the town. While the magistrate is in office, the town hardly ever plays the role of fort, for apart from the occasional skirmish with some nomads no external danger unsettles the tranquillity of life. The imposition of a military aspect on the town takes place when officers arrive from the capital to defend the empire against the supposed barbarian invasion. The redefinition takes place by force; its inadequacy and artificiality are repeatedly stressed. The impulse for action does not come from the frontier but, paradoxically, from the remote capital. To the inhabitants of the town the barbarians appear to be merely elusive nomads on the periphery of the explored territory. Officers come equipped with false certitudes as to why and how to conduct the military operation. The expedition is guided by maps based on fragmentary, often second-hand accounts. Because the frontier town has no immediate neighbour, the imperial border has been arbitrarily drawn and is recognised only by the empire. The campaign consists largely in traversing empty territory and capturing accidental people who are forced by torture to give testimony leading to the intensification of the military effort. The irony is that for a number of reasons, not the least of them linguistic, only token communication can be established between the captors and the captives. In order to elicit the truth that the officers wish to hear, they have to invent and implant it in the prisoners first. This is how the colonel presents his methods of investigation:

> I am speaking of a situation in which I am probing for the truth, in which I have to exert pressure to find it. First I get lies, you see — this is what happens — first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That is how you get the truth (p. 5).

The prisoners have their backs inscribed "enemy" and are subsequently subject to torture and killing, which stresses both the violence and arbitrariness of the empire's appropriation of the land and the people.

The fact that the terms "civilisation" and "empire" are used interchangeably and that the expedition from the start aims at securing the limits of both is illustrated by the conversation between the magistrate and the colonel: " 'if you get lost [says the magistrate to the officer — B.K.] it becomes our task here to find you and bring you back to civilisation.' We pause, savouring from our different positions the ironies of the word" (p. 12). Hence the journeys in the frontier territory take on the significance of defining the equivocal concept. The description of the setting in the book loses its mimetic function; space has been named and defined by civilisation in an attempt at self-definition. This use of space is evident also in the magistrate's dream visions. The first of these occurs after he has failed to prevent the torture of prisoners:

> From horizon to horizon the earth is white with snow. It falls from a sky in which the source of light is diffuse and everywhere present, as though the sun has dissolved into mist, become an aura. In the dream I pass through the barracks gate, pass the bare flagpole. The square extends before me, blending at its edges into the luminous sky. Walls, trees, houses have dwindled, lost their solidity, retired over the rim of the world (p. 9).

Thus the landscape loses its realistic aspect and begins to epitomise the protagonist's growing moral anxiety as well as the obscure zone between barbarity and civilisation. The location of the town on the frontier makes it the place where the delineation effectively has to occur. From the position of the empire, the settlement is its most remote outpost, an extension of its identity and power. The expedition is an attempt at drawing the geographical and political limits of the empire but for the protagonist it subsequently entails the necessity to draw the boundary of what constitutes civilisation in terms of notions such as justice, law, and decency. The ambiguity of the project is signalled by the significant omission of the presentation of the capital. In the magistrate's reminiscences, the capital is represented by "the pavilion gardens where musicians perform for the strolling crowds and one's feet rustle through fallen autumn chestnut leaves; a bridge […] from which one sees the reflection of the moon on the water that ripples around the pediments in the shape of a flower of paradise" (pp. 49—50). The magistrate himself is given to reading classics, cataloguing collections, collating maps, pragmatically implementing law and order, encouraging progress of the small community. But it is also from the capital that the soldiers and the

torturers come. Yet the magistrate and the officer who has brutally killed and mutilated prisoners share the same code of social rituals. The magistrate reflects: "Throughout a trying period he and I have managed to behave towards each other like civilised people. All my life I have believed in civilised behaviour; on this occasion, however, I cannot deny it, the memory leaves me sick with myself" (p. 24).

The protagonist's experience of drawing the ethical boundary is reflected in his journey to the limits of the empire. The purpose of the journey is to hand over the barbarian girl who was left behind in the town back to her own people. She had been blinded and mutilated during interrogation. It is only after a long and arduous expedition across unexplored wastes that the destination can be reached. However, the magistrate stops at the border of the empire; he never gets a glimpse of the barbarian country and never contemplates crossing over. The culminating point of his journey marks also the psychological and moral limit to his acquiescence in imperial atrocities. On coming back, he opposes the inhumanity of the empire and is consequently treated as one of its enemies and subjected to the same ordeal. At the culmination of his suffering at the hands of imperial officers he hallucinates about reaching the borders of the empire again.

The book exposes as misguided, futile, and ultimately self-destructive attempts at defining civilisation by setting up barbarity as its actively hostile, external opponent. The very vacuity of the desert at the edge of the empire encourages different interpretations but in reality the land hides nothing; it is just as it appears to be: empty. The land of the barbarians is not depicted and remains unexplored. All expeditions beyond the magistrate's town cross uncharted territory on which, however, the empire tries to superimpose its own rule, arbitrarily construing the void of the desert as peopled with enemies. This does not mean that barbarity is an empty concept but that it is misused. Barbarians do appear on the periphery of the civilised land. However, the existence of the vast, almost uncrossable zone between their land and the town suggests that there is no direct contact between the two, hence the idea of opposition between them is false. Therefore they should not serve as standards for mutual definitions. When the magistrate accuses the colonel of being a barbarian ("*You* are the enemy, *you* have made the war, and *you* have given them all the martyrs they need – starting not now but a year ago when you committed your first filthy barbarities here!" (p. 114)), it is not his own definition of the barbarian that he is using but the colonel's. Hence Michael Valdez Moses commenting on the book is right in saying that "The magistrate wishes to maintain a clear, even absolute distinction between civilization and barbarism," but wrong in claiming that the protagonist "revers[es] the customary roles that the Empire and

the nomadic peoples have historically assumed."[5] The barbarians are never shown as embodying values opposite to those that civilisation claims for itself. To the magistrate, who understands local affairs and discards the imperial perception of the barbarians as enemies, the barbarian tribes are simply "pastoralists, nomads, tent-dwellers" (p. 15) associated with forces of nature, passively waiting for the civilisation to exhaust itself and ready to reclaim its place:

> We think of the country here as ours, part of our Empire – our outpost, our settlement, our market centre. But these people, these barbarians don't think of it like that at all. We have been here more than a hundred years, we have reclaimed land from the desert and built irrigation works and planted fields and built solid homes and put a wall around our town, but they still think of us as visitors, transients. […] They do not doubt that one of these days we will pack our carts and depart to wherever it was we came from, that our buildings will become homes for mice and lizards, that their beasts will graze on these rich fields we have planted (p. 51).

At the end of the story the town indeed awaits annihilation, in the wake of the other obscure settlement which has not even survived in barbarian legends. It is the desert itself that may engulf the settlement if the continuous effort of planting and building ceases. The drying up of the nearby lake poses a more genuine threat to the town's existence than the supposed invasion.

The empty space separating civilisation from barbarity is reflected in the mental distance between the magistrate and the barbarian girl. Her body permanently bears the marks of torture which she underwent while the magistrate withdrew from the scene, thus passively making himself an accomplice in imperial cruelty. His attempt to "read" the disfigured body becomes, as Samuel Durrant argues, "not just an act of empathy but a radical experience of abjection in which we gain a momentary awareness of that which underwrites civilization."[6] The marks on the girl's body have been written there by the empire of which the magistrate is also a servant; he speaks to her his own language, realising only when it is too late that she has language of her own. Therefore she remains a surface beneath which he is unable to probe. The marks, which in one sense externalise the magistrate's own guilt, resist his reading, just as the girl's mind and body remain

[5] Michael Valdez Moses, "The Mark of Empire: Writing, History, and Torture in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*," *Kenyon Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1993): Academic Search Premier. Jagiellonian Library, Kraków at: 28 March 2002 <www.bj.uj.edu.pl/zb/bazy/ASP.htm>

[6] Samuel Durrant, "Bearing Witness to Apartheid: J.M. Coetzee's Inconsolable Works of Mourning," *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (1999): Academic Search Premier. Jagiellonian Library, Kraków at: 28 March 2002 <www.bj.uj.edu.pl/zb/bazy/ASP.htm>

impenetrable to him: "[W]ith this woman it is as if there is no interior, only a surface across which I hunt back and forth seeking entry" (p. 43). Her body and face seem to him blank; her "black glassy insect eyes" give him "no reciprocal gaze but only [his — B.K.] doubled image cast back at [him — B.K.]" (p. 44). Hence the brief and inconclusive encounter with the Other leads primarily to unsettling self-reflection. While compulsively trying to examine the girl he is effectively all the time examining his own ethical stature. The futility of his efforts to communicate with the girl lead him to end this bizarre relationship, and the girl for her part finds no reason to stay in the town. The unbridgeable gap between the magistrate and the barbarian girl, corresponding to the spatial distance between the town and the barbarian country, functions as a metaphor for the separation between the notions of civilisation and barbarity understood simply as lack of sophistication at an early stage of mankind's development. Therefore civilisation must define itself in relation to itself, against the void that surrounds it. The actual threat to civilised values resides within. The magistrate never learnt the language of the girl but his screams during torture at the hands of imperial officers are recognised as barbarian language.

David Attwell once aptly remarked that Coetzee's work may be seen as an attempt to project a "post-humanist, reconstructed ethics."[7] In *Waiting for the Barbarians* the ethical dimension clearly plays a crucial role in the notion of civilised behaviour. When he objects to the cruel treatment of the captives, the magistrate can only shout "No" but can find no adequate words to articulate the reason why men should be treated, or, for that matter, killed in a humane manner. He reflects:

> The words they stopped me from uttering may have been very paltry indeed, hardly words to rouse the rabble. What, after all, do I stand for besides an archaic code of gentlemanly behaviour towards captured foes, and what do I stand against except the new science of degradation that kills people on their knees, confused and disgraced in their own eyes? (p. 108).

The archaic code has no external criteria against which to be asserted. Confronting his former torturer with questions about the officer's moral self-perception, the magistrate glances up at the empty sky. Earlier he described himself as "one man [in this farthest outpost of the Empire of light — B.K.] who in his heart was not a barbarian" (p. 104). The emptiness surrounding the only civilised man, the desert beyond the town is a metaphor for the existential void against which civilisation must affirm itself and set its own limits.

[7] Quoted in: Easton, "Text and Hinterland."

Bożena Kucała

Kartografia rubieży cywilizacji: *Czekając na barbarzyńców* J.M. Coetzee'ego

Streszczenie

Autorka poddaje analizie potraktowanie przestrzeni w powieści J.M. Coetzee'ego *Czekając na barbarzyńców* i stawia tezę, że odczytanie książki w kategoriach przestrzenności pozwala postrzegać ją jako próbę zdefiniowania pojęcia cywilizacji. Ponieważ osnową fabuły jest oczekiwanie na najazd barbarzyńców na pograniczne miasto — przedstawione w sposób charakterystyczny dla konwencji alegorii — potraktowanie problemu przestrzeni w tej powieści daje się interpretować w świetle dążenia głównego bohatera i zarazem narratora do rozgraniczenia pojęć cywilizacji i barbarzyństwa. Autorka analizuje cechy miasta i krajobrazu ukazanych w powieści w odniesieniu do alegorycznego użycia przestrzeni w świecie przedstawionym. Otaczająca miasto pustka sugeruje arbitralność binarnej opozycji cywilizacji i barbarzyństwa. Fabuła powieści, z wyeksponowaną rolą przestrzeni, podsuwa wniosek, że cywilizacja musi sama wytyczyć swe granice, unikając arbitralnego wytwarzania własnej opozycji. W powieści Coetzee'ego w definiowaniu przeciwstawnych (lub pozornie przeciwstawnych) koncepcji cywilizacji i barbarzyństwa kluczową rolę odgrywają przesłanki etyczne.

Bożena Kucała

Die Kartografie von Zivilisationsgrenzen: *Die Barbaren erwartend* von J.M. Coetzee

Zusammenfassung

Im vorliegenden Artikel wird der im J. M. Coetzees Roman *Die Barbaren erwartend* erscheinende Raum untersucht. Die Verfasserin stellt folgende These auf: die Betrachtung des Romans in räumlichen Kategorien lässt ihn als einen Versuch, die Zivilisation zu bestimmen, betrachten. Da zum Hauptmotiv der Handlung der erwartete Überfall der Barbaren in eine Grenzstadt ist — diese Erwartung ist in einer allegorischen Konvention dargestellt — lässt sich das Problem des Raumes in dem Roman im Lichte der Strebung des Hauptheldens und des Erzählers zugleich nach der Abgrenzung des Begriffs „Zivilisation" von dem Begriff „Barbarei" interpretieren. Die Verfasserin untersucht die Eigenschaften der, in dem Roman geschilderten Stadt und Landschaft in Bezug auf allegorische Anwendung des Raumes in der dargestellten Welt. Die die Stadt umgebende Leere deutet aufs Ermessen der binären Opposition „Zivilisation — Barbarei" hin. Die Handlung mit hervorgehobener Rolle des Raumes lässt folgende Schlussfolgerung zu: die Zivilisation muss selbst ihre Grenzen abstecken, ohne eigene Opposition willkürlich zu schaffen. Die wichtigste Rolle beim Definieren der oppositionellen (oder scheinbar oppositionellen) Konzeptionen von der Zivilisation und von der Barbarei spielen in Coetzees Roman ethische Voraussetzungen.

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"RUST AND MUST AND COBWEBS" OF ACCUMULATION AND CIRCULATION IN DICKENS'S *BLEAK HOUSE*

One of the concepts "central to the scientistic social notions"[1] of the nineteenth century was, Wolfgang Schivelbusch contends, the concept of circulation, borrowed from biology to be commonly employed to organise and explain the operation of society, its structures and institutions. Although it is in the nineteenth century that circulation gains such wide application, the beginning of its career has to be traced back to the seventeenth century and William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood, which not only redefined the body and life by putting them in a mechanical, and secular, context but also bestowed prime importance on motion as a condition determining health. The idea that the efficient circulation of blood or air within the bodily system translated into bodily health was readily appropriated by city planners who began to see in smooth mobility the key factor responsible for making urban space functional, and therefore fit. About this close correspondence between the body and urban design writes Richard Sennett in *Flesh and Stone* tracing the variations of the analogy through various ages, and seeing the eighteenth century as the moment at which the "new image of the body as a circulating system prompted […] attempts to circulate bodies freely in the city."[2]

Imagining human beings as blood corpuscles, city planners conceived streets as arteries or veins, as channels whose prime function was to ad-

[1] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey. Trains and Travel in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Anselm Hollo (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 187.

[2] Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilisation* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), p. 23.

vance an easy flow of traffic, and this criterion, in turn, translated into the layout of urban space. It was not only traffic that was to freely circulate but also air, water or waste; any kind of blockage, obstruction, congestion would be now conceived as detrimental to the urban organism. Several Enlightened planners based their designs on the principle of unimpeded circulation so as to create healthy urban environment: the most famous, though not exempt from certain ambiguities, due to its relation to Versailles, was Pierre L'Enfant's republican plan for Washington D.C. with its system of streets efficiently connecting different parts of the city. The most spectacular instance of the city rigorously reorganized for the sake of circulation is, of course, Paris as remade by Baron Haussmann, "artist-demolitionist,"[3] in the nineteenth century. It was the transformation dictated by the demands of circulation in the sense of modern traffic whereby there would be created a system or network of streets constituting lines of communication between various points or nodes; the streets were first and foremost "structures that convey and connect."[4] To make communication expeditious it was important not only to create connections, but also to reshape, namely to regularise or straighten streets so that they could accommodate and promote fast-flowing traffic. Haussmann's straight and broad boulevards and avenues, circulation-oriented, open up urban space, let in light and air, and so give it a neat, regular and healthy image; in opening up the city he was demolishing Paris that was "musty and close."[5] Haussmann opened up but, in another sense, sealed up the city by replicating the network above by one below: made of sewers and waterways. He himself spoke of the network he created as a "circulatory system," but his city was quite faithfully modeled on human physiology with its complex of systems: circulatory, respiratory or even excretory.

It is small wonder that the notion of circulation, originally affiliated with medicine, amplified its resonance and importance in the nineteenth century, the age of intense mobility of people and goods, increased traffic, transportation and trade; and just as in the medical context circulation connotes health, so in the economic and urban one it has accrued positive associations of vitality, efficiency, competence, and improvement. Faith which the nineteenth-century places in circulation as a value in its own right means, to cite Schivelbusch, that "whatever is part of circulation is regarded as healthy, progressive, constructive," and therefore whatever falls outside the scope of the circulatory system would be seen as "diseased."[6] This principle would

[3] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknapp Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 128.

[4] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 125.

[5] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 123.

[6] Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, p. 187.

be well illustrated by the physiology of the railway system; already places located on the extremities of the network were anaemic and undernourished, but those which were completely cut off from the realm of motion, and therefore nourishment were in danger of fatal decay: of social, cultural, and economic atrophy and death.

If circulation conveys light, air, cleanliness, and vitality, the isolation from it, inevitably tends to generate darkness, stuffiness, filth, and stupor. The common denominator, the master idea would be here that of stagnation which in the urban environment becomes often illustrated through the image of slack trade. The blatant evidence of economic ineptitude is, however, not an understocked forlorn shop interior, emptied of wares, but its very opposite: a space of excess in which commodities grow rank, take over space through frustrated accumulation. Such congested interiors, denoting no-go businesses, figure large in nineteenth-century literature but it is specifically in Charles Dickens's novels where they constitute usually peripheral yet always evocative elements of the metropolitan map. Spatially they belong to the margins of the urban system, but they also belong to a different time; their moribund character is a consequence of the conspiracy of isolation and anachronism. "Competition, competition — new invention, new invention — alteration, alteration — the world's gone past me,"[7] is how Solomon Gill explains his lack of custom. The lack of custom is ironically counterweighed by the superfluity of commodities that do not turn over; it is negative overabundance that, unlike the clutter of the Victorian domestic interior or the plenitude of the 1851 Great Exhibition, does not spell prosperity but failure and deterioration.

If the absence of circulation is unhealthy, so must be the kind of accretion that Dickens keeps taking stock of; accumulation entails congestion and the loss of space in which air and light could circulate. Dickens has earned the name of the chronicler of urban transformation, and the London he explores is said to be "in transition" and "in constant motion,"[8] but in his fascination with flux and change he does not disregard the study of *stasis* attendant on accumulation, no matter whether grown out of abortive business venture, miserly avarice or the collector's obsessiveness.

A peculiar interplay of circulation and impasse, deadlock indeed, informs *Bleak House*, ostentatiously a novel concerned with change, connection, and circulation, in which there happens quite a lot of mobility bound with work, curiosity, exploration, homelessness, restlessness, evasion, search, pursuit, and detection. Still, these episodes of mobility are overshadowed by the spells and images of accumulated stagnation: waste, torpid-

[7] Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 32.

[8] Murray Baumgarten, "Fictions of the City," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens*, ed. John O. Jordan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 112.

ity, languor, and staleness. Stagnation seems to be the common property of various locations — socially and materially as diverse as the slums of Tom-all-Alone's and the aristocratic Dedlocks' mansion of Chesney Wold — all of which are enshrouded in thick and sticky oppressive air, miasmic humidity suggestive of pollution and decay.

The juxtaposition of movement and obstruction, or actually their convergence, makes its first appearance in the opening chapter, much dominated by the elemental imagery of fog and mud, smoke and drizzle which pervade and define, at the same time, the metropolis. This introduction into London is an introduction into its streets, which is to say into motion. One has the sense of the multitude of foot passengers busily treading the pavements but it is motion which is deficient in efficiency since characterized by "slipping," "sliding," and ill-tempered jostling, and whose effect is not progress but mere amassment of mud: "[…] adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking […] tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest."[9] From the mud, the reader's gaze is next directed above, only to encounter a thick pall of fog, which has colonised the sky and, more than that, rolled its way into every void, every nook and cranny of the urban territory enveloping them in premature darkness. Two complementary images, two dense paragraphs suffice to thicken narration at the moment of its inception to the point at which it seems stillborn and thus usher in the dominant motifs of futility and foulness, dreariness, and obscurity. But through this imagery Dickens also marks a path of his resistance as he deliberately moves against the current of the convention which would start off with congestion to emphasize miscellaneity, and variety, as a distinctive metropolitan aspect; he apparently reaches for an alternative option which is that of intense mobility but immediately subverts it and turns the metropolis into a space of oppressiveness. Motion is there but it is hampered, heavy, muddled motion, motion which is incapacitated and which incapacitates advance.

That progress must not be expected from the kind of circulation that belongs to London is intimated in the very first sentence of the novel that may slip the reader's attention absorbed by the extensive symbolic weather report that spills over the space of the opening paragraphs, but it is, of course, a sentence that sets the scene: spells out the time, place, and action: "London. Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall" (p. 17). The first verb which sets the plot in motion is, paradoxically, one denotative of immobility, namely "sitting;" and, again, several meanings are accumulated in the word: such as "presiding over," "occupy-

[9] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (New York: Sygnet Classics, 1964), p. 17. All subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the main text in parentheses.

ing the place of authority" when applied to the Lord High Chancellor, but it is also synecdochically used, with reference to the Court of Chancery; "holding session" or "carrying out business." Dickens's as much idiosyncratic as irritating technique is one of reiteration, and he will repeat the verb "sit" with the insistence almost equal to that with which he keeps repeating the word "fog" to bring the two together for the true location of the Lord Chancellor turns out to be the fog, by now transparently metaphorical: "[…] at the very heart of the fog, sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery" (p. 18). Ensconced in the thick of things, he is a solid body, a pivotal figure of fixity around whom all legal circulation is organised, but once again it has the form of a constrained, floundering activity which is a fiction of progress. Coming full circle, to render the spirit of ineffectuality, chronic awkwardness and obfuscation that haunts the High Court of Chancery, Dickens returns to the imagery of human traffic circulating along the fog-and-mud-bound streets and metaphorises solicitors as "*mistily* engaged in one of the ten thousand stages of an endless cause, *tripping one another up* on *slippery* precedents, *groping knee-deep in technicalities*, running their goat-hair and horsehair warded heads against walls of words and making a pretence of equity with serious faces, as players might" (p. 18, emphasis mine).

Obstructed and confused motion, in a counterproductive manner, generates more muddle by introducing into circulation so much paper: "bills, cross-bills, answers, rejoinders, injunctions, affidavits, issues, references to masters, master's reports, mountains of costly nonsense piled before them" (p. 18). Once again the analogy becomes amplified through the image of the manufacture of legal matter: the relentless churning of papers by so many hands is a business just as mucky as the churning of mud by so many feet that trample metropolitan pavements. Urban "geological formation,"[10] to borrow the phrase used in *Our Mutual Friend*, is mud, whereas legal make-up is layer upon layer of documents written, copied, and multiplied *ad infinitum*. It is this excess of paper that defines the diseased condition of the legal system so impossibly clotted that threatening failure, but this imminence of a crisis also provokes the question of recovery, which is the question of how the organism negotiates this deleterious overproduction. For the economy of circulation demands the closed system be ventilated, detoxified, disencumbered of the accumulated stationary/stationery matter which must be occasionally removed, re-used or re-circulated, if only to create space for new deposits of litter.

Dickens persistently adheres to the imagery of begrimed urban locomotion to use it as an extended parallel with the legal system, afflicted by kin-

[10] Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 24.

dred ineffectuality, waste production, and waste management. He binds the connection making a respectable, influential lawyer Tulkinghorn walk to the unrespectable neighbourhood in which there lodges an obscure law-writer; he depicts the concourse of clerks, "counsel and attorneys," "plaintiffs and defendants and suitors" as well as "the general crowd" who having finished working their way through professional obstacles now negotiate the way home against more material yet no less puzzling obstruction, "the street mud, which is made of nobody knows what and collects about us nobody knows whence or how — we only knowing in general that when there is too much of it we find it necessary to shovel it away" (p. 149). Shovelling away, indeed, seems to be a simple and obvious solution to the problem of accretion, relevant for streets and courts alike. Thus when legal substance, in the shape of bagfuls of "heavy charges of papers" (p. 23) which has collected about lawsuits, those in the throes of "progress" and those that have already died their death, "nobody knows whence or how" reaches a critical state when "there is too much of it" (p. 149) it too need be cleared away.

Around the urgency of clearing things away, prompted by the "horror of waste,"[11] there developed in the Victorian Age a serious debate in which a principal voice was that of Edwin Chadwick. Chadwick saw the key problem of London in the accumulation of organic waste whose decomposition, along with damp and filth, contaminated the air thus posing a considerable health hazard, and worked out a plan for not just the removal but also reclamation of waste. Behind his plan of reform, it has to be said, was a humanitarian concern as well as an economic rationale: appalling hygiene conditions translated into sicknesses which, preventing labour, threatened in turn production and national prosperity. Campaigning for improved drainage, sewage, and ventilation, Chadwick recognised the sanitary and economic value of circulation which he saw as the most effective prophylactic against and remedy for all kinds of pestilential factors conducive to the spread of diseases among the working classes. So did another reformer, F.O. Ward, who at the Sanitary Congress held in Brussels in 1856 delivered a speech entitled "Circulation or Stagnation. Arterial and Venous System for the Sanitation of Towns" — a covert, though authorised exposition of Chadwick's idea — in which he opposed the putrefactive effect of accumulation to the purifying one of continuous circulation.

Explaining the technicalities of the system in which towns and the country were to be connected by "means of an immense tubular organisation consisting of two divisions, the one the urban drainage, the other the rural distribution; and these two divisions are again subdivided into

[11] S.E. Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (London, 1952), p. 3. Quoted in: Alexander Welsh, *The City of Dickens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 27.

two distinct parts, the one arterial, the other venous. Thus, we construct in a town two systems of pipes, the one bringing in pure water, the other carrying off this water enriched by fertilising matter,"[12] he acknowledged the sanitary movement's debt to Harvey whose discovery of "the circulation which goes on in the individual body has prepared us for the reception of the strictly analogous and fruitful discovery of the circulation in the social body."[13] The objective of the physiology-inspired reform was the creation of a self-contained system in which circulation was in one sense a means of removing waste, and in another a means of reclaiming it. Thus the "horror of waste" which the biographer ascribes to Chadwick's motivation entails not just the fear of pestilence bred as a result of the putrefaction of accumulated waste, but also the fear of wasting, failing to recognise and exploit the potential productivity of what has been discarded.

Apprised of the contemporary sanitary debate, Dickens does not sanitise his fictitious urban landscapes not only because he scrupulously registers the existence of rubbish and refuse but also because he, almost literally, takes the problem of waste further by tracing its after-life, that is its possible profitable ulterior uses or, at least, its further address after it has been apparently removed. Removal means relocation rather than destruction, and in the case of legal matter what is withdrawn from circulation, as Dickens demonstrates it in *Bleak House*, becomes simply put in storage, or, more properly, into an archive. The archive, from Greek *archeia* meaning public records, is a place of accumulating and preserving, a repository of documents, and an institution affiliated to political power, as again etymology indicates: *arkheios*, i.e. governmental. Chancery, though, does not set store by its "immense masses of papers of all shapes and no shapes" (p. 867) which acquire the status of detritus even before the causes they have accrued around are done away with. The duty of archiving falls then into private hands. These can be the hands of individual litigants such as Miss Flite, "a little mad old woman," who unwittingly parodies the circulation of legal papers as she turns herself into a walking archive by always carrying "some small litter in a reticule which she calls her documents" (p. 19) or a ruined suitor from Shropshire whose room is "covered with a litter of papers" (p. 221). The litigants are conscientious since interested archivists but it is their own files alone that they keep. Their scattered community forms a dispersed, decentralized or anarchic archive, very different from the equally

[12] Edwin Chadwick, "Circulation or Stagnation: Being a Translation of a Paper by F.O. Ward read at the Sanitary Congress held in Brussels in 1856, on the arterial and venous system for the sanitation of towns"; at: 15 March 2006 <http://www.victoriantimes.org/ixbin/hixclient.exe?_IXSESSION_=70EnHxm5I6A&_IXACTION_=file&_IXFILE_=lse/lsemaster.html.>

[13] Chadwick, "Circulation or Stagnation."

unofficial but far more voluminous and powerful repository contained in Krook's rag-and-bottle shop.

The shop, though located outside the walls of Lincoln's Inn within a more private neighbourhood, constitutes another site of excess and stagnancy; ostensibly peripheral to the legal system, it is one of its extremities or termini, and Dickens, it has already been noted, keeps pointing at the kinship of what seems to be in so many different ways apart. After all, the question which persists in this tangled novel is that of possible yet undiscovered but discoverable connections, and this question he pointedly asks early on: "What connexion can there be between the place in Lincolnshire, the house in town, the Mercury in powder, and the whereabout of Jo the outlaw with the broom […]? What connexion can there have been between many people in the innumerable histories of this world who from opposite sides of great gulfs have, nevertheless, been very curiously brought together!" (p. 232).

The gradual emergence, and consolidation, of inevitable connections out of initial apparent randomness, whereby "unknown and unacknowledged relationships, profound and decisive connections, definite and committing recognitions and avowals are as it were forced into consciousness,"[14] Raymond Williams identifies as a regular feature of Dickens's fiction. That the plot cannot but evolve towards exposing these originally unthought-of or unthinkable relationships goes without saying, another matter is by what means these connections become intimated and realised. Early on, the novel points to the fog and vitiated urban air as means which give unwholesome integrity to society, and thus connectivity has both an unexpected and pestilential aspect. In developing this idea Dickens draws on the anxiety permeating contemporary sanitary reports which, deploring urban pollution as they did, referred to the contaminated air as a "subtle, sickly, deadly *medium*."[15] Breathed in by the rich and poor alike, it perforce implicated them in an odious and fatal commonwealth as one would discover oneself to be connected to those from whom one believed oneself to be so very remote, socially, and otherwise.

Connections are effected thus by the impure offensive air which carries pestilence, but there exist also other agents of ugly connectivity. The first chapter, in which the fog makes inroads into the Court of Chancery, or rather Chancery is revealed as "the very heart of the fog" (p. 18), leaves no doubt as to the one being the analogon of the other, and the shared property must not be limited to that of obfuscation. The impure thick air of the fog, it has already been stated, does more than just bedim one's vision, slow

[14] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1993), p. 155.

[15] Lemuel Shattuck et al, *Report of the Sanitary Commission of Massachusetts 1850* (Boston, 1850), p. 103, emphasis mine, at: 22 January 2007 <http://www.deltaomega.org/shattuck.pdf.>

down one's motion, or impair one's sense of direction; insidiously and deviously, it creates fatal links and so does, analogously, Chancery, which indiscriminately and relentlessly spreads its legal contagion creating or revealing all kinds of unsuspected connections. It constitutes a focal point or a node where so many lines converge and cross, and from which so many lines spread outward, encompassing more and more parties. Dickens begins with identifying the focus to then split the action and shift it to a number of different locations, and so keep expanding the boundaries of the legal universe. This concurs with placing more and more lives within the litiginous ambit while entangling them in a network of alliances, enmities, kinships, and dependencies.

Krook's store is one of these many incidental and episodic locations to which stray both the narrative and the characters, already given the contaminated appellation of "the wards in Jarndyce" (p. 48). Only just initiated into the lawsuit, they have already caught the infection of confusion and ineffectuality. Space- and time-wise beyond the court, they remain within its vicious circle as Richard Carstone acknowledges an unplanned near return to the legal quarter of the day before: "We are never to get out of Chancery! We have come by another way to our place of meeting yesterday," which sense of reiteration is reinforced by the sight of Miss Flite, met only the day before in Chancery: "[…] here's the old lady again!" (p. 63). The impression of circularity, and of the uncanny attachment to the court, seems removed as they are deflected from their path into what is to be the domestic private environment, i.e. Miss Flite's lodging, to become then again turned out of their path by Krook's, her landlord's, shop.

Strictly speaking, though initially referred to as a shop, the place advertises itself as a warehouse dealing in all kinds of used-up matter: bones, old clothes, old iron, kitchen-stuff; this empire of refuse is a one-way emporium where, as Esther Summerson is quick to observe, "everything [seems — M.N.] to be bought and nothing to be sold" (p. 65). It is yet another place whose "organising" principle is accumulation and growth. Filled to the utmost capacity with objects withdrawn from circulation, since expended, it accepts them in their exhausted status and does not subject them to re-invention, which would put them back into the system of exchange.

In that it differs from another Victorian institution of accumulation which it otherwise resembles, i.e. the rubbish heap or dust mound, an important landscape feature in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, a novel whose principal theme is that of recovery, retrieval, and reconstruction. Dust meant not only cinders but all kind of rubbish, things "done with at last"[16]; collected from

[16] Clara L. Mateaux, *The Wonderland of Work* (1883), quoted in: Asa Briggs, *Victorian Things* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 49.

households, dust was carted away and piled up into eminences in suburban yards. There things "done with at last" would turn out not to be "done with at last" at all, because the heaps were the site of not so much refuse but reclamation: raked and searched, sorted and sifted. Dust would not be allowed to settle. Whatever could be retrieved from it — ashes, bones, shells, rags or pottery (and all these things can be found in Krook's shop) — would be sold on, remade into new commodities, and in a new, modified form commodified, put back into circulation, often to return to from where they were discarded. Economy but followed the law of nature which is "ever working in a circle and reproducing in the same ratio as she destroys,"[17] Mayhew remarked. Emerson's earlier observation was that "Nothing in nature is exhausted in its first use. When a thing has served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service."[18]

No such economic viability appears to inform Krook's massive dead stock. Bought but not to be sold, consigned to this economic death and dead-end, discarded things gathered together can only form an eccentric collection. Death, or rather deadness, and collecting do go together; Jean Baudrillard defines the collector as one who seeks exclusive rights over dead objects,[19] and economic theories readily reaching for the idiom of biology, too, would place the impeded or terminated circulation of goods not far from death seeing this immobility as critical to economic health. The consumption pattern or process entails acquiring, using and discarding, whereas collecting seems pared down to acquisition and possession. What constitutes a collection is objects withdrawn from ordinary, everyday use, things liberated "from the drudgery of being useful,"[20] as Walter Benjamin put it. But there may exist a possibility that the object becomes released from usefulness not at the moment of entering a collection, but becomes collectible precisely on the grounds of its uselessness or used-upness. Krook's omnium-gatherum is made exclusively of such items; it is the condition of their exhaustion that gives them a semblance of a set of sorts.

Collection implies forming a set and this involves selection; collecting consists in assembling and choosing, but no deliberate selectiveness organizes Krook's miscellany: "[A]ll's fish that comes to my net" (p. 67), he boasts. Admitting as he does in this declaration to the lack of discrimination, he betrays the spirit of avarice typical of the collector, and, even more so typical of old age; again, one may return to Benjamin, who looks at "the need to ac-

[17] Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), Vol. 2, pp. 159—160.

[18] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in: Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Lectures* (New York: The Library of America, 1983), p. 28.

[19] Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, trans. Brian Singer (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1990), p. 122.

[20] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 209.

cumulate" as "one of the signs of approaching death."[21] It is as if by holding on to things one clutched at life, but also by holding on to things used up and not one's own, thus without any nostalgic value, one re-attached oneself to society from which one had been distanced, if not discarded, because of one's old age. Krook's voracious love of things, love of all things discarded, ties in with seclusion, another measure of his eccentricity. Yet this unsociability which makes Krook a hardened recluse is motivated less by rejection and more by distrust, distrust that, in turn, is an expression of possessiveness, characteristic of the collector jealously and fanatically protecting his proprietary rights over amassed objects. But possessiveness can also be combined with the inability to discard anything and thus discipline one's massive acquisitions. Krook's obsession is perhaps less collecting and more "having and hoarding": he has "so many things […] of so many kinds" and he "can't abear to part with anything [he — M.N.] once lay hold of" (p. 67).

Although at first sight the rag-and-bottle shop makes on a stray observer an impression of a confused accumulation of litter, on closer inspection this litter begins to make sense. Not merely because one sees some signs of order in the various heaps of rubbish sorted into different categories, but also because one begins to place rubbish in the context of the past as one begins to identify the former place and function of particular objects, indeed removed from "the drudgery of being useful." However eccentric or peripheral in their oddity Krook's place and its contents may be, Dickens immediately inscribes them within an urban institutional system. "The shop had in several little particulars the air of being in a legal neighbourhood and of being, as it were, a dirty hanger-on and disowned relation of the law" (p. 65). The relationship between the warehouse and Chancery is one of contiguity and continuity: they are spatially and temporally aligned. The two places belong to the same neighbourhood and whatever has been used up and discarded by the Inn finds its way into the shop in whose interior become deposited layers of disused legal matter: from ink bottles through torn-up gowns to, above all, "heaps of parchment scrolls," "shabby old volumes," and "discoloured and dog's eared law-papers." The link is plain for all to see and Richard Carstone, at this point still standing on the edge of the world of law and hence capable of playful nonchalance, does not miss a chance to crack a joke and pursue the analogy to grim limits: when spotting a pile of "bones in a corner, […] picked very clean" he envisages them to be "the bones of clients" (p. 65).

Just like in the inaugural chapter Dickens made the fog metaphor, *nomen omen*, transparent, also in this instance the correspondence between Chancery and Krook's place is made complete and explicit as Miss Flite reveals

[21] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, pp. 207—208.

that Krook "is called among neighbours the Lord Chancellor. His shop is called the Court of Chancery" as just as completely and explicitly it is explained by the Shadow Chancellor himself:

> I have so many things here […] of so many kinds, and all as the neighbours think (but they know nothing), wasting away and going to rack and ruin, that that's why they have given me and my place a christening. And I have so many old parchmnentses and papers in my stock. And I have a liking for rust and must and cobwebs. And all's fish that comes to my net. And I can't abear to part with anything I once lay hold of (and so my neighbours think, but what do they know) or to alter anything, or to have any sweeping, nor scouring, nor cleaning, nor repairing going on about me. That's the way I've got the ill name of Chancery. *I* don't mind. I go to see my noble and learned brother pretty well every day […]. There's no great odds betwixt us. We both grub on in a muddle (p. 67).

It is an exhaustively demonstrated parallel bringing to the fore the condition of stagnation, futility, waste, filth, and decay that characterises Chancery or Chancery suits; but contained here is also an allusion to a different meaning or function of Chancery, that is the office for keeping public records. Krook's obsession with having and hoarding involves also preserving, which is the business of the archive. And not parting with any of "old parchmentses and papers," keeping a greedy watch over his dusty, musty, cobwebby stock he acts as a self-appointed archivist, who has illegitimately inscribed himself within the legal system, keeping an unauthorised record of its doings, and by the same token a record of private histories. At issue, though, is more than preservation: as a proprietor, collector, and archivist Krook has under his mastery or control far more than useless since discarded waste paper; he rather has in his hands power over human lives contained in documents. Presiding as he does over his grubby replica of Chancery he, too, "grubs on in a muddle," all the more gropingly because of his virtual illiteracy, turns over heaps of documents in the belief that among all this rubbish there must be treasure, that if one sorts and sifts, one will find "papers of importance" (p. 461—462) and that meaning and money can be salvaged out of refuse in a similar manner in which waste accumulated in dust heaps can be reclaimed and capitalised (on).

If Krook's illiteracy impedes, or even precludes, such discovery as is to be made in the act of obsessive turning over masses of papers, it also works as an expedient that ensures the preservation of the amassed stock; suspicious, though unaware of the contents, and therefore the worth, of individual documents that have come to his net, he does not part with any lest he should unwittingly let something of value go. In that he resembles Tulk-

inghorn, a "rich----in-flu-en-tial!" (p. 148) lawyer, similarly greedy, cunning and reclusive, but most of all characterised by the predilection for absorbing information (spoken or written, no matter) and by the refusal to let it out so as to turn to account legally and illegally obtained "family confidences […] of which he is known to be the silent depository" (p. 26). Krook's fantastic collection of legal refuse matter makes him another "silent depository" in the space of whose spurious archive, even as waste, documents are not buried, but merely kept in abeyance, awaiting their turn to rejoin circulation. It is false economy to see accumulation as immune to circulation, just as it is false economy to see waste as useless.

Both in *Our Mutual Friend* and in *Bleak House* to the economic usefulness of the accumulated waste matter testifies their status of property, and, on the death of the owner, of legacy. It constitutes a welcome object of inheritance: not only because valuable in itself since cashable, but also because its sheer volume promises a possibility of chancing upon hidden treasure, a scenario thoroughly evidenced in Merryweather's *Lives and Anecdotes of Misers, or the Passion of Avarice Displayed*. On Krook's death by spontaneous combustion his heaps of rubbish are shaken out of shape by the Smallweeds, unexpected legatees, who take possession of the musty effects and take over the business of "rummaging and searching, digging, delving, and diving among the treasures of the late lamented" (p. 564). Their forensic search replicates the practice of the sorting and sifting of dust mounds, whereby accumulated waste, after transformation, regains substance and is put back within the circulatory system of urban economy. If the search of mounds or scavenging the streets may have biological undertones by exemplifying the principle of competitiveness enacted in a fierce struggle of "sharp eyes and sharp stomachs,"[22] the Smallweeds' search, just as predatory, comes close to a geological investigation. Here the objects of a methodical, painstaking, examination of "paper fragments, print, and manuscript" (p. 565) are less the inventorying of recyclable litter and the economic utilisation of waste and more a pursuit of some lost document which when revealed would be invaluable since acting as a piece of evidence or a missing link that would help establish both desired and undesirable connections. It is out of the heaps of rubbish that are extricated the stories of the past: the love letters of Lady Dedlock to Captain Hawdon and the will that to all appearances may help settle the Jarndyce and Jarndyce lawsuit. Connections are revealed, the circle becomes closed; connectedness turns out to be the work of not only vitiated air, that "subtle, sickly, deadly *medium*," but also that of discarded written matter that may return to circulation with a vengeance.

[22] Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, p. 147.

And once discoveries of important documents and connections are made, and out of these discoveries money is made, space can be cleared. The return to the original order and health has its symbolic equivalent in the images of the accumulated waste, whether in Krook's Shadow Chancery or Chancery proper, being carted away. As the lawsuit at long last expends itself, and in a curiously circular manner the estate has got absorbed in costs, "great bundles of paper […] immense masses of papers of all shapes and no shapes" (p. 867) are carried out for good. But one must not trust these tidy endings, since removal does not mean disappearance but only dislocation. For nothing can ever be done with at last. What has been removed from Chancery and the pages of *Bleak House*, resurfaces in Dickens's next novel, *Our Mutual Friend* as "mysterious paper currency which circulates in London when the wind blows, gyrate[s] here and there and everywhere […]."[23]

[23] Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, p. 147.

Małgorzata Nitka

„Rdza, pleśń i pajęczyny" Kumulacja i cyrkulacja w *Samotni* Charlesa Dickensa

Streszczenie

Jednym z kluczowych pojęć porządkujących rzeczywistość dziewiętnastego wieku i zarazem pomocnych w rozumieniu funkcjonowania społeczeństwa, jego struktur i instytucji jest cyrkulacja (*circulation*), czyli krążenie, obieg czy też ruch, wokół którego gromadzą się pozytywne skojarzenia ze zdrowiem, sprawnością, wydajnością, energią oraz postępem. Brak ruchu oznacza stagnację sprzyjającą ciemności, duchocie, martwocie; to, co istnieje czy dzieje się poza zaklętym kręgiem obiegu traktowane jest jako chore, zagrożone atrofią: społeczną, kulturową, gospodarczą.

Samotnię Charlesa Dickensa można postrzegać jako powieść poruszającą, między innymi, tematykę zmiany i ruchu czy ruchliwości, związaną z poszukiwaniem, bezdomnością, niespokojnością itp. Równie ważne miejsce w powieści zajmują przestrzenie zdominowane przez stagnację i towarzyszącą jej kumulację, będące z jednej strony świadectwem peryferyjności i odrzucenia, z drugiej zaś — stanowiące zagrożenie dla wydajności miejskiego organizmu. Właśnie owa osobliwa symbioza cyrkulacji i impasu, w powieści Dickensa, jest przedmiotem analizy zawartej w niniejszym artykule.

Małgorzata Nitka

„Rost, Schimmel und Spinnennetz" Kumulation und Zirkulation in der *Einöde* von Charles Dickens

Zusammenfassung

Einer der Grundbegriffe, welche die Wirklichkeit des 19.Jhs ordnen sollen und das Funktionieren der Gesellschaft, deren Strukturen und Institutionen verstehen helfen, ist Zirkulation (*circulation*), d.h. Kreislauf, Umlauf oder eine Bewegung, die mit positiven Assoziationen mit Gesundheit, Leistungsfähigkeit, Produktivität, Energie und Fortschritt verbunden wird. Die mangelnde Bewegung hat eine Stagnation zur Folge, die zur Beschränktheit und Geistesstumpfheit beiträgt. Was außerhalb des Zauberkreises des Umlaufs geschieht, wird als etwas Krankes und von sozialer, kultureller und wirtschaftlicher Atrophie Bedrohtes betrachtet.

Der Roman *Die Einöde* von Charles Dickens betrifft die Änderung und die Bewegung oder die Beweglichkeit, die mit Suchen, Obdachlosigkeit, Unruhe u. dgl. verbunden sind. Genauso wichtig sind die von der Stagnation, und von der sie begleitenden Kumulation beherrschten Gebiete, die einerseits vom Peripherischen und von der Ablehnung zeugen, und andererseits für die Produktivität des städtischen Organismus gefährlich sind. Die besondere im Dickensens Roman erscheinende Symbiose der Zirkulation und der Ausweglosigkeit wird zum Gegenstand des vorliegenden Artikels.

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IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER: IDENTITY, DISRUPTION, DIFFERENCE A STUDY OF JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *THE NAMESAKE*

The following analysis focuses on the instances of disruption in the supposedly smooth and homogeneous categories of first and second generation migrants, taking as an example Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, *The Namesake*. I concentrate on the binaries like men/women, old/new, Bengal/America, now/then, showing how the two are disrupted by the newness, in the sense of the term presented by Homi Bhabha. I also analyze the connectedness between the themes of knowledge, mobility and identity as linked with memory. Julia Kristeva's reading of the notion of identity is used here, which means evoking the "name of the father" as essential to the construction of identity. The very question of the name and the importance of proper naming remain central to my analysis.

Lahiri's first novel, *The Namesake*, recounts the story of an immigrant family, the Gangulis. The opening scene shows pregnant Ashima Ganguli being transported to hospital to give birth to a son. The pregnancy itself is offered as a metaphor for what it is to be a migrant, for, as Ashima muses,

> being a foreigner […] is a sort of lifelong pregnancy — a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding. Like pregnancy, being a foreigner […] is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect.[1]

[1] Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003), pp. 49—50.

The metaphor of pregnancy is a curious one, since it seems to present the lives of first generation immigrants as being only a prerequisite to their children's lives in a new homeland. Even though it is a necessary phase, it still remains without any resolution, and in a sense it makes the lives of the first generation Indian Americans insignificant or – to further the pregnancy metaphor — infertile since it does not end in a birth, or end at all, for that matter. And although the migrants' experience bears promise and is charged with potential, literally bulging with new life, it is second generation's lives that have an independent meaning here.

The moment of birth provides an occasion for insight into the differences between what is presented as American and Bengali ways of living. Similar comments are scattered throughout the novel as well: the fact that American couples declare love in the presence of others in hospital, or that wives call their husbands by their first names and receive flowers from them, which is not described as a "Bengali way" (cf. 2, 3, 12, 25, 28). Yet what truly distinguishes the Bengali immigrants from the mainstream American society, in the narrator's assessment, is not customs and habits, but their peculiar relation to past-in-present, where the two planes of time do not exist in a linear succession, but belong to other spaces, thus constituting time-space. The immigrants are the subjects who cross boundaries between the time-spaces, leaving behind the past which evolves in a direction distinct from what they experience as "here" and "now": "In some senses Ashoke and Ashima live the lives of the extremely aged, those for whom everyone they once knew and loved is lost, those who survive and are consoled by memory alone."[2] Phone calls and letters provide links with the family members in India who "seem dead somehow, always invisible, impossible to touch."[3] The ghostly presence of the people from the past lives is manifested only through voice and pictures. It is devoid of substance yet it possesses the governing power over their present. It remains inexplicable to children who naturally do not feel the bond with their parents' past. Those children for whose sake their parents emigrated and whose lives are invested with meaning not attached to the migrants' lives, are the new subject, and their "newness" here should be understood in the sense which Bhabha gives to the word, namely, as a quality disrupting the linear order of the past followed by the present:

> The "newness" of migrant or minority discourse has to be discovered *in medias res*: a newness that is not part of the "progressivist" division between past and present, or the archaic and the modern; nor is it a "newness" that can be contained in the mimesis of "original and copy"[…]. The newness of cultural translation is akin to what Walter Benjamin

[2] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 63.
[3] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 63.

describes as the "foreignness of languages" — that problem of representation native to representation itself.[4]

For Bhabha, as is evident in this passage, this quality is inherent in the discourse of the first generation; in Lahiri's novel, this emphasis is shifted towards the second generation. The experience of the "foreignness of language" is common for both the first and the second generation migrants, though they are very distinct ones. For the second generation there appears the urgent need to translate the culture of "origin," not the culture of newly adapted homeland.

The narration is conducted from the point of view of Gogol Nikhil Ganguli, Ashima's child. At times voice is given to Ashima or Ashoke, Gogol's father, but mostly the narration constitutes a rendering of a life of a second generation Indian American and the presentation of Gogol Nikhil's perspective. The importance of proper naming, emphasized in the very title of the novel, is not only Gogol's case, whose naming establishes the central dramatized moment in the narrative, but also Ashima's, who thinks about herself: "True to the meaning of her name, she will be without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere."[5] In this statement the underlying assumption is that there is a meaning inherent in the name and this meaning is pertinent also to the person. Yet the relationship between the two: the meaning of the name and the attributes of the person described by the name is complicated by the process of becoming: Ashima will acquire the qualities described by the name; they are not simply her attributes, but she has to perform her part in order to be faithful to the meaning of her name.

Taken together, the metaphor of pregnancy given at the very beginning of the narration and the remark about the meaning of Ashima's name voiced at the end of the novel exemplify the progress in the vision of a migrant subject's status: from a continuous burden and estrangement towards the borderless state of disconnectedness. Both do not bear the promise of agency inherent in the second generation's position, or rather, various specific positions. Following is an analysis of those differences in the instances of second generation subjects in view of the question of naming.

The main focalizer of the novel, Gogol, gained his name literally by accident. The Gangulis await the letter from Ashima's grandmother, who is granted the honor of naming the first "sahib" in the family. Yet the letter gets lost and never reaches its destination, so the name for the first Indian

[4] Homi Bhabha, "How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Times and the Trials of Cultural Translation," in: Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004 [1994]), p. 325.

[5] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 279.

American is lost somewhere between the continents. The power of naming, of bestowing meaning and establishing paternal relations is hence suspended, it no longer extends from India to the United States. Obviously, the symbolic command persists, but supremacy is now handed over to the second generation, whose members decide for themselves, as is visible in the school incident: parents decide that the boy should be called Nikhil, not Gogol, because of what they explain is a Bengali tradition of having two names for different purposes. One name is the name used officially, a good name, and the other, the pet name, is for the family and closest relatives. However, Gogol does not understand the necessity for being called in a different manner from what he knows up to this point. The teacher asks the boy what he wants to be called and on the basis of Gogol's answer writes a letter to his parents, "explaining that due to their son's preference he will be known as Gogol at school. What about the parents' preference? Ashima and Ashoke wonder."[6] Gogol here rebels against the tradition he does not understand and chooses the manner of being named for himself. Yet the name he chooses as a boy will not be the name he wants to be called by as a young man: he changes the name he grows to hate in court and is known as Nikhil hence. His father's reaction to the idea of changing the name shows that the whole affair is symptomatic of the immigrant condition: "Then change it […]. In America anything is possible. Do as you wish."[7] The name-conversion not only refers to the ideals of freedom and the "American dream," but it is also connected with the larger issues of independence and manifestation of free will, as is asserted in the general remark about people changing their names: "Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers, revolutionaries, transvestites."[8] Nikhil here with the act of switching the name acquires an American dimension to his subjectivity, but also claims a place among the rebels and social disruptors in a more general sense. Yet the experience does not seem empowering for him, but rather disillusioning, since it leads to his conclusion that "there's no such thing as a perfect name."[9] His revolt against the name given to him by his parents leads him through denial to a reluctant acceptance of the name, to the full realization and understanding of the motives behind the gesture of naming.

The figures connected with the act of naming are the characters carrying a certain amount of power over the family and the narratives shaping the dynamics of the family. Significantly, it is not the grandmother — since the letter with the original name disappeared — but the father who names the boy Gogol. On a surface level he gives his son the name after his favorite

[6] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 60.
[7] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 100.
[8] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 97.
[9] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 245.

writer. However, this is not the whole story: during the train catastrophe, back in India, many years before his son is born, Ashoke is reading Gogol's short stories and this fact proves life saving. It is father, then, who names the son, and this act commemorates his own second birth. As Ashoke puts it, "He was born twice in India, and then a third time, in America. Three lives by thirty"[10] to show the peculiar connections between himself and his son: "Being rescued from that shattered train had been the first miracle of his life. But here, now, reposing in his arms, weighing next to nothing but changing everything, is the second."[11] The relationship between the father and the son in fact informs the dominant dynamics of the narrative: not only is it the relation between Gogol and Ashoke, but also Ashima and her father. Even the metaphor of pregnancy is appropriated for the father's use, as Ashoke relates to it: "Although it is Ashima who carries the child, he, too, feels heavy, with the thought of life, of his life and the life about to come from it."[12] The feeling he experiences — or usurps for himself — is an overburdening one, as it is connected with the sense of responsibility for the life of a person already displaced at the very start, with two homelands, multiple points of reference and numerous alliances to be negotiated.

Ashoke tries to imagine how he appears to his newborn son and articulates his position as a "dark, grainy, blurry presence" clarifying the view as not simply any person over the child, but "As a father to his son."[13] The dark presence will be felt throughout the characters' lives, in the name of the father, in the name the father chose for the child, in the dominant dialectic of the relations between members of the two generations.

Julia Kristeva helps us understand the meaning of the father figure in the necessary process of growing into one's identity: "Maintaining against the winds and high tides of our modern civilization the requirement of a stern father who, through his Name, brings about separation, judgment, and identity, constitutes a necessity, a more or less pious wish."[14] Though the quote mentioned above refers to the functioning of the culture, *The Namesake* provides the tangible literary example of a figure determining the choices of characters, the most vital of them all being the choice of a name. This figure is at once a necessary and disrupting factor. The "modern civilization" whose condition could be described in terms of migration, requires a "stern father", through his figure safeguarding the processes informing the continuity of this civilization: "separation" and "judgment." In a sense, the process of naming constitutes a catastrophe of the modern migrant fig-

[10] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 21.
[11] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 24.
[12] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 21.
[13] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 24.
[14] Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 157.

ure since it means identity, a stable, fixing label, which provides means for the assessment and also secures severance and disconnection, the conditions of migration. In *The Namesake* it is precisely the catastrophe that names Gogol; as he himself expresses it, he thinks "Of the disaster that has given him his name,"[15] meaning the train crash his father was victim of.

The condition of modern civilization is that it seems to operate according to the law of the father, thus constituting the patriarchal frame of reference. Women characters are doubly bound by the masculine and the mainstream cultural orders; one often replicating the other. Hence for the sake of guaranteeing her integrity the female character has to rebel against the law of the father, and it is again the second-generation migrant that does rebel, since it is she who is invested with an amount of agency not accessible for the first generation subject. Moushumi, Gogol's wife, serves as an example here: she transgresses the orders of behavior prescribed for young women, being an independent, promiscuous woman pursuing academic career. After marrying Gogol, she keeps her last name and this act somehow disturbs Gogol: "She doesn't adopt Ganguli, not even with a hyphen […]. Though he hasn't admitted this to her, he'd hoped […] that she might consider otherwise, as a tribute to his father, if nothing else."[16] Although the arguments against her changing the last name are logical: she publishes under her maiden name and hyphenated name would be too long to appear on official papers, still her husband sees the name as a sign of respect towards the paternal line of family. The fact that Moushumi is expected to give tribute to the person she hardly knew can be explained only on the grounds of tradition and the patriarchal law.

Moushumi's first name is also a question of scrutiny for Gogol. After some time of their marriage he finds out what her name means, "a damp southwesterly breeze,"[17] and he feels upset about the fact that it was the information about her that he was ignorant about. It seems that he takes for granted so many things about his wife that it never occurs to him to ask her about the facts. In both characters' lives they represent the partners their parents would choose for them. They have histories of non-Indian boyfriends and girlfriends and their marriage is a combination of what their families expected from them (marrying an Indian American) and what they have always opposed. It comes as little surprise, then, what Moushumi thinks about her husband: "He was not who she saw herself ending up with, he had never been that person. […] [F]alling in love with him, doing precisely what had been expected of her for her entire life, had felt forbidden, wildly

[15] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 185.
[16] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 227.
[17] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 240.

transgressive, a breach of her own instinctive will."[18] It is interesting to see how the second generation Indian American woman understands her will and the offense against it and defines the lapse in terms of what her family would want her to do. It seems that what Ashima described as the "Bengali way" is what Moushumi would describe as violence against herself. Following the ways of the elders is what would work against her. Moushumi gets involved in an affair and the marriage with Gogol ends.

Symptomatically, Gogol finds out about the affair on the train. The trains are the sites of revelations, deaths, and second births, and this fact points to the very nature of knowledge and the ways of acquiring it: in the movement. Mobility is a condition of discovering facts of life, and it may be said that migrating is the way of gaining comprehension. The other instances when Gogol gets to know about a phenomenon that becomes important for him are when he meets his first girlfriend, Ruth[19] or when he learns what his name really signifies for his father.[20] But trains are also the sites of transformation, because getting back home from college on weekends means getting back to the place where everybody calls him Gogol from the place where he is known as Nikhil.[21] Here the themes of knowledge and movement are connected to the theme of transformation.

The mobility of the second generation is, quite paradoxically, what distinguishes it from the first. As Ashima thinks about her children, she calls them "vagabonds,"[22] marveling at them changing apartments every year. She contemplates her own places of abode: "In her own life Ashima has lived in only five houses […]. One hand, five homes. A lifetime in a fist."[23] The fact that she can count the places she has lived in on the fingers of one hand is to show her rather immobile style of living, yet it is she who traveled all the way from India, crossing the ocean and coming to live on a different continent. The label of "vagabond" seems unstable and displaced and the question of mobility remains equivocal. It is as if this label was projected by the second generation upon the first, judging the parents according to their own, Americanized standards; as if the mobility was contained within the continent, not referring to other places. Perhaps again the lives of the first generation migrants are rendered as less important in comparison to the second generation.

Among other significant journeys is the family trip to the seaside and a walk to the end of the breakwater undertaken by Gogol and his father,

[18] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 250.
[19] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 109.
[20] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, pp. 123—124.
[21] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 106.
[22] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 167.
[23] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 167.

while Sonia and Ashima wait on the beach. The father asks Gogol to remember the day for ever: "Remember that you and I made this journey, that we went together to a place where there was nowhere left to go."[24] Gogol recollects this event on the train, an apt place for revelations. This recollection follows another remembrance from the past in which Gogol describes the source of his name: "[…] the disaster that has given him his name,"[25] mentioned above. Here, however, worth considering is the possibility whether it is the father — the one who named Gogol — who is actually called "disastrous," which leads us back to Kristeva's contemplation on the inevitable father in whose name there emerges separation and judgment. This insight into the nature of modern identity formation presents it as disastrous, because based on the patriarchal rule. The disaster that named Gogol also asks for eternal memory — here the reason for which Gogol would like Moushumi to pay tribute to his father by taking his last name becomes clearer. When the father takes Gogol to a place where there is "nowhere left to go", he takes him to the limits of his identity. He asks for a complete faithfulness and in return describes him completely, gives him identity.

Julia Kristeva discusses the destabilization or even destruction of a subject in "poetic language," demonstrating two positions: of the rhetorician and of the writer. The former is not an inventor, but rather plays with the language, remaining faithful to the fatherly discourse. The latter possesses "style" and disrupts the paternal order of language, being no longer hampered by the deceptive discourse of the self neither by discourse of transcendence. The writer "assume[s] a different discourse […], a permanent go-between from one to the other, a pulsation of sign and rhythm, of consciousness and instinctual drive."[26] Being faithful to the paternal discourse is what restrains creativity. On the other hand, poetic language disrupts the subject and destabilizes the order, being "the equivalent of incest."[27]

If one takes the two figures to describe the positions of the immigrant characters in the book, then the position Gogol takes is the one that could be described in terms of a rhetorician. Gogol is the guardian of the tradition, although it is a new, adapted version, accommodating Western education and stereotypically mainstream American values such as independence and freedom of choice. He is described as having American white girlfriends and deciding on his name with disregard to the Bengali fashion; he divorces and constantly veers from the tradition, yet it is he who insists on respecting the name of the father, in this manner reproducing the traditional ways.

[24] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 187.
[25] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 185.
[26] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 107.
[27] Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, p. 104.

Moushumi, Gogol's wife, resembles a writer, a figure causing turmoil and disrupting social order (though what needs emphasizing here is that the novel in general does not delineate very firmly the moment of disruption, being focused more on the ways of abiding by the tradition and finding a quiet way of conciliating the old and the new in an immigrant country). The disruption Moushumi causes is not based on incest, though — the book is too conventional for that — but promiscuity, which is perceived as as grave a threat to the community as incest itself. The incest in Moushumi's case is the flirtation with the name of the father and marrying Gogol.

The Gangulis once in a while go to India to visit their relatives and the journey is always meticulously prepared beforehand, with gifts to be handed to the family members. Ashima prepares a present for everyone, spending all the money, and a special thing for her father, paintbrushes, as he is an artist. She leaves her bags on a train and then recovers them through the lost property office. This event is said to link her to Cambridge in an emotional way she had not imagined before. When she learns about her father's death, just before the trip to India, she purposefully loses the gifts she prepared for the father. So the two events: her father's death and her finding an emotional bonding with the place she immigrated to are linked. Symbolically she has to let go of the relation with her father in order to find her new place of living.

The brushes are described as "wildly expensive, more so than anything else she's ever bought in America"[28]; so not only do they have emotional significance for her, but they also bear material value. It testifies to the substantial meaning she attributes to a relation with her father but what is also important here is that the gift signifies creativity, in *The Namesake* always connected with the male protagonists, Ashima's father and Gogol. For Ashima or for any female character somehow the question of independent creation is never plausible, even in the pregnancy metaphor mentioned above, perhaps because the patriarchal relations of the old continent are reproduced in the new place. Ashima is free from the paternal power, but right away she literally steps in her future husband's shoes. Only after his death is she presented as a person central to her community, to her friends. Now she can be, in truthfulness to her name, without boundaries. After Ashoke's death she divides her time between the States and India. She finds the way to her mobility which signifies knowledge and transient identity. She finds freedom from the fixity of the identity exerted by the name of the father.

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel does not propose an alternative to the demanding yet identity-producing name of the father. Though the disrupting elements are not presented as of primary interest in the novel, my analysis was aimed

[28] Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 41.

at focusing upon the disruptions in the moments where they surreptitiously enter the narrative. Perhaps it is more useful here to see those moments in the light of Greenblatt's suggestion that one can perceive the subversive elements in a text only if in fact they are not subversive, since they are contained with ease which allowed their articulation in the first place.[29] There are important moments in the lives of second generation migrants which somehow do not receive as much attention as expected, for instance, what Maira calls "rites of passage," that is, "journeys 'back' to India."[30] Another silenced fact is the first generation's mobility which is not acknowledged as it is due: it is the second generation that is suggested to be truly mobile, though the parents traveled all the way from India to America. Those moments, among other, though relegated to the secondary position, constitute the silent centre of the novel, governing its dynamics.

[29] Quoted in Robert J.C. Young, *White Mythologies*: *Writing History and the West,* 2nd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 2004 [1990]), p. 193.

[30] Sunaina Marr Maira, *Desis in the House*: *Indian American Youth Culture in New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), pp. 27—28.

Katarzyna Nowak

W imię ojca: tożsamość, jej zaburzenia, inność Studium powieści Jhumpa Lahiri *The Namesake*

Streszczenie

W analizach prowadzonych w artykule, biorąc za punkt wyjścia powieść Jhumpa Lahiri *The Namesake*, koncentrowano się wokół zaburzeń tożsamości w pozornie homogenicznych grupach pierwszego i drugiego pokolenia emigrantów. Uwagę kieruje się ku binarnym opozycjom: mężczyzna/kobieta, stare/nowe, Bengal/Ameryka, teraźniejszość/przeszłość. Pokazano, jak opozycje te ulegają zaburzeniu przez element nowego, w sensie, jaki zaproponował Homi Bhabha. Analizowany jest związek między tematyką wiedzy i mobilności oraz tożsamości w ich powiązaniu z pamięcią. Zastosowane zostało tu Julii Kristevy pojmowanie tożsamości, przywołujące „imię ojca" jako zasadnicze dla konstrukcji tożsamości. Sama kwestia imienia własnego oraz jego doniosła rola są kluczowe dla przeprowadzanych analiz. Przywołane zostaje Kristevy omówienie (w *Desire in Language*) destabilizacji a nawet destrukcji podmiotu w „języku poetyckim" demonstrujące dwie pozycje: retora i pisarza. Stąd tematy wiedzy i ruchu powiązane zostają z problematyką transformacji. Imigranci postrzegani są jako posiadający podmiotowość przekraczającą ograniczenia czasoprzestrzenne, pozostawiający za sobą przeszłość, która rozwija się w kierunku innym od tego, którego doświadczają jako „tu i teraz".

Katarzyna Nowak

Im Vaters Namen: die Identität, deren Störungen und die Andersartigkeit Eine Studie über den Roman *The Namesake* von Jhump Lahiri

Zusammenfassung

Zum Ausgangspunkt der im vorliegenden Artikel durchgeführten Analyse wird der Roman *The Namesake* von Jhump Lahiri. Die Verfasserin konzentriert sich auf die in scheinbar homogenen Gruppen der ersten und zweiten Emigrantengeneration entstehenden Identitätsstörungen und damit auf binäre Oppositionen: Mann/Frau, alt/neu, Bengalen/Amerika, Gegenwart/Vergangenheit. Es wird gezeigt, auf welche Weise diese Oppositionen durch Elemente des Neuen, in dem von Homi Bhabha gemeinten Sinne, gestört werden. Die Verfasserin untersucht die Verbindungen des Wissens, der Mobilität und der Identität zum Gedächtnis. Sie stützt sich dabei auf Julia Kristevas Betrachtung der Identität (grundlegende Bedeutung des „Vatersnamens" für die Konstruktion der Identität) und auf die von Kristeva (*Desire in Language*) wahrgenommene Destabilisierung und die Destruktion des Subjektes in „poetischer Sprache in zwei Positionen: des Rhetors und des Schriftstellers". So werden die das Wissen und die Bewegung betreffenden Themen mit dem Problem der Transformation verbunden. Immigranten erscheinen als solche Personen, die mit ihrer Subjektivität im Stande sind, jede zeiträumliche Beschränkung zu überwinden; sie hinterlassen die Vergangenheit, die sich ganz anders entwickelt, als das von ihnen „hier und jetzt" Erfahrene.

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DEFYING TIME, CELEBRATING SPACE – THE CONSTRUCTION OF MALE BONDS IN THE *LEATHERSTOCKING TALES* BY JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

In this paper I will examine the construction of male bonding in the *Leatherstocking Tales* with reference to the concepts of time and space. That Cooper's saga is primarily interested in male homosocial relationships is not a controversial claim. Many renowned critics, including Leslie Fiedler and D.H. Lawrence, have written on this topic, highlighting especially the cross-racial relationship of Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook. The novels also foreground many relationships among white men. This paper is intended to demonstrate that male homosociality in the novels is constructed in terms of space, while heterosexual bonds are associated with time. I will try to prove that the *Leatherstocking Tales* exclude women in an attempt to create a mythical sacred space for male bonding.

Umberto Eco, examining another central myth of American imagination, argues that "[i]n Superman it is the concept of time that breaks down."[1] The Superman episodes take place in a continuous present. Thus, the narrative is constructed in a manner which violates the rule of time causality according to which the past determines the future. The progression of time would be fatal for the mythological aspect of Superman. "[H]e must be an archetype, the totality of certain collective aspirations, and therefore he must necessarily become immobilized in an emblematic and fixed nature."[2] Eco claims that this is the reason why Superman's relations with women

[1] Umberto Eco, "The Myth of Superman," trans. Natalie Chilton, in: *The Critical Tradition*, ed. David Richter (Boston: Bedford, 1989), p. 335.

[2] Eco, "The Myth of Superman," p. 332.

remain within the realms of parsifalism and platonic chastity: "If Superman married Lois Lane, it would of course be another step towards his death."[3] One can conclude, from Eco's analysis, that time progression is both fatal for any archetypical character and intricately related to heterosexual bonds. This thesis can be productively applied also to the *Leatherstocking Tales*.

The concept of time in the *Leatherstocking Tales* is necessarily different than in Superman comic strips, as it is a historical romance and therefore cannot be constructed as a continuous present. Cooper defeats causality and time progression in a different manner. The series begins in 1822 with the publication of *The Pioneers*, which narrates the events taking place in 1793. In the novel, Natty is over seventy, whereas Chingachgook dies at the end. In order to overcome the death of the archetype, Cooper goes back in time. The time difference between the date of publication and the historical time narrated in the novels increases with every novel which follows. Thus, in *The Pioneers* it is twenty-nine years (1822/1793), in *The Last of the Mohicans* sixty-nine (1826/1757), in *The Pathfinder* eighty-one (1840/1759), and finally in *The Deerslayer* it exceeds one hundred years (1841/1740). With the succession of the novels, Cooper retreats from the times he could still remember into the days with which he could not be familiar, creating an imaginary mythical past.

Moreover, this enables him to realize the fantasy of retreat into boyhood, which is connected with the escape from the responsibilities of maturity and temporal progression. Natty miraculously gets younger in later novels, from being seventy to his early twenties in *The Deerslayer*. D.H. Lawrence claims that this fantasy is central to the American imagination: the Leatherstocking novels "go backwards, from old age to golden youth. That is the true myth of America."[4] Thus, by reversing the chronology of the novel plots, Cooper defies the progression of time. Yet even though Natty's character is presented as getting younger, there is no change in his personality. In all the novels, regardless of his age, Natty is always the same. Even in *The Deerslayer*, which presents his youth, he is simple, philosophic, and stoically and moralistic. Lawrence claims that "his simplicity is the simplicity of age rather than of youth. […] All his reactions and impulses are fixed, static."[5] Hence, going back in time not only defies time progression but also reinforces Natty's fixed, unchangeable, archetypical character.

This is not the only strategy to avoid change and progress. Eco, in his essay, links the progression of time with romantic and heterosexual plots. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in her seminal work *Between Men. English Literature and*

[3] Eco, "The Myth of Superman," p. 336.

[4] D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923; Dallas: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 60.

[5] Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, p. 66.

Male Homosocial Desire, even more explicitly relates the male-female bond with change and temporal progression: "One useful way of putting the difference between the male-male bond and the male-female bond seems to be that tensions implicit in the male-male bond are spatially conceived […] and hence imagined as stable; while the tensions of the male-female bond are temporally conceived […] and hence obviously volatile."[6] Sedgwick, analyzing Shakespeare's Sonnets, adds that sexuality in itself is marked as feminine and connected with an irreversible change, and thus associated with temporal progression.[7] As Cooper tries to defeat progress and temporal progression, his novels are not interested in romantic male-female bonds but rather represent various facets of homosocial bonds.

Just as marriage would threaten Superman's immortal myth, it also menaces the executors of the American destiny, men in the wilderness. For Superman marriage means death, whereas Natty prefers death to marriage in *The Last of the Mohicans*. When he is offered a way to escape death by torture if he only consents to marry the Indian woman whose husband he has killed, he states that he "would prefer death to such sort of captivity."[8] There are numerous other passages where a bachelor way of life is praised and marriage is debunked. The Leatherstocking, in *The Pathfinder*, argues that "even marrying once [is] what Master Cap calls a circumstance," and he is supported by Sergeant: "If it were not that Mabel is to be your wife, I would advise you to remain single."[9] Circumstance is an idiomatic phrase Cap uses to describe suspicious and treacherous doings. Thus, men in Cooper's novels are deeply suspicious of matrimony. Not only do the novels invest in male bonds, but also they explicitly exclude women and marriage from the space of male wilderness.

Yet, not all women are banned from the male space. The marriageable girls are central to all the novel plots: Elizabeth Temple in *The Pioneers*, Cora and Alice Munro in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Mabel Dunham in *The Pathfinder* and Judith and Hetty in *The Deerslayer*. They function as objects of exchange between male comrades and they help celebrate male friendship. Typically, they marry their father's best friend and, once they get married, they are also deleted from the plot. This process has been defined by Levi Strauss as male traffic in women — where women serve as exchange objects in a society of male subjects. Sedgwick elaborates on this phenomenon, adding that this exchange strengthens male homosocial relationships. Once the

[6] Eve Kosofski Sedgwick, *Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 45.

[7] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, pp. 45—46.

[8] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer* (1841; New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1961), p. 499.

[9] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pathfinder* (1840; New York: Airmont Books, 1964), p. 230.

girls marry, they lose their exchange potential and begin to stand for the restraints of marriage and society. They start to threaten, as Martin Green points out on the example of Elizabeth from *The Pioneers*: "Wherever Elizabeth may be, she will be in charge, because she knows best. She terrifies other characters."[10] The reader sympathizes with Oliver when his newly wedded wife tries to organize everything. "Bess, you amaze me! I did not think you had been such a manager!" he says, and the surprise is not necessarily pleasant.[11] The fact that the married women are excluded from the male space of wilderness is even more conspicuous when one realizes that, coincidentally, all the mothers of the above-mentioned girls are absent from the plots.

Moreover, women in the *Leatherstocking Tales* are always represented as the transmitters of education and civilization. Elizabeth and Mabel visit their fathers after they were educated in the cities. Judith and Hetty from *The Deerslayer* were educated by their late mother. Reading and education is so closely related with the figure of the mother that Hetty, when she finds out that Natty cannot read, risks a guess that: "He never could have had a mother."[12] Thus, women in Cooper's novels represent civilization and education, which can be read as inherently linked to progress. In addition, their relationships with men necessarily lead to the irreversible plot progression of marriage and children. These changes in the plot furthermore menace the male characters with the restraints of society, which is contrasted with the lawless wilderness.

Thus, the concepts associated with femininity can be thematised as related to progress, time progression, and change, which threaten the mythical character of the Leatherstocking and other men in the novels. In contrast, male bonding is characterized in terms of space. In his analysis of male bonding in American literature, Donald J. Greiner posits that "domesticity and women mean time. Time is always the enemy of spaciousness for the bonded male in the American novel because, if possible immortality is associated with space, certain mortality is associated with time […]. If men are to fulfill the destiny of America — and it is clear in the classic American novel that women cannot do so — they must avoid the reality of time for the illusion of space."[13] American adventure novels are marked with an escapist gesture, which changes time progression into imaginary space. Men in Cooper's novels prefer the limitless spaces to time progression; thus, women and marriage are excluded from the plots.

[10] Martin Green, *The Great American Adventure* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 35.

[11] Cooper, *The Pathfinder*, p. 449.

[12] Cooper, *The Deerslayer*, p. 315.

[13] Donald J. Greiner, *Women Enter the Wilderness. Male Bonding and the American Novel of the 1980s* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), p. 13.

The *Leatherstocking Saga* is an excellent example of the celebration of landscape and spaciousness in American literature. The painting-like character of Cooper's fiction is emphasized by a number of critics and writers. Balzac was enchanted with his prose because "never did typographed language approach so closely to painting."[14] Also Lawrence claims that the myth of the Leatherstocking is based on being at one with the landscape and characterizes the novels as: "Pictures! Some of the loveliest, most glamorous pictures in all literature."[15] Hence, space and particularly wilderness are central for Cooper's myth.

In the novels that take place later, space is perceived with nostalgia for an ideal that is already vanishing. Thus, in *The Pioneers*, in 1793 Natty nostalgically recollects the days when "The smokes were […] few in these hills. The deer would lick the hand of a white man, and the birds rest on his head."[16] He creates an imaginary edenic vision of American spaces, which, already in 1793, are threatened with the progress of civilization. The earlier novels celebrate the unspoilt beauty of American wilderness. This charm is primarily connected with its vastness and limitlessness. In *The Pathfinder*, the scenery serves as an introduction into the novel:

> Towards *the west* […] the eye ranged over *an ocean* of leaves […]. […] [T]he noble oaks of the American forest […] mingled their uppermost branches, forming one *broad* and seemingly *interminable* carpet of foliage, which stretched away towards *the setting sun* until it bounded the *horizon* by blending with the *clouds*, as the *waves* and *the sky* meet at the base of the vault of *heaven*.[17]

This description contains several elements both representative of similar descriptive passages and significant for the construction of space in the *Leatherstocking Tales*. The long and complex sentences emphasize stillness and limitlessness of the landscape and imitate the free movement of the characters' gaze. The direction of the gaze as well as the time of the day both point to the direction of American expansion, contributing to the emergence of the myth of the West. Moreover, the vast vistas are compared to an ocean; this impression is later reinforced by Mabel, who argues that "this is like a view of the ocean."[18] This parallel poetically emphasizes the vastness and freedom of the open spaces. Yet it can be read also with reference to the cul-

[14] Quoted in: Lee Clark Mitchell, *Westerns. Making the Man in Fiction and Film* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 31.

[15] Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, p. 61.

[16] Cooper, *The Pathfinder*, p. 185.

[17] Cooper, *The Pathfinder*, p. 12, emphasis added.

[18] Cooper, *The Pathfinder*, p. 13.

tural codes in which the land and the ocean differ in their relation to gender. Namely, women are traditionally excluded from the marine community of men. This association is directly triggered by the presence of Cap, a sailor. Finally, Cooper lends this landscape a supernatural quality by referring to heaven and sky. This points to the edenic and perhaps even sacred nature of the wilderness as represented in the novels.

The wilderness in Cooper's novels is constructed as being under constant danger on the part of the civilization's expansion. Cooper mourns the progress of civilization already a hundred years before Frederick Turner's hypothesis of the end of the frontier. Simultaneously, he finds a literary way to solve the problem of progress by going back in time from *The Pioneers* to *The Deerslayer*. In this way he recovers the wilderness that has not been civilized yet and becomes a founding father of the myth of the West.

The retreat into American prehistory and escape into the woods are not the only ways to avoid the progression of time in the *Leatherstocking Tales*. Natty flies from society into the woods and into the embraces of his Indian companions. In the novels, space is intricately connected with the American Indians. The wilderness is threatened only by the white population, whereas Native Americans seem to be a part of it. They can blend perfectly with the surroundings as well as skilfully imitate wild animals. This introduces another binary, in which the progress of white civilization as time is contrasted with the "primitive" society of the Indians conceived as space. Cooper employs the projection of unchangeability, savagery, and primitivism to construct the American Indian community in the novels. Natty often voices his opinion about different "gifts" of Indian tribes. The impossibility of change is revealed in numerous statements such as "he who is born a Mingo will die a Mingo."[19] Indian culture and history are not conceived in diachronic terms. Moreover, social Darwinism of the nineteenth century places the Native American community as an imaginary past of white civilization.[20] Natty goes back in time with the publication of the consecutive novels, and, anthropologically, he goes back in time by socializing with his Indian friends. Thus, the escapist gesture of the *Leatherstocking Tales* seems to be connected with evading the progression of time, relationships with white women, civilization, and society with its laws, while the asylum for the male characters is provided by American limitless spaces and red men imagined as primitive.

This dynamic reveals a deep longing for the creation of an imaginary world without women, a paradisal space for men only. In the *Leatherstocking*

[19] Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, p. 43.

[20] The paradox inherent in the perception of nonwhite communities, on the one hand as an earlier stage of development of white civilization and as unchangeable essentialist, on the other, has been acknowledged by Richard Dyer in "White," *Screen*, Vol. 29. 4 (Autumn 1988), pp. 44—64.

Tales, characteristically, this dream seems to be best embodied in the concept of the Happy Hunting Grounds, the Indian Eden. Unlike white religion, which is gendered in the nineteenth-century imagination as feminine,[21] the Indian paradise seems to be created especially for men. Chingachgook explains that "[t]he Delawares believe that good men and brave warriors will hunt together in the same pleasant woods, let them belong to whatever tribe they may."[22] The dead man, as the Leatherstocking says, "is to be young ag'in, and to hunt, and be happy to the ind of etarnity."[23] This place seems to be the final imaginary asylum from all the menaces of the white culture. White men can freely socialize with their non-white companions, as the Eden does not exclude any tribes. Moreover, they will not be threatened by women since only "good men and brave warriors" are accepted. The eternal youth is also an important element, since, as Fiedler claims, the fantasy of the escape from women and the society is necessarily juvenile, regressive, and narcissistic.[24] The setting for the paradise is provided by the woods rather than any conveniences of wigwams or villages. Only there are men able to live together in a timeless wilderness and eternal youth without women. The ideal of the hunting grounds is almost realized in the community of Natty, Chingachgook, and Oliver Edwards. They spend their days hunting in the woods together and living blissfully in a log cabin. Yet, at the end of the novel, the expansion and curiosity of the settlers bring an end to this sacred masculine space. The hut is burned and Oliver gets married. Natty is forced to go back in time into *The Last of the Mohicans*.

[21] See: Ann Douglass, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998 (1977)).

[22] Cooper, *The Deerslayer*, p. 469.

[23] Cooper, *The Pathfinder*, p. 422.

[24] Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 348.

Anna Pochmara

Odrzucając czas i celebrując przestrzeń Konstruowanie męskich związków w *Leatherstocking Tales* Jamesa Fenimore'a Coopera

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest próbą analizy związków określanych jako *male bonding* w *Leatherstocking Tales* Jamesa Fenimore'a Coopera z wyeksponowaniem znaczenia czasu i przestrzeni. Męska przyjaźń pozostaje w ścisłym związku z odrzuceniem czasu i celebracją przestrzeni ame-

rykańskiej. Analizy ujawniają dążenie Coopera do stworzenia męskiej przestrzeni w dzikich ostępach nieograniczonej przyrody. Cooper stosuje wiele strategii zmierzających do pokonania postępu czasowego, np. każda kolejna powieść przesuwa nas coraz dalej w przeszłość. W kontraście z postępem czasowym znajdujemy nieograniczoną przestrzeń. Obydwa wymiary pozwalają się ująć w perspektywie dziewiętnastowiecznego dyskursu na temat różnic pomiędzy tym, co kobiece i tym, co męskie, gdzie cywilizacja utożsamiana jest z pierwiastkiem kobiecym, a przyroda z męskim. Stąd wyłączenie kobiet w prozie Coopera można odczytać jako sposób zanegowania zmian i postępu czasowego. Dzika przestrzeń przyrody jest konstruowana jako odpowiadająca specyfice męskich związków przyjaźni.

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Die Zeit ablehnend und den Raum zelebrierend Die in James Fenimore Coopers Werk *Leatherstocking Tales* gebildeten männlichen Verbindungen

Zusammenfassung

In ihrem Artikel versucht die Verfasserin, die in dem Werk *Leatherstocking Tales* von James Fenimore Cooper zum Vorschein kommenden und als *male bonding* bezeichneten Verbindungen zu untersuchen; sie bemüht sich dabei, die Bedeutung der Zeit und des Raumes hervorzuheben. Männerfreundschaft steht im engen Zusammenhang mit der Zeitablehnung und mit dem Zelebrieren des amerikanischen Raumes. Cooper bezweckt, einen männlichen Raum in der Wildnis der unbegrenzten Natur zu erschaffen, indem er eine ganze Reihe von Strategien anwendet, die den Zeitlauf überwinden sollten (z. B. jeder neue Roman versetzt uns immer weiter in die Vergangenheit zurück). In Kontrast zum Zeitlauf steht der unbegrenzte Raum. Beide Dimensionen lassen sich in Form eines Diskurses aus dem 19.Jh. über die Unterschiede zwischen dem Weiblichen und Männlichen auffassen, in dem die Zivilisation mit dem weiblichen und die Natur mit dem männlichen Element gleichgesetzt werden. So kann die Abwesenheit der Frauen in Coopers Prosawerken so betrachtet werden, als ob der Autor den Zeitwandel und den Zeitlauf hätte bestreiten wollen. Die Wildheit der Natur entspricht der Spezifizität von Männerfreundschaftverbindungen.

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"I SAW NEW WORLDS BENEATH THE WATER LY": THE GNOSTIC IDEA OF SPIRITUAL DISPLACEMENT IN THE POETRY OF THOMAS TRAHERNE

The aim of my paper is to draw some parallels between the chosen poems of Thomas Traherne, the seventeenth-century English religious poet and mystic of the Metaphysical tradition, and the most characteristic motif of gnostic mythology, namely the idea of spiritual displacement and exile. This concept refers to the moment when the Soul abandons the world of divine ideas and descends into Matter, which serves as an indispensable condition for the creation of the physical world. According to Gnosticism, the divine element plunges in the dark chaos of imperfect Matter and, consequently, the very act of Creation becomes tainted with the idea of evil; hence the characteristic dualism of this philosophy (light/darkness, idea/matter, good/evil) and neglect, not to say contempt, for the material world.

Assuming the gnostic perspective, the mythical motif of spiritual fall becomes the basic symbol of degradation and loss, imprinted indelibly in the condition of the physical world and human existence; it is treated like an act of rebellion against the divine realm. As Hans Jonas writes in his detailed study comprising multifarious branches of Gnosticism, "we shall find that in gnostic thought the world takes the place of the traditional underworld and is itself already the realm of the dead, that is, of those who have to be raised to life again."[1] This act of returning to one's transcendental origins (every man, despite his spiritual "debasement" and impurity, has been also endowed with a sacred, divine element) requires, however, unique, divine

[1] Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion. The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 68.

knowledge, *gnosis*, inaccessible for the uninitiated. The most significant and perhaps challenging consequence of such an approach was the appointment of man to the role of his own redeemer.

According to Jonas, the irrational proclivity of the spirit to penetrate the lower spheres, namely the tendency manifested by the Soul to descend "downwards," can be interpreted in terms of the original sin, resulting in the metaphorical immersion, in other words imprisonment, of the disillusioned Soul. Such an affliction becomes ascribed by the Gnostics to reprehensible curiosity, vanity or desire manifested by the transcendentally "vulnerable" Soul. What requires particular emphasis in this context is the moment of illuminated attraction. The term "illumination," evoking apparent associations with mystical recognition of the Absolute, appertains here to a diametrically opposite act. In Jonas' words, "the cosmogonic process or the sinking of the Soul, or generally the downward movement of a divine principle, was initiated by a reflection of the upper Light in the Darkness below."[2] It can be interpreted either literally, as an actual fall of the divine spark into Matter, or metaphorically, as a creation of the spectre, an imitation or a quasi-mirror image of the reflected spiritual element. Significantly enough, in many variants of Gnostcism the process of spiritual displacement is tantamount, at least in its initial stages, to the loss of memory: the Soul, immersed in dark material depths, forgets about its divine origin and it is only the Redeemer who can help it recollect the past and liberate it from physical confines through the complicated process of "blessed" return.

In Traherne's poetry, the motif of blissful childhood as well as of an exceptional consistency and clarity of vision accompanying this innocent state can be interpreted with regard to the above theories. Namely, it can be seen as a symbol of the uncorrupted Soul, oriented entirely to the divine and still unaware of the material allure. As the notion of sin becomes for Traherne synonymous with the "customary" preoccupation with the purely physical world, childhood, so often referred to in his works, can represent spiritual purity and total immersion in the ideal realm. In a way quite unorthodox for an Anglican priest, he questions the idea of the original sin with regard to the spiritual element itself (every child is born innocent for him) and sheds light on evil inherent in the very act of spiritual descent and the consequent creation. This immaculate state of the Soul, before its indulgence in material darkness, becomes, for instance, presented by the poet in "The Preparative." In the literal sense, the poem seems to be the monologue of a child, recollecting its unborn, purely spiritual state. By no means willing to abandon its visionary repose, the child was then endowed with a preternatural sense of the ideal. In the light of the gnostic approach, the child's description of this

[2] Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 161.

innocent condition may be perceived as a testimony of an unrestrained spiritual element, inhabiting the uppermost spheres of divinity in stark contrast to its future, dark, and chaotic predicament, haunted with imperfection and sin:

> […] Then was my Soul my only All to me,
> A Living Endless Ey,
> Far wider then the Skie
> Whose Power, whose Act, whose Essence was to see.
> I was an Inward *Sphere of Light*,
> Or an Interminable Orb of *Sight*,
> An Endless and a Living Day,
> A *vital Sun* that round about did *ray*
> All Life and Sence,
> A Naked Simple Pure *Intelligence*. […]
>
> Without Disturbance then I did receiv
> The Fair Ideas of all Things […]
>
> Be'ing thus prepard for all Felicity,
> Not prepossest with Dross,
> Nor stiffly glued to gross
> And dull Materials that might ruin me,
> Not fettered by an Iron Fate
> With vain Affections in my Earthy State
> To any thing that might Seduce
> My Sence, or els bereave it of its use
> I was as free
> As if there were nor Sin, nor Miserie. […][3]

In some gnostic myths the Soul, seduced by Matter, realises its irreparable mistake after the initial loss of memory and begins to bemoan its fallen condition; imprisoned within the gloomy confines of the material world, it awaits the longed-for redeemer and recalls the radiant glories of its ideal, sacred past. Considering the past tense used throughout the poem, "The Preparative" can be perceived metaphorically as a gnostic lamentation, a forlorn attempt to regain the state of spiritual innocence, to return to the place of divine origins, exemplified by the imagery of day and light and opposed to the dismal seclusion of "this" world. Significantly enough, the embittered Soul refers to the "Earthy State," apparently indicative of its actual

[3] All Traherne's poems and meditations quoted here are taken (in accordance with their original spelling and punctuation) from Thomas Traherne, *Poems, Centuries and Three Thanksgivings,* ed. Anne Ridler (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966). The above poem is quoted on pp. 12—14.

involvement, and openly blames the seduction performed by "dull Materials" for its (i.e. the Soul's) present affliction. The poem, a melancholy sigh rather than a desperate cry of regret, does not seem to strike a particularly grievous tone and no evident signs of repentance are manifested by the Soul; yet, blissful visions of an ideal, uncorrupted state are juxtaposed here with the awareness of sin, an impediment to spiritual freedom. Descent into Matter, this cosmogonic "abuse" of the divine element represented by the illuminated Soul, has to be considered in the categories of evil and enslavement, curiosity and remorse, fatal enchantment or sin. "I / […] was all Sight, or Ey. / Unbodied and Devoid of Care […]," confesses Traherne in the same poem, stressing the incorporeal, blissful condition of ostensibly infallible Soul, a state conducive to divine contemplation and participation in the ideas. "To see" means for Traherne "to think" and "to understand," yet in a truly ecstatic, visionary mode, where no precise definitions are to be formulated, no logical conclusions to be drawn; where the ability of discursive reasoning gives way to mystical intuition. As specified in one of Traherne's prose meditations,

> [t]hese Things shall never be seen with your Bodily Eys but in a more perfect manner. You shall be present with them in your Understanding. You shall be In them to the very centre and they in you. As Light is in a Piece of Chrystal, so shall you be with every Part and Excellency of them. An Act of the Understanding is the presence of the Soul, which being no Body but a Living Act, is a Pure Spirit, and Mysteriously fathomless in its true Dimensions.[4]

"The Preparative" seems to be the most representative one among a wide range of similar poems by Traherne, namely those aimed at rendering the state of enchantment and bliss experienced by a sinless entity, a newly-born child or, figuratively, a yet "unbodied," elated spirit. As one critic notes, "Traherne is perhaps best remembered for his descriptions of the innocent wonder of his childhood and his insistence on the value of these experiences, not only in themselves but as a guide to adult life."[5] Metaphorically, an individual trying to liberate himself from the worldly "custom," the primary source of sin, resembles the incorrigible gnostic Soul, entrapped in Matter, yet painfully aware of its transcendental origins; unable to wean itself from the supremacy of grief, loss, and mortality, yet still retaining hope for eventual redemption and spiritual awakening. While many of Traherne's poems describing the mystic union with the Absolute are permeated with

[4] Traherne, *Second Century*, II. 76, p. 248.

[5] Dick Davis, "Introduction," in: Thomas Traherne, *Selected Writings*, ed. Dick Davis (Manchester and New York: Carcanet Press Ltd, 1988), p. 13.

the imagery of ascent, of the spiritual journey or flight directed upwards, his "childhood" poems contain motifs of descent. An innocent spirit is convinced of being sent "from God above" into the realm of ideas and everlasting, contemplative joy and de*light*. As it is expressed in "Innocence,"

> No Darkness then did overshade,
> But all within was Pure and Bright,
> No Guilt did Crush, no fear invade
> But all my Soul was full of Light.[6]

What is expressed here is, again, the gist of gnostic thought: until the unfortunate moment of sinister fall, darkness, fear, and guilt — the cornerstones of material predicament — are still denied an access to the uncorrupted Soul.

The general idea of spiritual descent into the dark recesses of Matter, one of the basic components of the gnostic myth, undergoes some modifications according to a particular source of its origin. As already stated here, it can involve, for instance, the actual presence of the Soul in Matter, a spark of divine Light falling downwards, or a mere reflection of ideal radiance or divine form shed from above. The Soul falls in love with Matter or finds it difficult to refrain from curiosity, becomes seduced and abused by darkness or falls victim to its own excessive vanity, as it develops fascination not with Matter itself, but with its (i.e. the Soul's) own image, illuminated by divine Light and reflected in the gloom beneath. The last motif seems to deserve special interest due to its apparent associations with the myth of Narcissus. As Jonas writes, many gnostic texts contain no more than vague allusions to this particular myth; yet, in one of the most prominent ones, namely in the *Pymander*, purportedly written by Hermes Trismegistus in Hellenic Egypt, the idea of gnostic Narcissus, slightly re-adjusted for doctrinal purposes, appears to have found its complete realisation.

As the majority of gnostic texts, Hermetic *Pymander* constitutes to a certain extent an amalgamation of ideas derived from various "unorthodox" sources. Yet, it seems to be much more independent of biblical influences than many other gnostic revelations of its time. One of Hermetic original, characteristic notions is the concept of Anthropos, the Primordial Divine Man, pure spiritual Life and Light incarnate, emanation and ideal reflection of the divine form (by no means a clay-made entity), who, surprisingly and unfaithfully enough, descends from Heaven into Nature. Contrary to the majority of gnostic beliefs, the physical world in *Pymander* has already been created by God; the subsequent fall of the divine element does not serve cosmogonic purposes there. Yet, the original sin committed by Anthropos

[6] Traherne, *Poems, Centuries and Three Thanksgivings*, pp. 10—12.

still seems purposeful and inevitable, necessary to justify the human condition in the world (mortal in his physical form, man is at the same time immortal thanks to an ideal divine form intrinsic to him) and to initiate the process of spiritual ascent under the aegis of gnostic revelation. It is the confrontation of Anthropos, the heir of celestial spheres, and Nature, the epitome of the material world beneath, that presents the Narcissus myth in a new, original light. According to Hermes, Anthropos, divine form incarnate, unable to overcome curiosity, looked downwards and leaned over Nature. Consequently, his shadow covered the Earth and became visible in its waters. Seeing his own, infinitely beautiful and perfect image thus reflected, he immediately fell in love with himself and decided to enter the material realm, to unite with Nature as if represented by himself, assuming in consequence the burden of human earthly afflictions, sin and mortality among them. In the way parallel to Greek Narcissus, then, Hermetic Anthropos falls victim to his own beauty, becomes entrapped by his fatal, irresistible charm. His fate appears more tragic, in fact, than that of Narcissus, more preordained and unpreventable, inscribed in the essence of his very nature (Godlike emanation), as no one would probably seem strong enough to resist the divine allure. According to Jonas, Anthropos "is not as guilty as that primordial Soul which succumbs to a desire for the pleasures of the body, for it is the beauty of his own divine form, itself the perfect likeness of the highest God, that draws him downward."[7] Purely physical fascination, as it may seem, gains therefore a transcendental dimension here, becomes inscribed in the mechanism of spiritual fall and the tragic dichotomy of human nature, haunted by degradation and loss, yet simultaneously endowed with divine potential concealed under the burden of sin and mortality. The tragedy of Anthropos, gnostic Narcissus, the act of transcendental insubordination tantamount to the original sin, becomes at the same time a departure point for the process inversely proportionate to his fall, namely for the regaining of ideal consciousness, for the gradual, mystical ascent of the spiritual element awakened from deadly, material slumber and sheer immersion in Nature, for the gnostic return of the illuminated Soul to its divine repose. Thus, an ancient Greek myth, transformed according to gnostic principles, becomes enriched in *Pymander* with "divine" undertones and acquires an archetypal depth.

Gnostic writings of Hermes Trismegistus seem to have constituted for Traherne a considerable source of inspiration (another significant proof of his spiritual, truly mystical independence analogous to doctrinal unorthodoxy). What has been particularly stressed by the critics in this respect is his conviction of man's unquestionable divinity (God immanent in the illumi-

[7] Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 164.

nated Soul) and the admiration he cherishes for the human body (a reflection of the divine form, as suggested in *Pymander*).[8] The imagery of light and sun permeating Traherne's poems and meditations, although profoundly Neoplatonic in character, can be as well ascribed to Hermetic influences. Yet, there still remains one aspect that seems to deserve further exploration with regard to Hermetic thought, as in the poems "Shadows in the Water" or "On Leaping over the Moon" Traherne apparently alludes to the myth of gnostic Narcissus, delineated above.

In comparison with Traherne's other poems, "Shadows in the Water" can be characterised as a curiosity due to its very theme: instead of a mystical contemplation of the Absolute or exalted praises over childhood innocence, the reader is confronted with a child, leaning over a puddle. A little boy, fascinated by its dark recesses, discovers with surprise a world reflected in the water and notices his own image among the shadows of the passers-by:

> Thus did I by the Water's brink
> Another World beneath me think;
> […]
> As by som Puddle I did play
> Another World within it lay.

Significantly enough, the world "beneath" is perceived as an entirely separate sphere, manifesting no apparent connection with the reality inhabited by the child. Although the boy admires the so-called "new Antipodes," he seems disappointed with the inability to enter their enchanted realm, to descend among intriguing shadows, looming beneath the unnecessary "film":

> I call'd them oft, but call'd in vain;
> No Speeches we could entertain:
> Yet did I there expect to find
> Som other World, to pleas my Mind.
> I plainly saw by these
> A new *Antipodes*,
> Whom, tho they were so plainly seen,
> A Film kept off that stood between.
> […]
> O ye that stand upon the Brink,
> Whom I so near me, throu the Chink,
> With Wonder see: What Faces there,

[8] Cf. Carol L. Marks, "Thomas Traherne and Hermes Trismegistus," in: *Renaissance News*, Vol. 19 (1966), pp. 118—131. Marks writes about gnostic traces in the poet's vision, but analyses them almost exclusively in terms of the divinity of man, whereas my main concern here is the myth of the fallen Soul.

Whose Feet, whose Bodies, do ye wear?
I my Companions see
In you, another Me.
They seemed Others, but are We:
Our second Selvs those Shadows be.
[…]
[…] what can it mean?
But that below the purling Stream
Som unknown Joys there be
Laid up in Store for me;
To which I shall, when that thin Skin
Is broken, be admitted in.[9]

In the light of gnostic undertones, the concept of a child captivated by the world beneath bears close resemblance to Hermetic Anthropos and his unfortunate material destination. Although *Pymander* depicts the divine *man* in his most perfect, "formal" revelation, rather than a little boy, the idea of childhood applied to the context of Traherne's poem seems to underline the primary innocence of the divine element, or the condition of the Soul, contemplating the world of ideas before its engagement in the material realm. The poem presents the spirit, epitomised by the child, on the verge of a significant change, resulting either in the creation of the physical world (the majority of gnostic myths) or in the imprisonment of the divine principle within the already existing Nature (Hermetic thought). The whole world perceived by the child in the water stands, figuratively speaking, in favour of the latter approach, as, according to *Pymander*, the physical realm has already come into existence due to God's will before Anthropos's transgression. It is Nature, not chaotic Matter itself, that sets the watery trap and overcomes the enamoured divine man (treated figuratively in the context of "Shadows in the Water," as the fascination manifested by the boy does not bear apparent signs of Narcissistic love and self-delusion). On the other hand, the dirty, dark water of the puddle symbolises the impurity of the physical realm, its degradation and uncertainty as well as the potential danger it constitutes for the embodiment of the divine light. Shadows reflected in the water can be perceived, according to gnostic thought, as mere simulacra, vague, ephemeral spectres, highly imperfect imprints of the ideal world within the matter (hence the phrase "our second selves"). The irreconcilable dichotomy between these two realms, between the forces of darkness and the domain of the divine light, between ultimate perfection of ideal revelation and the calamity of the original sin, becomes symbolically stressed by the boy's words "I called them […] in vain." In a forlorn attempt to adapt

[9] Traherne, *Poems, Centuries and Three Thanksgivings*, pp. 116—118.

himself to the intriguing world of shadows, he tries to reconcile his divine condition with the forces of darkness and loss. Yet, his futile endeavours lead only to displacement and consequent degradation of Godlike form, to its total immersion and dissolution in Nature; no natural co-existence of such diametrically opposite realms seems acceptable for gnostic beliefs.

The last stanza of the poem seems also particularly meaningful in the context of Hermetic thought: in a way parallel to *Pymander*, the shadowy world beneath (as stated before, "this" world, according to the Gnostics, constitutes the kingdom of death; hence yet another dimension of shadows here) is too strong a temptation to resist for the inexperienced spiritual element; nothing seems to prevent the boy's forthcoming fall, then. Allured by the tantalising prospect of "some unknown joys," he is just about to descend. Overcome with curiosity, he leans over the surface of the water (here referred to as "thin skin" or "film," a symbolic barrier between the ideal and the physical worlds), all ready to touch it with his hand and "break," in other words — to make the first step on his way downwards, towards matter, towards oblivion, pain, and mortality. Significantly enough, the motif of tearing apart the layer that forms the division between the ideal and the physical worlds, synonymous with immersion in the material realm, appears also in *Pymander*: "And He [Man — A.P.] who had full power over the world of things mortal and over the irrational animals bent down through the Harmony and having broken through the vault showed to lower Nature the beautiful form of God."[10] Tearing apart the walls of ideal repose and entering the physical world, apart from its prominent gnostic undertones, can be also perceived in terms of a symbolical birth, a purely physical act indeed, stressing the irreversibility of Anthropos's fate (embodiment with all its "human" consequences) and depraving him of his ideal state. Instead of the eternal "now," synonymous with divine co-existence in celestial spheres, spiritual death, a process inversely proportionate to the physical birth, is going to constitute his ultimate destination until the moment of illuminated awakening according to gnostic formulae.

"New Worlds" reflected in, or, according to the poet, "lying beneath the Water" become also mentioned by Traherne in "On Leaping over the Moon," a poem that describes a boy jumping over a little stream. Although not as evocatively Hermetic in character as "Shadows in the Water," the poem still stresses the notion of some enticing, separate reality the child feels tempted to explore:

> I saw new Worlds beneath the Water ly,
> New Peeple; and another Sky,

[10] Cited in Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, pp. 150—151.

And Sun, which seen by Day
Might things more clear display.
[…]
He might hav dropt throu that thin Element
Into a fathomless Descent;
Unto the nether Sky
That did beneath him ly
[…]
Thus did he yield me in the shady Night
A wondrous and instructiv Light,
Which taught me that under our Feet there is
As o'r our Heads, a Place of Bliss.[11]

What deserves particular attention here seems to be the very moment of enchantment and fascination, fatally deluding indeed; whereas "this" world functions in this context as a metaphorical counterpart of the ideal realm and the child represents the yet "unbodied" Spirit, the spectral sphere of underlying reflections, despite its ostensible imperfection, still offers some incomprehensible, alluring attractions, almost impossible to resist.

Thus, the idea of spiritual displacement and exile, namely of the Soul's descent from the ideal world, a place of divine repose, downwards, to the material world, the realm of affliction and sin, synonymous with degradation of the divine element and evil inherent in the very idea of the physical world, finds its reflection in Traherne's poetry. It seems that gnostic undertones, however unorthodox and obscure, endow some of his poems with a mythical dimension and perhaps underline the main, recurrent idea of his genuine, mystical works, namely that the spiritual return to the source of divine light and the rejection of any material element constitute the first and foremost duty as far as one's clear perception and pure understanding are concerned.

[11] Traherne, *Poems, Centuries and Three Thanksgivings*, pp. 118—120.

Anna Popiel

„Nowem światy widział pod powierzchnią wód": gnostycka idea duchowego przemieszczenia w poezji Thomasa Traherne'a

Streszczenie

Celem analiz przedstawionych w artykule jest interpretacja wybranych utworów poetyckich Thomasa Traherne'a, poety mistyka wywodzącego się z tradycji poezji metafizycz-

nej, w odniesieniu do myśli gnostyckiej, a w szczególności motywu upadku duszy w materię. Według gnostyków dusza porzuca sferę boskiego światła i pogrąża się w ciemności, czym przyczynia się do stworzenia świata widzialnego, który jest z definicji zły. Procesowi mistycznego wstępowania poeta przeciwstawia upadek w materialną sferę grzechu i niedoskonałości. Do rangi symbolu urasta tu postać dziecka, pochylającego się nad wodą i zafascynowanego złudnym światem odbitym na jej powierzchni. W analogiczny sposób, według gnostyków, dusza pochyla się nad złudną materią, by przez swą ciekawość i fascynację utracić cząstkę boskiego światła i pogrążyć się w mroku, dając nieopatrznie początek widzialnemu światu. Obrazowanie, które przenika poezję Traherne'a, w znacznej mierze odzwierciedla dychotomię pomiędzy elementem idealnym i duchowym (dusza) i materią, światłem i ciemnością, procesem mistycznego wzlotu i materialną degradacją, tj. osunięciem się w obszar niedoskonałości i grzechu.

Anna Popiel

„Neue Welten hab` ich unterm Waser gesehen": gnostische Idee der geistigen Verlagerung in den Gedichten von Thomas Traherne

Zusammenfassung

Zum Ziel des vorliegenden Artikels ist, die ausgewählten Dichtwerke von Thomas Traherne, dem mystischen, sich aus der Tradition der metaphysischen Dichtkunst herleitenden Dichter, in Bezug auf gnostische Idee und besonders auf das Motiv der in die Materie versinkenden Seele, zu interpretieren. Die Gnostiker behaupten, dass eine Seele die Sphäre des Gotteslichtes verlässt, um in der Dunkelheit zu verschwinden, wodurch sie zur Erschaffung der sichtbaren, von Natur aus bösen Welt beiträgt. Dem Prozess der mystischen Beseelung setzt der Dichter den Sturz in materielle Sphäre der Sünde und der Unvollkommenheit gegenüber. Die Ausmaße von einem Symbol nimmt hier die Figur eines Kindes an, das sich über dem Wasser neigt und von der trügerischen, auf der Wasserfläche widerspiegelten Welt entzückt ist. In Analogie dazu — so Gnostiker — neigt sich die Seele über der trügerischen Materie, um in Folge ihrer Neugierde und Faszination einen Teil des Gotteslichtes zu verlieren und dann in der Dunkelheit zu versinken, unbedacht den Ursprung für eine sichtbare Welt bildend. Der für Trahernes Dichtwerke charakteristische Bilderreichtum spiegelt im großen Maßen eine Dichotomie zwischen dem idealen und geistigen Element (Seele) und der Materie, zwischen dem Licht und der Dunkelheit, zwischen der mystischen Beseelung und materieller Degradation, d. i. ein Herabsinken in den Bereich der Unvollkommenheit und der Sünde wider.

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REMEMBERING IT IN OUR BONES: MARIE CLEMENTS' *BURNING VISION*

I am usually proud to be called Canadian, because Canada is a country with a reputation for tolerance, neutrality, prosperity, and a peaceful way of life. Nowhere is this more evident than on the quiet, idyllic island where I live, off the west coast of Vancouver. Like the majority of Canadians, I live near the 49th parallel, and the rest of our country, the Great North, remains sparsely populated, existing largely only in our imaginations, which are fed by nature documentaries. It is a big Nowhere, part of the "Bush Garden" Northrop Frye wrote about when he described the land which early white pioneers encountered but which has now been now tamed and "civilized." Nowhere is a good place if you are an immigrant seeking safety from persecution — indeed, as Noah Richler has pointed out, even the suburbs described in the work of novelists like Barbara Gowdy, Paul Quarington, Jane Urquhart, and Margaret Atwood are all modeled on this myth that the newly arrived settler can simply fill the unused space we call Canada. But most of us forget that that blank space, however unknown to the mainstream, is already occupied, peopled, storied, and mapped out.

Part of this *terra incognita* has recently come very much alive to me — that of Port Radium in the North West Territories, only 2 days' drive from my home, just a dot on the map on the shores of Great Bear Lake, and a place I had neither heard of nor read about in Canadian history books. Yet deep within the bowels of the Northwest Territories was the uranium used to obliterate Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Port Radium was home to two atomic bombs: Little Boy and Fat Man. Last month the world marked the sixtieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, and to know that my country

played a large role in that nuclear holocaust when History has taught me to blame the Americans for the atrocities (a favourite pastime of Canadians) fills me with shame. And I am shocked that I would never have heard of Port Radium, were it not for the work of a young First Nations playwright, Marie Clements, who depicts the plight of the Dene people, an Athabaskan-speaking culture that inhabits northern Canada and part of Alaska. She joins the dots on the map, showing us how this small community is globally connected, as are all its inhabitants, by multinational strategies of profit and deception. Her play, *Burning Vision*,[1] unmasks both the great lies of imperialist powers (telling miners they are digging for a substance that cures cancer, while secretly using it for the Manhattan project to build bombs to drop on Nagasaki and Hiroshima); and all the seemingly small rationalizations and accommodations that people of all cultures construct to make their personal circumstances yield the greatest benefit to themselves. Images in the play reflect the private consequences of public decisions, and show how global powers shape not just our geographical maps, but also the map of the human heart.

But before I go into the play, some facts. In 1905, Albert Einstein developed his theory of relativity. In 1938, Enrico Fermi received the Nobel prize for discovering the fissionable properties of uranium. In 1925, radium watch dial painters, all women, were encouraged by their employers to lick their paint brushes to give them a sharp point for a better application of luminous paint. The ingestion of radium resulted in severe anemia, bone cancer, and glowing "radium jaw." In an era when uranium was the most valuable substance on earth and fetched $120,000 a gram, the Dene hunters and trappers were paid $3 a day by their white employers to haul and ferry burlap bags from Port Radium to Fort McMurray. In the 1950's, they slept on the uranium ore on barges, ate fish from water contaminated by radioactive tailings and breathed radioactive dust. Their women sewed tents from the used uranium sacks. More than a dozen men carried sacks weighing over 45 kilograms for 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, 4 months a year. Over 18 Dene who worked at the mine between 1942 and 1960 have died of lung, colon, and kidney cancers, in a community that had previously never known any form of cancer. The average lifespan of male Dene elders has dropped from 90 to 62. The Canadian federal government owned Eldorado Mining as a crown corporation from 1942 until 1960 and regulated the uranium industry, privatizing it in 1988. Declassified documents on the U.S. atomic weapons and energy program reveal that both the Canadian and American governments knew of the deadly hazards of uranium extraction, yet to date

[1] Marie Clements, *Burning Vision* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2003). All subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the main text in parentheses.

there has been no public acknowledgement, no apology, and no compensation given to the Dene community.[2]

Surviving elders now say that the Prophet warned them; these are the people whose dead husbands and brothers hauled the uranium ore to make the bombs. These are the people who still have no word in their language for radiation. Throughout the late 1800's and until his death in 1940, Louis Ayah, one of the North's great aboriginal seers, repeatedly warned his people that the waters in Great Bear Lake would turn a foul yellow. According to "Grandfather," the yellow poison would flow toward the village, recalls Madelaine Bayha, an 82-year-old woman and one of a dozen scarfed and skirted "uranium widows" in the village. Her husband, Joseph, worked for the uranium mine and died coughing himself to death. The deaths began in 1960 and continued into the next decade, the radiation seeping slowly into people's bones. Victor Dolphus' arm came off when he tried to start an outboard motor; he was also wearing a neck brace to hold his head in place because his bones were half dissolved by cancer. Joe Kenny, a boat pilot, died of colon cancer; his son Napoleon, a deck hand, died of stomach cancer.[3] And so on. The premature death of so many men left not only many widows but interrupted the handing down of their oral culture. This is a vicious example of cultural genocide.

In her play, Marie Clements shows how the genocides of the Dene and the Japanese are connected by conflating the stories of both peoples; the spaces that they all once occupied are collapsed as she bridges both continents and undermines any conventional understanding of place and time. Her stagecraft is irreverent and defies dramatic tradition; it is "all about process," as theatre people like to remind us. If your cultural history has been erased by colonization many times over, then you cannot be said to exist wholly; you inhabit the margins, the fragments, and the uninterrupted circle that ignores the lines other nations have drawn to box you in. And so the play both reaches into the past and foreshadows a futuristic globalism where not just national boundaries are erased, but whole cultures are eliminated in the name of progress. Simone Weil reminded us that history is the story of the vanquished told by the victors. Clements' play superimposes indigenous peoples' stories onto linear histories, informing the actors' gestures with a deadly contemporary significance by intertwining events and structuring the play in a highly fractured and impressionistic fashion. It is both a warning about an apocalyptic future and an exposé of past atrocities that have rendered the victims invisible.

[2] Andrew Nikiforuk, "Echoes of the Atomic Age: Cancer Kills Fourteen Aboriginal Uranium Workers", *Calgary Herald*, Saturday, March 14 (1998) A1.

[3] Nikiforuk, "Echoes of the Atomic Age," p. 1.

To bring back to life the memory of those who died in war as well as those along the road to uranium, Clements has symbolically retraced their journey. Starting from the land of her ancestors, she travels down the length of the Mackenzie River (reversing the journey of the explorer, reversing the colonial takeover), crosses the United States and makes her way back to Hiroshima. The ore is mined by people who "all looked the same", as the Dene seer remarks (p. 107). There are no distinct, fully-developed characters, and many of the roles are doubled to suggest overlapping, even racial blurring. The actor who plays the young Metis woman is called Rose, and she becomes indistinguishable from the character Tokyo Rose, a Japanese-American student who was a propaganda radio personality during the war and later prosecuted by the American government, in spite of her popularity among American G.I.s as a supposedly exotic geisha girl.

Likewise the Dene ore carrier, a ghost who haunts his widow throughout the play, overlaps with Koji, a Japanese fisherman whose life just before the blast of the atomic bomb is depicted in poetic fragments throughout the play. The Japanese Grandmother becomes the Widow in the final scene. The bomb that was named Little Boy is personified as a young native boy searching for a place to call home, but he is the ward of an insensitive and complacent character named Fat Man, who represents the Colonizer.

The scene where Fat Man masturbates on stage is shocking mostly because his self-congratulatory power is juxtaposed with the loving, earthy sexuality expressed the Widow of the Dene ore carrier. Little Boy, whose love of the earth in its unmined state allows him to reclaim his voice by speaking out of the darkness against being discovered, knows that the discoverers "lay claims on you, not knowing you've known yourself for thousands of years" (p. 20—21).

Several of the characters have no place in this world but haunt us from another world, speaking to the living characters on stage. They live literally "beyond the pale," and this is the space that Clements seems to celebrate as both the site of destruction and the site of hope.

(There are other Canadian texts I can think of that do this, too. In Daphne Marlatt's *Ghost Works*,[4] the word "home" echoes throughout, picking up layers of meaning that complicate the narrator's view of herself, her family, her nation, and her past. Gail Scott's *Main Brides*,[5] about the Montreal massacre of December 6, 1989, emphasizes juxtaposition and simultaneity, eschewing linear time and space.)

Clements' stage directions are vague and philosophical rather than explicit. In the production I saw in Vancouver, the stage set is a stone-filled

[4] Daphne Marlatt, *Ghost Works* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1993).

[5] Gail Scott, *Main Brides* (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1993).

circle on the floor and the play is staged in the round with the periphery in shadow, suggestive of both the uranium mines and of Hiroshima just after the bomb was dropped.

The lighting is evocative: either blinding searchlight, or dim flickering firelight. Looming from the shadows are the characters whose paths cross between 1880 and 1945, revealing gradually the blind forces they will smash into. They gain insight, or visionary powers, at the precise moment that they are destroyed — hence the title, burning vision. The backdrop is a herd of migrating caribou whose bones are glowing. The soundscape is an aural collage of voices-overs, radio announcers (including the Voice of Doom, Lorne Green, a famous Canadian wartime personality), crackling fires, underground explosions that rumble though the soles of your feet before bursting into a full-blown, bone-rattling roar, and music that is both Eastern and Western, producing a layered effect. The repetition of sounds of dripping water, heartbeats, footsteps, ticking clocks, and countdowns produce a nervous agitation in the audience that highlights Clements' sense of urgency.

In other words, this is not realism, nor is it strictly symbolism. Rather it is ritual dance. The emphasis is upon movement, echoing nuclear fission, where atoms spin and where the cycle of life and death continues in a great cosmic dance. The heart of this ritualistic play is a mine around which stories spin and unwind in circles and broken lines. There is no Act I or Act II, but there are instead Movements, suggesting that history repeats itself in cycles and that chronological time is irrelevant since we senselessly destroy all that we have created, even if we are forced to apologize later. Nor does Clements let Canadian liberals off the hook; Round Rose warns against both political and personal compromise:

> [E]verybody else is sorry. Half the time we don't even know what we are sorry about, it just squeaks out of our sorry gaps before we've even clued into the conversation. Well, I'm sorry, YOU'RE all so sorry. You have to know when to be sorry. You can't really be sorry for something you can't remember, can you. Selective memory isn't it? Let's be honest, hell, you can't even apologize for the shit you did yesterday never mind 50 years ago. Indian residential schools, Japanese internment camps, hell, and this is just in your neighbourhood. But it's all right. […] [E]verybody's sorry these days. The politicians are sorry, the cops are sorry, the priests are sorry, the logging companies are sorry, mining companies, electric companies, water companies, wife beaters, serial rapists, child molesters, mommy and daddy. Everybody's sorry. Everybody's sorry they got caught sticking it to someone else […]. That's what they are sorry about … getting caught. They could give a rat's ass about you, or me, or the people they are saying sorry to. Think about it. […] Don't

Phot. 1. "Fat Man masturbates on stage…" A scene from Marie Clements' *Burning Vision*

Phot. 2. "The play is staged in the round with the periphery in shadow…" A scene from Marie Clements' *Burning Vision*

Phot. 3. "The stages is e stone-filled circle on the floor…". A scene from Marie Clements' *Burning Vision*

Phot. 4. "It is not realism, nor is it strictly symbolism. Rather it is ritual dance…". A scene from Marie Clements' *Burning Vision*

> be a sorry ass, be sorry you have to say you are sorry. Be sorry for even thinking about, bringing about something sorry-filled. And the next time someone says, "There is one law for everyone." Say, "I'm sorry, you're an idiot" (p. 101—102).

If this verbal assault weren't enough, there's one image that remains seared into your mind: in the first half of the play, Rose, wearing rubber boots and an oversized dress, and Koji, wearing drawstring trousers, spin and spin in a dance that is an ode to joy. The dance is echoed by a second image in the final scene, where the "drop dead gorgeous" young woman who is a radium painter wears a clumsily-buttoned wedding dress, and spins in a dance of death. Falling cherry blossoms and paper cranes replace the black rain of Hiroshima and the snow of the Canadian landscape.

A white wedding dress among black cinders. Vision in the face of darkness. The birth of a mixed-race child in the final movement whose heartbeat inspires Rose to remark that "[h]is heart is so strong you have to believe in the world" (p. 115). What is most remarkable about the play for me is Clements' insistence on hopefulness. The land itself is furrowed by light and disemboweled by the roar of war and progress, but across it wander the souls who strike the first notes in a symphony of pardon. The play is as mystical as it is surreal. As Leonard Cohen would have it in his song *Anthem*: "[T]here is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

Perhaps it is true, as George Woodcock notes, that place exists in the mind as much as on the map, and that works of art "come into fullness only when their umbilical cords are severed".[6] Canadian literary regionalists are unnecessarily trapped between two opposing concepts of regional space, either an opacity that overemphasizes the materiality of space, as if space's "natural simplicity" spoke for itself[7], or a kind of transparency whereby space is rendered invisible. This false polarity prevents representing space as simultaneously social differences and complex particularities that issue from a condition of what spatial theorist Edward Soja, in *Postmodern Geographies*, calls "geographic co-presence." *Burning Vision* shows us how we can all be present in many places simultaneously, how global connection affirms our humanity, our connectedness. How we can dance with the dead in order to ensure the survival of the living.

[6] George Woodcock, "Pride of Place and Past," *Canadian Literature*, Vol. 71 (Winter 1976), p. 119.

[7] Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographie* (London and New York: 1989), p. 10.

Liza Potvin

Pamięć przechowana w kościach: sztuka *Burning Vision* Marie Clements

Streszczenie

Marie Clements jest metyską pisarką, autorką sztuk, których kompozycja pozwala widzom powiązać małą wioskę łowiecko-rybackiej społeczności Dene zamieszkującej północno-zachodnie terytoria Kanady z projektem Manhattan w Nowym Yorku oraz japońskimi społecznościami w Nagasaki i Hiroszimie, miejscami, których losy są z sobą połączone globalnymi strategiami zysku i zatajenia prawdy. Utwór *Burning Vision* odsłania zarówno wielkie kłamstwa, które skrywa imperialistyczna elita władzy (informowanie górników, że wydobywają substancję, która ma pomóc w leczeniu raka, podczas gdy potajemnie wykorzystują ją do konstrukcji bomb, które zniszczyły Hiroszimę i Nagasaki), jak i wszystkie rzekomo nieistotne racjonalizacje i nawyki, tworzone przez ludzi różnych kultur w celu uzyskania możliwie największej osobistej korzyści. Sztuka potwierdza istnienie związków pomiędzy różniącymi się od siebie kulturami oraz ich wspólne dzieje. Koncentruje się na elementach tykających zegarów i bomb oraz bijących serc — dzięki czemu różne momenty dziejowe zlewają się z sobą, momenty wyjęte z indywidualnego życia ludzkiego, z dziejów określonej kultury — przeznaczonych do ludobójczej destrukcji. Omawiane przez postaci sztuki obrazy odzwierciedlają prywatne konsekwencje decyzji politycznych i pokazują, jak globalne mocarstwa kształtują nie tylko mapy w sensie geograficznym, ale i mapy ludzkich serc.

Liza Potvin

Das in Knochen aufbewahrte Gedächtnis: das Theaterstück *Burning Vision* von Marie Clements

Zusammenfassung

Marie Clements ist eine Mestize-Schriftstellerin, die Autorin von Theaterstücken, deren Komposition den Theaterbesuchern möglich macht, die Dene-Gemeinschaft in einem kleinen Dorf im nordwestlichen Kanada mit dem Projekt Manhattan in New York und mit japanischen Gemeinschaften in Nagasaki und Hiroshima zu verbinden, also mit den Orten, deren Schicksal durch globale Gewinn- u. Verheimlichungsstrategien miteinander verbunden ist. Das Werk *Burning Vision* enthüllt sowohl große Lügen, die von imperialer Macht verborgen sind (die Bergleute werden informiert, dass sie eine, den Krebs heilende Substanz fördern, während diese Substanz zur geheimen Produktion von den, die japanischen Städte Hiroshima und Nagasaki zerstörenden Bomben verwendet wird), wie auch alle unwichtigen Rationalisierungen und Gewohnheiten, die von den verschiedene Kulturen vertretenden Menschen zu ihren möglichst größten Gunsten geschaffen werden. Das Drama bestätigt das Vorhandensein von den Zusammenhängen zwischen verschiedenen Kulturen und deren gemeinsame Geschichte. Es konzentriert sich auf die für eine Völkerdestruktion bestimmten Elemente der tickenden Uhren, Bomben und schlagenden Herzen, so dass ver-

schiedene Geschichtsmomente, Momente des individuellen menschlichen Lebens, Momente aus der Geschichte einer bestimmten Kultur miteinander verschmolzen werden. Die von den Dramafiguren erörterten Bilder spiegeln persönliche Folgen der konkreten politischen Entscheidungen wider und zeigen auf welche Weise, nicht nur geografische Landkarten, sondern auch Karten der menschlichen Herzen von globalen Großmächten gebildet werden.

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"AMERICAN HISTORY IS PARKING LOTS" PLACE AND MEMORY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN TRAVEL WRITING

Anthropological studies of Americans often emphasize their orientation towards the future. It is believed that as a future-oriented society Americans devalue the past and are unconscious of the present, concentrating their efforts on the improvements the future will surely bring. Reverence for the past, respect for ancestors and tradition have little significance in the lives of self-reliant and mobile individuals.

One the other hand, the fact that Americans do take interest in the national and regional history is confirmed by a large number of historic associations and societies that aim to celebrate, preserve and interpret heritage of the past.[1] An enormous popularity of genealogy is also a proof that many Americans explore the past while studying the history of their own family.[2] Thus, for a substantial number of Americans history becomes a hobby at a certain stage of their lives. The wish to explore the past is also an important motivation for contemporary travelers. The trips described in American travel books of the last twenty years are in a sense journeys back into the past, in search of the old fashioned, small-town America. These

[1] Numerous history organizations in the United States are usually small and run by volunteers. American Association for State and Local History, created in 1940, provides "services and leadership to thousands of institutional and individual members. It is the only comprehensive national organization dedicated to state and local history." More information can be found at AASLH homepage at: 28 October 2009 <www.aaslh.org>

[2] Federation of Genealogical Societies that includes the most comprehensive directory of genealogical and historical societies in America on its homepage, estimates their combined membership at 500,000 members; at: 28 October 2009 <www.fgs.org>

journeys in search of regional and national identity are a good opportunity to see how the past influences and shapes the present. This paper focuses on three prevalent ways in which interest in history manifests itself in popular travel books of the last two decades, such as Ian Frazier's *Great Plains* (1990), Dayton Duncan's *Out West* (1988), William Least Heat Moon's *Blue Highways* (1983), and Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent* (1989).

First of all, travel authors perceive landscape as record of the past, as "expressions of cultural values, social behavior, and individual actions worked upon particular localities over a span of time."[3] If landscape can be a symbolic archive for a traveler, human memory serves this function even better. Like oral historians, contemporary travelers explore "grass-root" history by listening to and recording the stories of the people they meet. Finally, they also visit museums, monuments, battlefields, and other historic sites that are both to commemorate and represent history for the general public.

As I have mentioned, cultural landscape can be treated as "information stored in symbolic form, an environmental archive of sorts."[4] As such, it plays an important role in the community and society. It functions as "a narrative, a symbolic legacy conveying, if not realizing, information from one generation to another."[5]

If landscape is a code or a narrative, then de-coding or reading it means revealing the cultural and symbolic significance of certain human actions that "produce" landscapes. Ian Frazier, a New Yorker, in his book on *Great Plains* tries to probe deeper into the Western history. He studies academic monographs, visits the important sites and talks with the locals. Yet it is the landscape of the Great Plains that he finds most revealing in his search: "The Great Plains have plenty of room for the past. Often, as I drove around, I felt as if I were in an enormous time park."[6] He comes across fossilized dinosaur bones, ancient Indian artifacts and ruins, and ruts of old pioneer trails. In fact, Frazier looks at the Plains as an archaeologist would look at them — as a site rich in valuable artifacts and evidence of past events. Once such a site is destroyed and the layers mixed, no research aimed at reconstructing the past will any longer be possible. There will be nothing left to explore for future generations. That is why Frazier protests passionately against strip-mining, which he sees as an act of mindless destruction of American history records: "Strip-mined land is land thrown away. Usually, trash exists in a larger landscape; after strip-mining, the larger landscape *is*

[3] Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscapes* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 13.

[4] Lester B. Rowntree and Margaret W. Conkey, "Symbolism and the Cultural Landscape," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 70 (1980), p. 461.

[5] Rowntree and Conkey, "Symbolism and the Cultural Landscape," p. 461.

[6] Ian Frazier, *Great Plains* (New York: Penguin, 1990), p. 82.

trash. Instead of adding a new layer to the palimpsest of the Great Plains, strip-mining destroys the palimpsest itself. Of a place where imagination could move at will backward and even forward through time, strip-mining creates a kind of time prison."[7]

To Frazier the gravest sin of strip-mining is the destruction of what he calls "the palimpsest" of the Plains, a unique deposit of layers that have accumulated through millennia as a result of geological processes, animal, and human activities. He sees long-term anthropogenic changes to the landscape as natural but cannot accept abrupt termination of that process.

Wherever it has been left intact, landscape can inspire an observer to travel back in time. This happens to Dayton Duncan, who in his book *Out West* follows in the footsteps of the Lewis and Clark expedition. As can be expected, very few places on the famous explorer's route have been preserved in the original state of wilderness. So when Duncan finds himself at the White Cliffs of the Missouri he experiences the pleasure of re-discovery, of seeing exactly the same scenery he has read about in Lewis and Clark's *Journals.* "My small group of Lewis and Clark buffs […] sits speechless as each one of us savors the gifts nature freely provides only when she has been left alone: a sense of timelessness, a feeling of awe, a moment of communion with those who have been here before and proceeded on. […] [T]he magic of this landscape is that all of us see it through the fresh eyes of the first explorers, and each one of us is thinking the same thing. *This* is where they camped, *this* is what they saw, *this* is how they must have felt."[8]

In such cases, as Heather Henderson points out, "the value of scene, landscape, monument lies not so much in its own intrinsic qualities as in the pleasure of seeing for ourselves what someone else has seen and described before us."[9] For Duncan and his companions the value of the White Cliffs is enhanced by the fact that they look exactly the way they did almost 180 years ago. Thus, modern-day travelers are able, in their imagination, to travel back in time and to feel as the first explorers must have felt.

At the same time, Duncan is aware of the paradoxical status of such places as the White Cliffs. They have survived intact because of intentional human efforts to preserve them. He comments on this fact in the following way: "[…] these days, sometimes a man's mark on the land is found by the relative absence of the marks of man."[10] Duncan points out that in the Unit-

[7] Frazier, *Great Plains*, p. 91.

[8] Dayton Duncan, *Out West: American Journey Along the Lewis and Clark Trail* (New York: Penguin, 1988), p. 233.

[9] Heather Henderson, "The Travel Writer and the Text: 'My Giant Goes with Me Wherever I Go,'" in: *Temperamental Journeys*: *Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, ed. Michael Kowalewski (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1992), p. 232.

[10] Duncan, *Out West*, p. 240.

ed States at the end of the twentieth century there are no purely "natural" landscapes, since their existence and preservation has been possible only thanks to the laws and regulations passed by humans.

Both Frazier and Duncan make references to historic figures, places, and events on almost every page of their books. They refer to accounts of Western exploration, relate legendary and true stories of outlaws and sheriffs, retell stories of immigrants and booming prairie towns. As Duncan admits, in his Western travels, he "bumped into [history — M.R.] and its constant companion, myth, at every stop. They twine together and grow on the roadside, like the bramble and the rose, increasingly hard to separate. Jesse James and Joseph Smith, Custer and Sitting Bull, mountain men and cowboys — they and many others existed once in fact; they live on in myth, exerting as much or more influence on our present as they did on their own. The myth industry is the only one that has always boomed and never gone bust."[11]

One cannot help noticing that the evoked landscape of the past is, in Frazier's words: "[…] much more colorful and exciting and populous then the present."[12] Both Frazier and Duncan realize that a whole chapter of the Western history is coming to an end. Family farms are vanishing, small towns are emptying out and sometimes the old-timers' stories remain the only record of a rural or backwoods culture. These people and their recollections await a chronicler who will save them from oblivion.

This is another path that a self-appointed student of American history can take. Like oral historians, some travel authors are interested in recording and preserving "the history of ordinary people as they lived their ordinary lives."[13] They also realize that the value of folk memory and folk tradition lies in their ability to supplement the versions of past events that can be found in history books. The main difference between an oral historian and a travel author is that while the former does some prior research and preselects a group of people to be interviewed, the latter does not know whom he will meet and interview. Unlike the oral historian, who focuses primarily on historically significant memories, the traveler finds anecdotes, remarkable personal experiences and family stories to be equally fascinating and valuable resources for our understanding of the past.

The stories that fill the pages of contemporary travelogues are usually recollections of elderly people who have lived all their lives in the same place and know everything about it. The possibility to access these private archives of memory and then share the stories they hear with their readers is one of the main rewards for a traveler. This is how Dayton Duncan, who

[11] Duncan, *Out West*, p. 414.

[12] Frazier, *Great Plains*, p. 81.

[13] *Oral History*: *An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, eds. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1984), p. xxi.

explores the history of Ponca valley in Nebraska, comments upon his interviews with an elderly couple: "Listening to the Christensens in their living room is to hear firsthand the complete story, from the beginning to the present, of white settlement of the area and to understand a comparatively youthful regional history that can be encompassed by one person's life — like being able to stop at a home near Plymouth Rock and talk to Miles Standish."[14] For the travelers and readers alike such personal recollections not only make the history almost palpable but also teach the importance of one's roots.

In contemporary travel books it is usually the elderly who function as a source of information about that past and as keepers of the local lore. They are willing to share their memories with others. Thus, popular travelogues invigorate the old way of passing on knowledge between generations — elderly people function in them as storytellers, the young ones are listeners who learn to respect the past and absorb the knowledge it brings.

So far we have analyzed how travel authors read landscape as the record of the past and record recollections of the living witnesses of local history. A less challenging and perhaps more common way to learn history is to visit museums, historic towns, battlefields, heritage parks, and "living history museums." Travel authors willingly visit small museums, talk to the wardens, and search out local landmarks. Dayton Duncan even invents a Road Rule that says: "Stop at all historic markers. Also stop at interesting sites, unusual places or tranquil settings."[15] In general, travel authors find such out-of-the-way, "commercially undeveloped" historic sites genuinely interesting and educative.

The trouble begins when a traveler ventures into historic places that have been developed and designed to cater for tourists. It can be added here that modern travelers always see themselves in contrast to tourists and devalue educational potential of tourist experience. Since tourists bring money, local officials will often do anything to attract them. However, the price of development tailored to tourists' demands is high; authenticity, local flavor, and good taste are the first to go. In a more sensitive visitor such sites inevitably provoke questions about what and when to restore, reconstruct, reproduce or preserve.

Two authors, William Least Heat Moon and Bill Bryson are especially critical of the tourists' influence upon many historic places in the United States. Several incidents recorded in both travelogues clearly manifest the unbridgeable gap between the traveler's view on how American history and culture should be preserved versus the expectations of tourists. Early on in

[14] Duncan, *Out West*, p. 128.
[15] Duncan, *Out West*, p. 24.

his journey, Least Heat Moon visits the site of Star Fort, a Loyalist stronghold besieged by the revolutionary infantry in 1781. Situated on the edge of the ancient Cherokee Path, the old fort is overgrown with trees, silent, and mysterious. However, the Park Service means to redevelop and restore the site, so "one day we'll have pavement so high-heeled ladies and overweight men can tiptoe a few steps to the Star Fort, see something they don't understand, take a snapshot of themselves and hurry on."[16] Least Heat Moon, disapproving of these plans, remarks that: "Without trees and isolation the mystery is gone."[17]

Least Heat Moon is also bewildered by tourists' inability to distinguish between the authentic and the worthless. While visiting Newport, Rhode Island, he experiences a shock as he walks along Thames Street, which he remembers to have once been shabby, colorful, marine, full of bars and shops frequented by sailors. Revisited fifteen years later the place, epitomizing the town's rich history, is gone; seventeenth- and eighteenth-century houses have been replaced by concrete and glass shops selling kitschy souvenirs, the seamen's taverns have been demolished and the street is full tourists. A young man with whom Least Heat Moon discusses the changes remarks bitterly: "They trashed the place to save it. The American plan." "But the history?"— the traveler asks. The answer is bitter: "American history is parking lots."[18] American history is also, as the author learns in Newport and other places, a commodity that is being tailored to tourist needs and then sold as any other product.

Like Least Heat Moon, Bryson is surprised to find that historic landmarks can be objects of business. In Santa Fe, he visits a famous Loretto Chapel with a wooden staircase not supported by anything but its own weight. According to the legend, the staircase was built by a mysterious carpenter who appeared in answer to a nun's prayers and vanished after he had completed his work. Yet, the miraculous origins of the staircase did not prevent the nuns from selling the chapel to a private company. Bryson's commentary of this decision is somewhat ironic. "Generally speaking — which is of course always a dangerous thing to do — generally speaking — Americans revere the past only as long as there is some money in it somewhere and it doesn't mean going without air-conditioning, free parking and other essential conveniences. Preserving the past for its own sake doesn't come into it much. There is little room for sentiment. […] I find that very sad. It's no wonder that so few things last for more than a generation in America."[19]

[16] William Least Heat Moon, *Blue Highways: A Journey into America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983), p. 74.

[17] Least Heat Moon, *Blue Highways*, p. 74.

[18] Least Heat Moon, *Blue Highways*, p. 361.

[19] Bill Bryson, *The Lost Continent*: *Travels in Small-Town America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1989), p. 232.

As Bryson also learns during his journey, the very instinct of preservation may not be enough to create an authentic historic site. Colonial Williamsburg, the second capital of Virginia, bought in 1920's by John. D. Rockefeller and painstakingly restored over the years is "a sort of Disney World of American history"[20] Bryson's main problem during the visit is how to distinguish what is genuine and what is just a "Disneyesque embellishment."[21] The cobbled lanes are inviting and vine-clad houses charming, but when you enter they turn out to be gift shops selling expensive souvenirs. There is the Governor's Palace that looks very old and, though it was built only in 1933, nobody discourages the visitors from believing it is an eighteenth-century building. The inscriptions on the old gravestones at the local church are fresh and deeply grooved. Almost against himself, Bryson is captivated by the hyperreality of the place and realizes its attractiveness for numerous visitors may be well due to the fact it is so unlike an average American town. "It makes you realize what an immensurably nice place much of America could be if only people possessed the same instinct for preservation as they do in Europe. You would think the millions of people who come to Williamsburg every year would say to each other, '[…] Gosh, Bobbi, this place is beautiful. Let's go home to Smellville and plant lots of trees and preserve all the fine old buildings.' But in fact that never occurs to them. They just go back and build more parking lots and Pizza Huts."[22]

In the *Lost Continent*, Colonial Williamsburg is contrasted with a nearby Mount Vernon, George Washington's house, maintained and run with dedication and skill by Mount Vernon Ladies' Association. Bryson remarks approvingly that the reconstruction was done with utmost care and even the paint pigments and wallpapers look exactly they way they did in Washington times. He also appreciates thorough explanations of volunteer guides. In short, "Mount Vernon was everything Williamsburg should have been and was not — genuine, interesting, instructive."[23]

* * *

Even a cursory analysis of a selection of passages from contemporary American travel books shows, I think, that in their encounters with the past, modern travelers prefer direct, unmediated contact with the source of information. A conversation with an elderly person well-versed in local history or an experience of looking at the landscape are valued more than a visit to a historic place that sells a version of itself to tourists. Such a hierarchy can

[20] Bryson, *The Lost Continent*, p. 110.
[21] Bryson, *The Lost Continent*, p. 111.
[22] Bryson, *The Lost Continent*, p. 110.
[23] Bryson, *The Lost Continent*, p. 112.

be first of all explained by the travel authors' search for a first-hand, authentic experience. They want to find "real" people and visit "real places." In his sociological study of tourism, Dean MacCanell sees such search for authenticity as a powerful motivating force: "[P]retension and tackiness generate the belief that somewhere, only not right here, not right now, perhaps just over there somewhere, in another country, in another life-style […] there is genuine society."[24]

Travel authors are also motivated by an impulse to record and preserve in their books the quickly vanishing old-fashioned America and its traditional values. They do not usurp a position of sociologists or historians on a field trip; they rather want to show their readers that with a bit of historical perspective every place and every person has an interesting story to tell. Through the stories they collect and share with the audience they wish to show that history can become a source of identity for both a community and an individual.

Finally, these contemporary journeys into America's past and present can be interpreted as attempts to re-establish a sense of belonging to one's native land. Yi-Fu Tuan has written that "place is security, space is freedom; we are attached to one and long for the other."[25] Travel satisfies both of these needs. At first, every journey is a departure into the unknown space, even if the unknown, in our case, means the heartland of America. A traveler is dissociated from one's family and friends, from familiar, usually urban, environment and daily routines. When he encounters local people and starts learning about the land and culture from them, he is able to establish new emotional bonds with people and places. Thus, eventually, travel becomes a means of association, a way to develop a sense of belonging. To quote Yi-Fu Tuan again: "[…] what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with values."[26]

[24] Dean MacCanell, *The Tourist*: *A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 15.

[25] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*: *The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 3.

[26] Tuan, *Space and Place*, p. 6.

Małgorzata Rutkowska

„Amerykańska historia to parkingi" Miejsce i pamięć we współczesnych amerykańskich reportażach podróżniczych

Streszczenie

Społeczeństwo amerykańskie jest zazwyczaj postrzegane przez socjologów czy antropologów jako „zorientowane ku przyszłości". Jednak badania historyków dowodzą, że Amerykanie nie odrzucają przeszłości, tylko „używają" jej inaczej niż profesjonalni historycy, angażując się najchętniej w poznawanie przeszłości swojej rodziny czy „małej ojczyzny". Właśnie takie rozumienie przeszłości odnajdujemy na kartach współczesnych amerykańskich reportaży podróżniczych, których autorzy udają się na amerykańską prowincję w poszukiwaniu małych miasteczek, prostych ludzi i tradycyjnych wartości. Ian Frazier w *Wielkich Równinach* (*Great Plains*, 1990), Dayton Duncan w *Na Zachód* (*Out West*, 1988), William Least Heat Moon w *Błękitnych autostradach* (*Blue Highways*, 1983) i Bill Bryson w *Zagubionym kontynencie* (*The Lost Continent*, 1989) przyznają, że interesuje ich przeszłość odwiedzanych miejsc, historia i związane z nią mity. W swoich poszukiwaniach autorzy podążają trzema drogami: opisują i interpretują zmiany w krajobrazie kulturowym amerykańskiej prowincji, poznają historię miejsc i społeczności przez jej świadków (historia mówiona), a także odwiedzają muzea, pola bitew czy skanseny. W tropieniu śladów przeszłości podróżnicy cenią sobie najbardziej dwie pierwsze metody, preferując kontakt z historią za pośrednictwem świadków czy artefaktów, często krytycznie traktując wersję przeszłości odtworzoną na potrzeby przemysłu turystycznego i dostosowaną do niezbyt wygórowanych wymagań przeciętnego turysty.

Małgorzata Rutkowska

„Amerikanische Geschichte das sind Parkplätze" Der Ort und das Gedächtnis in gegenwärtigen amerikanischen Reisereportagen

Zusammenfassung

Amerikanische Gesellschaft ist von den Soziologen und Anthropologen meistens als eine „nach der Zukunft ausgerichtete Gesellschaft" betrachtet. Die Historiker vertreten aber die Meinung, dass die Vergangenheit von den Amerikanern nicht abgelehnt wird, sondern sie wird von ihnen anders als von den Profihistorikern „verwendet": sie setzen sich am liebsten dafür, die Geschichte ihrer Familie oder ihrer „kleinen Heimat" kennenzulernen. Solche Beurteilung der Vergangenheit findet man in amerikanischen Reisereportagen, deren Autoren in amerikanischer Provinz nach kleinen Städten, einfachen Menschen und traditionellen Werten suchen. Ian Frazier in *Großen Ebenen* (*Great Plains,* 1990), Dayton Duncan in *Nach Westen* (*Out West,* 1988), William Least Heat Moon in *Himmelblauen Autobahnen* (*Blue Hihgways,* 1983) und Bill Bryson im *Verlorenen Kontinent* (*The Lost Continent,* 1989) geben zu, dass sie sich für die Vergangenheit der besuchten Orte, für deren Geschichte und für

die damit verbundenen Mythen interessieren. In ihren Suchen gehen sie drei verschiedene Wege: sie beschreiben und interpretieren die in der Kultur der amerikanischen Provinz eingetretenen Änderungen, lernen die Geschichte von den besuchten Orten und Gemeinschaften von den Augenzeugen kennen (gesprochene Geschichte) oder besuchen Museen, Schlachtfelder oder Freilichtmuseen. Die zwei ersten Methoden werden von den Reisenden bevorzugt, denn die zum Bedarf der touristischen Industrie durchgesetzte und den maßvollen Ansprüchen der durchschnittlichen Touristen angepasste Wiedergabe der Geschichte wird von ihnen kritisch beurteilt.

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IMAGES OF THE HERMETIC ROOM IN THE NOVELS OF PAUL AUSTER

Among literary critics there are some who have noticed Auster's fascination with place and spatiality. Tim Woods, for example, calls this preoccupation a specifically postmodern phenomenon and he classifies spatiality as an additional "S" word, together with subjectivity, sexuality, silence, and sublimity.[1] Auster's fiction frequently foregrounds spatial loci: small apartments located in big cities, locked rooms, confined space of a writer's study, and other circumscribed spaces and places in which his characters dwell. His fiction pivots on the consequences of confinement or the spatial closure the protagonists in his novels experience as well as on the effects of openness on human consciousness. On the one hand, Auster's characters either choose confinement or are doomed to end up in constricted spaces. On the other hand, they seem to be either fascinated with open and vast space of the American continent or haunted by it, which eventually leads to their epiphany or demise. As Dennis Barone has aptly stated, Auster's narratives "often move from closed spaces to wanderings, and this movement parallels characters' understanding of actions and their consequences. Characters are paradoxically most free when confined and least free when openly rambling."[2]

As far as the experience of spatial closure is concerned, the most recurrent image in Auster's fiction, however, is that of a room and it appears in

[1] Tim Woods, "'Looking for Signs in the Air': Urban Space and the Postmodern in *In the Country of Last Things*," in: *Paul Auster*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), p. 138.

[2] Dennis Barone, "Introduction: Paul Auster and the Postmodern American Novel," in: *Beyond the Red Notebook*: *Essays on Paul Auster*, ed. Dennis Barone (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 12.

most of his novels. It happens that Auster's characters are quite frequently writers and their profession requires spending long stretches of time within the four walls of their studies. More often than not these rooms are presented as a location with a particular *genius loci*, or "the spirit of place," thanks to its spatial characteristics. According to Botond Bognar, " '[s]pirit of place,' or *genius loci*, arises from the special character or synesthetic quality of a particular locality," and it is evoked by various significant aspects which, among many, include spatial structures as well as topographical patterns and textures of a place.[3]

Firstly, it is worth mentioning that the term "topography" explicitly refers to the delineation of one's locality or "situatedness" of somebody or something. According to *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, "topography" is not only a detailed description, delineation or representation on a map of the features of place, but also the identification of the locality or local distribution of a thing.[4] Secondly, when speaking of textures of a place, it is also vital to point out that "[a] place's 'texture' […] calls direct attention to the paradoxical nature of place."[5] As Adams, Hoelscher and Till have argued, texture does not merely mean a superficial layer of a place, which is one of many definitions of this word. On the contrary, by the very complex meaning of the word "texture," which denotes "any structure having the appearance or consistency of woven fabric, a tissue, a web" as well as "constitution, distinctive nature or quality resulting from composition, or even mental disposition,"[6] it suggests inherent complexity which is created by bringing together many threads employed in its constitution: "[T]he shape, feel, and texture of a place each provides a glimpse into the processes, structures, spaces, and histories that went into its making."[7] Last but not least, spatial structures must be taken into account since space is one of the basic constituents of a place. Being a potentiality in itself, space corroborates its spaciousness or capacity to contain that which is being held within its grasp. Thus, space, or more poignantly the spatiality of a place, can generate ample meanings and connotations.

What is the potentiality of space as far as the image of a room is concerned? The rooms in Auster's novels are always similar: most often tiny and cell-like,

[3] Botond Bognar, "A Phenomenological Approach to Architecture and Its Teaching in the Design Studio," in: *Dwelling, Place & Environment*, eds. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (Malbar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1985), p. 188.

[4] *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Lesley Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), Vol. 2, p. 3341.

[5] *Textures of Place*: *Exploring Humanist Geographies*, eds. Paul C. Adams, Steven Hoelscher and Karen E. Till (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. xiii.

[6] *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, p. 3265.

[7] *Textures of Place*, p. xiii.

profoundly claustrophobic, bare or completely empty; and, more often than not, they are locked. In those rooms space appears to close in on the characters that either dwell in them or just enter them for shorter or longer stretches of time. Paradoxically, the rooms being claustrophobic, Auster's protagonists do not seem to suffer from claustrophobia (which is fear of enclosed space) but rather experiencing claustrophilia (which is love of being confined in small places). The very constriction of space is guaranteed by the hermeticity of the rooms presented as they are inescapably walled territories, which augments their confining influence. The rooms are delineated as peculiar enclaves of spatial closure which is both of physical and mental nature.

The hermeticity of the room apparently seems to suggest a certain spatial seal or even a particular concealment of the room's space as well as of one's consciousness within its walls. However, it is pivotal to acknowledge that the hermeticity of the room is not smoothly opaque and impermeable. Depending on which perspective one assumes, the hermeticity of the room may also appear rather porous in its character. Such a permeable, or to a certain extent open, structure of the room is experienced from within the room, for it is always connected with a body of a person staying within its four walls. Thus, *within* the room lies the porous structure of its space. Moreover, it lies within because hermeticity accordingly lies in the nature of the room and does not constitute its layer. Furthermore, its porous character indicates that the hermeticity does not merely mean closure and confinement but also a specific disclosure of its substance or partial opening of its space. Such dual essence of the room's hermeticity is corroborated by the meaning of the word "hermetic."

On the one hand, one of the meanings of the word signifies something airtight, sealed, and protected from outside agencies, but, on the other hand, it also means an adjective pertaining to the god Hermes, the son of Zeus and Maia in the Greek mythology, the messenger of the gods.[8]

> Swiftly moving Hermes is at once "the God of motion, communication, guidance, and barter." He acts as a guide to human souls on their journey into the underworld and yet is prone to mislead these souls by his cunning and guile. […] Associated with the heaps of stones that mark crossroads and territorial boundaries in ancient Greece […] Hermes is also the god of roads and of wayfarers.[9]

Being a god of intersections, the "hermetic" essence of this deity appears to lie in its being "always *out there*," resonating with a mode of dwell-

[8] *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 1, p. 1223.

[9] Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back Into Place*: *Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press: 1993), p. 137.

ing experienced in its very outwardness.[10] As Rafael López-Pedraza argues, "Hermes permeates the whole world because of his possibility of making connections."[11] This capacity for linking the outer with the inner is what closely relates to the twofold nature of the hermeticity of the room which, thanks to a body within its walls, joins the inside of the room with its outside. Furthermore, while speaking of two modes of dwelling, namely hestial and hermetic, Edward Casey identifies the latter one with ec-centric inhabiting which consists in "far-out view," in outwardness and exteriority.[12]

The preoccupation with possibilities of confined space and of surpassing its limitations by transgressing its physicality lies at the center of Auster's fiction and is explicitly associated with the image of the room. The seminal text in which the motif of the room is employed is *The Invention of Solitude*, and more predominantly its second section entitled *The Book of Memory*.

> This penchant for narrow spaces, where the spirit can project itself against the walls […] makes the room a kind of mental uterus, site of a second birth. In this enclosure the subject gives birth, in essence, to himself. From mere biological existence he now attains spiritual life. The confinement transforms him into a voluntary castaway, a Robinson Crusoe run aground in the middle of the city, wedged into a tiny fissure of the urban habitat.[13]

The protagonist of *The Book of Memory* is A., who stays in his small room and writes, trying to inhabit the space of the room not only with his body but also with his thoughts. It is as though he was to fight the emptiness of the place with his mind's creativity and transgress its confinement by this "spiritual work."[14] On the one hand, the experience of being walled out means constriction of inhabited space, which can also be described as a *centripetal* movement of the room's space, by which it is meant that space appears to close in on A. On the other hand, staying within the walls of the room simultaneously generates the feeling of crossing the room's material boundaries because its space is also governed by its *centrifugal* force, which signifies that space seems to open up since the room changes from a peculiar microcosm into a macrocosm, the very Universe itself.

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[10] Casey, *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 137.

[11] Rafael López-Pedraza, *Hermes and His Children* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1977), p. 8. Quoted in: Casey, *Getting Back Into Place*, p. 137.

[12] Casey, *Getting Back Into Place*, pp. 133—138.

[13] Pascal Bruckner, "Paul Auster, or The Heir Intestate," in: *Beyond the Red Notebook*, p. 28.

[14] Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), p. 77.

> Rather, a feeling of doors being shut, of locks being turned. It is a hermetic season, a long moment of inwardness. The outer world, the tangible world of materials and bodies, has come to seem no more than an emanation of his mind. […] A feeling of having been locked up, and at the same time of being able to walk through walls.[15]

This quotation reveals the twofold meaning of the word "hermetic." As long as "hermetic" is experienced from the outside, it stays opaque and impermeable, but the moment one enters the hermeticity of a place, it changes its essence. The hermeticity of the room as encountered from the inside transports its dweller to its center, within the boundaries of oneself, at the same time thrusting the person outside the limits of the room and causing the person to be able to expatiate beyond its walls. Thus, the body within the room corroborates the porous structure of its hermeticity because thanks to the body within the room its space becomes inhabited or lived. "'Where' is never a there, a region over against us, isolated and objective. 'Where' is always part of us and we part of it. It mingles with our being, so much so that place and human being are enmeshed, forming a fabric that is particular, concrete and dense."[16]

The Book of Memory seems to commence with the image of the room and it also grows out of the very motif. One of the most frequently repeated sentences in the text is one of Pascal's thoughts, namely: "All the unhappiness of man stems from one thing only: that he is incapable of staying quietly in his room,"[17] as though such constriction of space were to offer a way to happiness or transcendence. Furthermore, different rooms are presented in the novel: rooms of different writers and rooms depicted in various novels, poems, and paintings. Auster presents the rooms reproduced in the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh and Vermeer, the rooms of real writers, for example the room into which Emily Dickinson retired, and in which she produced her whole *oeuvre*, and finally Hölderlin's living in his tower, which supposedly was built by a carpenter called Zimmer. These last two instances are highly significant as towards the end of their lives both Dickinson and Hölderlin left their rooms more and more rarely, which altered those places into uterine symbols of their life spaces, although the reasons for staying within their rooms were different for those two poets; the creative space of the room of Emily Dickinson and the more confining space of Hölderlin's tower, which he left more and more rarely because of his illness towards the end of his life. In both situations, however, it was the space of the room which encompassed spatial territory of their Universe and became gradually transformed into it.

[15] Auster, *The Invention of Solitude*, p. 78.
[16] Joseph Grange, "Place, Body and Situation," in: *Dwelling, Place & Environment*, p. 71.
[17] Auster, *The Invention of Solitude*, p. 83.

Another character in the novel is S., A.'s friend from the past, who used to live "in a space so small that at first it seemed to defy you, to resist being entered."[18] S.'s room became changed into a cloak in which he was living, sleeping, and breathing. It came to represent a diaphanous texture through which S.'s life could be seen and read, and in which it was encompassed and embodied.

> For there was an entire universe in that room, a miniature cosmology that contained all that is most vast, most distant, most unknowable. It was a shrine, hardly bigger than a body, in praise of all that exists beyond the body: the representation of one man's inner world even to the slightest detail. S. had literally managed to surround himself with the things that were inside him. The room he lived in was a dream space, and its walls were like the skin of some second body around him, as if his own body had been transformed into a mind, a breathing instrument of pure thought. This was the womb, the belly of the whale, the original site of the imagination.[19]

The room becomes transformed into a corporeal framework, a body, and the body metamorphoses into the body's mind. Here the room happens to be incorporated and assimilated into the fabric of embodied existence; the room comes to be S.'s second body. This metamorphosis is possible thanks to the porous structure of the room's space and its being inhabited, which renders its outward and inward movement within its texture possible. As Bernd Jager has argued the body does not merely occupy space but it generates it, thus allowing for its transformations.[20] It brings us again to the importance of the body that dwells within the room, which renders the twofold meaning of the room's hermeticity possible, and thanks to which its porous structure comes to be comprehended.

Another novel which is filled with images of rooms is Auster's *The New York Trilogy*. It consists of three novels whose titles are respectively *City of Glass*, *Ghosts* and *The Locked Room*. The title of the last one is transparent enough but it is in *Ghosts* that readers can find the most elaborate descriptions of the room and the consequences of staying within its walls. The protagonist of the novel is a detective called Blue, who is hired by a man named White, and whose task is to watch another one, called Black. A small studio apartment is rented for Blue and he is to keep an eye on Black, who lives in the building opposite Blue's. As it turns out, Black spends most of his

[18] Auster, *The Invention of Solitude*, p. 89.

[19] Auster, *The Invention of Solitude*, p. 89.

[20] Bernd Jager, "Body, House and City: The Intertwinings of Embodiment, Inhabitation and Civilization," in: *Dwelling, Place & Environment*, p. 215.

time within the four walls of his room writing, reading, eating and sleeping. Only rarely does he leave the room to wend his way through the streets of New York, which becomes a chance for Blue to do the same, the thing which he does very eagerly. It takes place very seldom, however, and Blue regards the confinement of his room as more and more intolerable. The spatial constriction of his life space is unbearable to him and "[f]or the first time in his life, he finds that he has been thrown back on himself, with nothing to grab hold of, nothing to distinguish one moment from the next."[21] Together with this spatial compression of his world within the room comes the reduction of life's pace, and the emptiness of Blue's room seems to swallow his body and his mind as though the hermeticity of the room was literal and he had no air to breathe, nothing which would render him alive.

Strangely enough, the novel itself is mainly set within the room's walls as if life could only take place in the room. The novel commences with Blue entering the room and it ends with his leaving the confining structure of the room. Readers know next to nothing of what happens before Blue's spatial, or maybe platial, adventure within the room and completely nothing of what happens after he leaves. In this case, however, Blue is forced to take up this stationary position and he does not welcome the shrinking of his life space. Here, the room's texture loses its porous character as it seems to be entirely devoid of life which is always brought within the borders of the room with the body of its dweller, or more poignantly with flesh rather than body, which would imply its sensuous aspect allowing for it to experience space surrounding it.[22] Blue, however, is merely stationed in the room to observe Black and thus he does not really inhabit its space, or does not want to inhabit it. It is no longer space that attacks Blue through his eyes only, but space that encroaches on him from all directions and enters his body, or his flesh, thus menacing its integrity. The space of the room becomes aching void for him and it threatens his mental stability. What finally happens is a figurative explosion of the person confined within the room; for Blue leaves it to enter the room of his antagonist, Black, where the former one apparently kills the latter. The hermeticity of the room may be treated literally as its spatial structure has such confining impact on Blue that he seems to be unable to breathe or live within its walls.

Another example of the room depicted in Auster's fiction is a writer's study which is always presented as a particular location. As it has already

[21] Paul Auster, *The New York Trilogy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1987), p. 143.

[22] Grange, "Place, Body and Situation," p. 72. Grange uses the word "flesh" instead of "body" to emphasize the sensuousness of the human body, its feeling and housing the environment in its being, which stands in clear opposition to "body" as suggesting its density and mass. The use of this word also implies the porous character of the room's hermeticity.

been mentioned, more often than not his characters are writers themselves and the rooms into which they retire to write appear in almost all of Auster's novels, for example, *Leviathan*, *The Book of Illusions*, *The New York Trilogy* and *Oracle Night*, which is Auster's last publication. The protagonist of *Oracle Night* is Sidney Orr, a thirty-four-year-old novelist recovering from a near-fatal illness. He spends his days walking and writing, these two activities being his main occupation. He mostly writes in his workroom which is "hardly bigger than a closet in there — just enough space for a desk, a chair, and a miniature bookcase with four narrow shelves."[23] The moment Orr enters the room and sits at his desk, he feels "like someone who had come home from a long and difficult journey, an unfortunate traveler who had returned to claim his rightful place in the world."[24] The room becomes presented as the authentic territory where happiness can be attained, where with the constriction of physical space the writer is granted freedom to wander, to expatiate beyond the walls of the room and even further. Such freedom within the room is indubitably connected with the process of writing which grants the writer a particular transcendence beyond the walls of the room.

This is possible thanks to the intertwining of the physical space of the room and the space of writing or the space of literature which is always connected with a certain opening. Through this opening (or dis-closure) the writer may transgress the hermeticity of the room and figuratively disappear, which causes his appearance somewhere else, in a different place. Paradoxically, when Orr's wife comes back home and looks for her husband in his workroom, she does not see him in there as though he were not within the room. On the one hand, writing within the room may seem to be an ordinary activity; but in Auster's novels it is always associated with a peculiar spatial phenomenon which again moves us to the porous character of the hermeticity of the room. Here, it is this which enables the writer to move beyond its walls, and it should not astound us that the writer retires into the room's spatial confinement to be capable of fighting its hermetic structure.

The rooms presented in Auster's novels stand for a particular spatial experience which is strictly related to their hermeticity. The very hermetic image of the room, however, may be comprehended in its twofold manner in relation to the dual meaning of the word "hermetic." Such a spatial, or platial, experience depends on the feeling or perception of the person, or the body, who stays within the room. On the one hand, the locked room may either be felt as confining when the person experiences it from the outside, or from the inside, when the person does not want to be there and is forced

[23] Paul Auster, *Oracle Night* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), p. 11.
[24] Auster, *Oracle Night*, p. 11.

to remain within the walls of the room. On the other hand, this very room may be experienced as welcoming and opened, or opening in its structure, when the person experiences the room from within, or when he or she willingly retires into the room and mingles with its space.

Magdalena Słonka

Obrazy hermetycznego pokoju w powieściach Paula Austera

Streszczenie

Artykuł poświęcony jest tematowi pokoju, który jest jednym z ważniejszych motywów twórczości Paula Austera. Pokój potraktowany jest tutaj jako zamknięta przestrzeń, w której bohaterowie Austera spędzają dobrowolnie, lub nie, dużo czasu, co z kolei wiąże się z ich odseparowaniem od świata zewnętrznego. Artykuł jest próbą spojrzenia na hermetyczność przestrzeni zamkniętego pokoju i jego podwójny aspekt przez zwrócenie uwagi na to, jak osoby (ich ciała) przebywające wewnątrz zmieniają charakter tej przestrzeni. Bohaterowie Austera to często ludzie pióra zamykający się w czterech ścianach, aby skupić się na pisaniu. Ten proces również otwiera ową przestrzeń i sprawia, że ci, którzy są w niej zamknięci, mogą wyjść „na zewnątrz". Paradoksalnie rzecz ujmując, to zamknięcie powoduje otwarcie: hermetyczna przestrzeń może być przestrzenią otwartą.

Magdalena Słonka

Bilder des Hermetische Zimmers in Paul Austers Romanen

Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Artikel ist dem Zimmer als einem der wichtigsten Motive in Paul Austers Werken gewidmet. Das Zimmer erscheint hier als ein geschlossener Raum, in dem Austers Helden, freiwillig oder unwillkürlich, sehr viel Zeit verbringen, was dann ihre Absonderung von der Außenwelt zur Folge hat. Der Autor ergründet den Hermetismus des geschlossenen Raumes und dessen doppelten Aspekt, indem er den Leser darauf aufmerksam macht, wie die sich in dem Zimmer befindenden Personen (deren Körper) den Charakter des Raumes verändern. Zu Austers Helden werden oft die in den eigenen vier Wänden geschlossenen Schriftsteller, die sich auf dem Schreiben konzentrieren wollen. Dank dem Prozess wird ein neuer Raum geöffnet, so dass die dort Geschlossenen „nach außen" dürfen. Eine Verschließung hat paradox eine Eröffnung zur Folge: ein hermetischer Raum kann auch ein offener Raum werden.

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A CITY GIRL AT HEART: CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDERED SPACE IN CHICK-LIT FICTIONS

> A different world (the reader's) slips into the author's place. This mutation makes the text habitable, like a rented apartment. […] Renters make comparable changes in an apartment they furnish with their acts and memories; […] as do pedestrians, in the streets they fill with the forests of their desires and goals.
>
> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

> "You seem to be abnormally preoccupied with space." "Sorry?" "Space. Having it. Needing it. Wanting it. You talk about it all the time. I've told you on several occasions that we're operating with a commune perception here at the Center. I believe we've discussed, ad nauseam, that you need to make peace with your allotted area."
>
> Emma McLaughlin & Nicola Kraus, *Citizen Girl*

Chick Lit[1] has become a widely recognized generic name designating a contemporary mainstream literary convention, known for its pastel, lighthearted covers and aspiring young female authors, who attempt to create humorous portraits of young urban women and their social environment. An early and significant literary symptom of the forthcoming Chick-Lit wave was Helen Fielding's best-selling novel *Bridget Jones's Diary*, which was published in the United Kingdom in 1996. As the strand has virtually flooded American and European markets, the question about its cultural significance, and

[1] The article partly draws on research that has appeared in print in my book on chicklit novels. See Katarzyna Smyczyńska, *The World According to Bridget Jones*: *Discourses of Identity in Chicklit Fictions* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007).

particularly about its relevance to the readers' lives remains pertinent. The Chick-Lit phenomenon can be approached from various perspectives, which either highlight its invasion of contemporary mainstream literary stage and point out its intertextual play with romantic and satirical conventions, or place it firmly next to other consumer culture products on the grounds that the novels thrive on their readers' consumerist desires. However, an issue which is most frequently discussed yet perhaps not fully understood by the critics of the strand is the way the novels construct a specific vision of gendered experience. The uneasy term "chick lit" has been criticised for its derogatory, condescending overtones, while the convention for its apparent perpetuation of stereotypical notions of neurotic, insecure, shopping-obsessed, and husband-hunting feminine identity. Chick-Lit fictions have been accused of breeding backlash rhetoric, even though the protagonists seem to embody successful women and postfeminist girls *par excellence*. Setting these complaints aside for a while, I will look at selected examples of the convention and, singling out a seemingly minor aspect of its discourse, i.e. its representations of space, demonstrate how space marks off the protagonists' gendered subjectivity, doing so in complex and often ambiguous ways.

The conceptualisation of space in sociology and cultural studies has undergone a major shift in recent decades. Not only has space come to be viewed as inseparable from time and relationally constituted, but it has also become acknowledged that its role extends over that of a passive and socially neutral field trodden upon and transformed by individual actions and social forces. Rather, it is now perceived as a terrain laden with social meanings, which plays an active role in the construction of social (including gender) identities. Chick-Lit discourses of identity are apparently marked by the space factor; as the subsequent analysis will demonstrate, space and gender identities of Chick-Lit characters are interrelated and constitutive of each other. The argument below is underpinned by two theoretical approaches: Anthony Giddens's structuration theory and Michel de Certeau's reflections on the connection between reading and spatial practices. The employment of structuration theory makes it possible to highlight the significance of space in the reproduction of social relations and its gendered character. The basic premise of the approach is that social subjects are active agents, or actors, who both draw on and are constituted by "rules" and "resources" distributed by social structure. Thus, the (re)production of social structures is possible owing to the actors' activity, which continually recreates and routinises the rules and resources that they draw on. In other words, "in and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make those activities possible."[2] Most importantly, structuration theory

[2] Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies*: *Theory and Practice* (London: Sage, 2004 [2000]), p. 235.

points to the dual character of structure, which is shown to be not just deterministic, but also enabling, in that it emphasises the subjects' ability to act creatively and transform social structure;[3] in other words, it is concerned with their ability to oppose and influence dominant social norms.[4]

Interestingly, structuration theory helps to explain the role of space in the reproduction of gendered subjectivities. It happens so because of the inevitable influence of the social organization of space on the construction of gender identities. As Shilling explains, "actors draw on rules and resources in *specific spatial contexts* which are themselves ordered in ways which effect the production and reproduction of central features of our society such as gender and social class inequalities."[5] Consequently, in the discussion on Chick-Lit urban stories it is possible to assume that narrative representations of spatial relations and the activity of the characters are closely interrelated. Moreover, it appears that structure, embodied by discourses of space, and actors — in this case the fictional characters and the novels' projected readers — may influence and transform each other.

This assumption is also inspired by Michel de Certeau's observations on the character of everyday consumer practices. For de Certeau consumption is a creative act of appropriation, a practice; with reference to readers he therefore uses a metaphor of travellers, who "poach" into a foreign space of the text, reappropriating and transforming it.[6] His analysis of the subversive potential of acts of reading extends over social practices performed upon texts of space. In de Certeau's view, the experience of reading is a kind of "impertinent absence," compared to being placed in an abyss, where readers vacillate between their own creative potential and their liability to be transformed by the text.[7] Abundant representations of urban life in Chick-Lit novels constitute a complex and productive discourse, in which the city — usually a Western metropolis — emerges as a site for the proliferation of personal and social identities. Texts of space in the convention are apparently largely marked by the ideology of urban consumerism and sexual politics, which is effectively incorporated within the PC discourse of sex non-discrimination and the policy of diversification. However, the female characters manage to make city space their own, to leave their "trace" on urban landscape and consequently actively to re-construct it. Their pres-

[3] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*: *Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 4.

[4] Chris Shilling, "Social Space, Gender Inequalities and Educational Differentiation," *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1991), p. 25.

[5] Shilling, "Social Space," p. 24.

[6] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 174.

[7] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 173.

ence embodies a time-space-specific reappropriation of the privileged male gaze of the *flanêur*, and legitimises female encroachments on a (traditionally male) territory of public space. The city represented in the narratives is thus a terrain which is constantly transformed by the practices of its professionally aspiring female inhabitants, even if they function within the confines of power embodied by the ubiquity of gender prejudice and commodity consumerism.

Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* cleverly illustrates the ambiguities involved in spatial constructions of gender identity. The book is a collection of fictionalised stories which first appeared in *The New York Observer* column, where Bushnell satirised the social and intellectual elite of New York. In one story, "urban women" decide to visit a "country girl," a married woman with children, who has invited them to a bridal shower at her place. They are ostentatiously disgusted by the hostess's suburban, home-bound, unadventurous lifestyle, and focus on contrasts between what they understand as their superior "urban" identity and the suburban values internalised by the mothers and housewives in the country. When Carrie Bradshaw, the main character, visits the bathroom and faces an explicit vision of domestic happiness embodied by a photo of the proudly pregnant hostess, she is shocked and — as she declares — disgusted by the photograph, a feeling that all her friends share as they ruminate over the visit on their way back to the city. As the following passage reveals, they are relieved to be returning to the world of glamour and night-life excitement: " 'I'm shaking,' Miranda said. They saw the city, dusky and brown, looming up as the train went over a bridge. 'I need a drink. Anyone coming?' "[8]

What the storyline does not tell explicitly is possibly the painful compromise on the part of women who feel entitled to use space (whether it is public or private) on the same terms as men, yet still feel vulnerable and insecure doing so. The city girls in the story appear to be strongly attached to their urban identity, yet their extreme reactions and their "othering" of suburban women suggest that in their attempt to occupy public and professional spheres they have to adopt the "masculine" values associated with urban space and deny any form of identification with domesticated femininity. Moreover, their intended detachment from suburban life does not make them successful cosmopolitans; they inadvertently cling to suburban morality through their harsh value judgements. The aura of independence and sexual adventurousness is in fact challenged in the novel — the adventurous overtones mingle with the bitterness of those who are in need of love and emotional stability, while the main criterion of their worth as individuals is still their sexual potential. The dissatisfaction stems from the fact that

[8] Candace Bushnell, *Sex and the City* (London: Abacus, 2002), p. 87.

the space they are conquering is still a hostile terrain, drained from values of bonding, trust, and commitment, culturally associated with the feminine. It needs to be tamed and transformed to match their needs and meet their criteria, which in fact is exactly what numerous Chick-Lit characters try to do. Just as urban life is the main reference point for the characters, who construct their identities through their spatial positioning, so, arguably, the city space is also re-constructed by their presence. Being invaders of a terrain where power relations are constantly reproduced to their disadvantage in increasingly refined ways, the characters have no choice but use their own strategies tacitly to transform the masculine "text of the city," the discourse that is imprinted in their cultural knowledge.

The Chick-Lit girls' experience of urban life is thus twofold: the city offers them an opportunity to use their potential and to play with their identity,[9] but it also imposes on them spatially dictated norms of gender behaviour[10] and weaves around them consumerist lifestyle aspirations. Supposedly, they (and indirectly the readers) are at least partly aware of those constraints, and are therefore able to recognize and diminish the influence of the factors by which they are pressurised. First, their incorporation of feminine and suburban values to urban landscape can be seen as an act of "domesticating" the city space. As a result, they are paradoxically able to reconcile the masculine urban discourse of competitive work, consumption, and anonymity with their suburban middle class background and feminine values, such as importance attached to manners, romantic courtship, commitment, and financial security.[11] Second, the characters openly voice their dissatisfaction and use the means that are available to them: is irony, female solidarity, and various devious strategies in order to make urban space habitable. As de Certeau points out, within the controlling system of the socio-economic and cultural order there exist "the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups

[9] For details see a volume *Reading 'Sex and the City'*, by Kim Akass and Janet McCabe (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

[10] See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) and Carol Gardner's feminist reconceptualisation of Goffman's sociology of public places, where she indicates that interaction in public places is far from gender neutral and imposes often underemphasised constraints on women. Carol Brooks Gardner, "Analysing Gender in Public Places: Rethinking Goffman's Vision of Everyday Life," *The American Sociologist*, Spring 1989, pp. 42—56.

[11] This remark was inspired by a thesis forwarded by Joanne Knowles, who analysed the geographical and economic context of Chick-Lit fictions, concluding that their appeal stems from "the paradox that the heroines journey to London, intending to establish themselves as successful cosmopolitans, yet cling to the middle-class suburban values of their backgrounds." Joanne Knowles, "Material Girls: Location and Economics in Chicklit Fiction, Or, How Singletons Finance Their Jimmy Choo Collections," *Diegesis*, Vol. 8 (2004), p. 41.

or individuals already caught in the nets of 'discipline,' " which are potentially subversive.[12] The characters do employ various "ways of operating" in their experience of gendered space, which implicitly manipulate the dominant order.

As suggested above, living in a metropolis *is* constraining for the female characters, because spatial relations impose on them certain rules of conduct and make them reproduce the existing social structure and gendered behaviour. Sociological analyses carried out by Shilling and Gardner indicate that space distribution plays a role in the reproduction of gender inequalities.[13] In fact, numerous analogies can be drawn between the results of their research and the representations of space and gender in Chick-Lit novels. Gardner's analysis focuses on three aspects of spatial interaction where female vulnerability in public places is reinforced, namely the normalisation of the distaste of public places, street remarks, and access information.[14] The novels offer lavish examples of heroines who are assaulted by strangers (possibly deviants; *Milkrun, The Nanny*), feel uneasy about their frequenting certain places (such as a sex shop in *Slightly Single* or a sex club in *Sex and the City*), or whose physical movements are controlled by men (notably, also by men with lower social and professional status, as in the novel *The Devil Wears Prada*, where the protagonist is forced by the door guard at her workplace to conduct a daily singing ritual to be let in). One of the examples in Shilling's analysis of gender inequalities within educational space is the management and organisation of schools, which also depend on gendered social practices in that they rest on the premise of the mothers' constant availability.[15] The research suggests that patriarchal relations may be reproduced even within the apparently privileged space of the staff room.[16] Such spatially induced constraints are well illustrated in some Chick-Lit novels, where working mothers are invariably seen by their environment as problematic, and are themselves distressed by a sense of guilt and inadequacy (*About a Boy, Man and Wife, The Nanny, I Don't Know How She Does It*). The latter example is also illustrative of patriarchal dominance in the workplace, where the elite London space of one of the ostentatiously PC City institutions is apparently

[12] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. xiv, xv.

[13] For details see the footnotes above.

[14] Gardner describes them as "normalised distaste for public places that is encouraged in women by their fear of crime in public and the measures they are informed they must take as crime-conscious pedestrians and shoppers; street remarks that are often difficult to manage and impossible to resolve successfully; and access information — information the woman discloses that can be used as a clue to her identity and home and, potentially at least , as ammunition for further harassment of her." Brooks Gardner, "Analysing Gender in Public Places," p. 42.

[15] Shilling, "Social Space," p. 26.

[16] Shilling, "Social Space," p. 38.

shared on the same terms by men and women, yet women are forced to act out a "male" identity to survive in the competitive macho environment.

The other spatially related constraints are economic in character, and reveal a disparity between the characters' financial potential and the spatially constructed consumerist desires. The characters inevitably identify with what they view as "urban lifestyle" (*Bridget Jones's Diary, Sushi for Beginners, The Nanny, The Devil Wears Prada,* the *Shopoholic* series). The knowledge and the rituals of purchasing brand goods are featured in the plots, implicitly imposing a consumer identity on the characters (and potentially on the readers). Although the very presence of young female professionals in the city is naturalised in Chick-Lit fictions,[17] the novels gloss over the fact that the protagonists are frequently oppressed by structural factors affecting spatial relations. They include the struggle to survive (and possibly succeed) on the job market, where gender-conscious power relations still prevail.[18] However much young women are attracted to the vision of their successful climbing the professional and social ladder, what they face is lack of promotion prospects and the rat race (*Bridget Jones's Diary, The Nanny, The Nanny Diaries, The Devil Wears Prada*). Among more "successful" girls (who often are featured as secondary characters, described critically by the protagonist) there are disillusioned women, who either have no prospect of a steady relationship, or no time for the children and husband, and are therefore emotionally detached in their own relationship (*The Nanny Diaries, The Nanny, The Devil Wears Prada, I Don't Know How She Does It*). Their success is often portrayed as a result of their internalisation of the "masculine" code of ruthless competition and hierarchy of power.

However, the appeal of the fictions possibly stems from the fact that numerous characters engender new spatial relations by means of marking their individual stamp on urban (including professional) space, and by struggling to make the space more women-friendly. Thus, the three spheres of their activity which potentially transform the dominant social order include *flânerie*, appropriation of professional sphere, and consumer strategies. In fact, even though the novels may reflect the harsh aspects of living in the city, they obliterate the even less sunny forms that urban life may take for some of its residents, focusing on the appeal that a metropolis has in social imagination. The cityscape is primarily represented as a place of social and personal opportunities. The magic of the city offers the charac-

[17] Knowles, "Material Girls," p. 37.

[18] See Iris Young's analysis of three axes of gender structuring: sexual division of labour, normative heterosexuality, and gendered hierarchies of power. Iris Young, "Lived Body vs. Gender: Reflections on Social Structure and Subjectivity," *Ratio* (*new series*), Vol. 15 (2002), pp. 410—428.

ters the pleasures of the *flâneuse*[19] in that its atmosphere and the spectacle it represents seem both liberating and comforting. The protagonist of the novel *See Jane Date*, while strolling along Park Avenue, describes it as one of the most incredible passages in the world, with its majestic buildings and flower arrangements on both sides, sights which one does not need to pay for and which as such make her feel like "the owner of the whole world." She mythicises the space, perceiving it as the only sphere which is truly democratic, and treating it as her own simply by stamping on it. Similarly, the city's uproar and liveliness have a healing effect on a distressed protagonist in the novel *Engaging Men*, who seems nostalgically to identify the city with her home, which offers her personal security and becomes a source of strength and inspiration:

> I took a deep breath, gazed up at the glittering billboards of Times Square as I waited for the light to change and felt some measure of comfort at the sight. Tourists aside, this was still one of the most amazing places in New York City. I could remember countless walks through Times Square […]. I smiled up at the place where the ball dropped on New Year's Eve […]. I remember I had held my breath, too. Dreaming, as that ball fell toward the shrieking crowd that I would one day, like Frank Sinatra sang, make it here.[20]

[19] The figure of the *flâneur* is referred to in de Certeau's study, while Sharon Zukin's historical perspective draws attention to the absence of the corresponding literary figure of the *flâneuse* in writings contemporary to those of Baudelaire and Benjamin. Sharon Zukin, "Urban Lifestyles: Diversity and Standardisation in Spaces of Consumption," *Urban Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 5—6 (1998), pp. 825—839. The concept is also reconceptualised by Zygmunt Bauman in his study of identity types dominating in the times of late modernity. Bauman argues that the absence of social structures which would help define and strive after the individual goal has rendered time a collection of episodes, while temporariness and transience become factors which condition constructions of identity. He therefore distinguishes four metaphors relevant to postmodern life, whose coexistence is supposed to illustrate its incoherence and inconsistency. Among the prevalent behavioural types enumerated in Bauman's essay, the *flâneur* is included alongside the vagabond, the tourist, and the player.

Flâneurs are described by Bauman as those who *see* but are *not seen* themselves, as directors of plays in which passers-by are actors without even being aware of it; therefore *flâneurs* simultaneously experience the freedom of fantasy and the empty superficiality of this freedom. While *flâneurs* used to be limited in number, as the pleasures accessible to them were only allowed to those with time and sufficient financial potential, nowadays virtually anybody can be a *flâneur*, most typically spending time in innumerable shopping malls. Although Bauman argues that the spontaneity and freedom of the nineteenth-century spectacle has now been eradicated by the precisely planned arrangement and careful display of goods, he still concedes that the possibility of spontaneous adventure and unexpected encounter is not denied to the contemporary *flâneur.* Zygmunt Bauman, *Dwa szkice o moralności ponowoczesnej* (Poznań: Instytut Kultury, 1993), pp. 22—24.

[20] Linda Curnyn, *Engaging Men* (Surrey: Harlequin Red Dress Ink, 2003), p. 271.

Not surprisingly, the city's attractiveness encourages its dwellers to be consumers; still, the novels portray the urban environment primarily in terms of its social, rather than purely consumerist, opportunities. For the protagonists, the public space offered by cafés, pubs or the underground easily becomes flirting space (*A Minor Indiscretion*, *Confessions of an Ex-Girlfriend*, *Slightly Single*). The characters actively make use of the Internet to make acquaintances (*Dating without Novocaine*), they eat out in restaurants and clubs with their prospective boyfriends, and treat visits at fitness centres as a pretext to meet men. The street "naturally" becomes a stage where the protagonists are actresses who can experience the pleasure of being looked at and admired. This is how the protagonist in the novel *Slim Chance* reports her experience of an encounter with strangers in public space: "I stepped out into the warm sunshine on Fifth Avenue. […] Three guys turned to check me out as I passed by, and more than a few others stared openly at my chest. I was gorgeous. Finally."[21] The character treats the evident example of male voyerism as a pleasurable experience, which is devoid of any threatening implications and only reaffirms her faith in herself. The three-hour visit to an expensive hairdresser's that precedes the scene, being admittedly costly and therefore not available to everyone, is nevertheless depicted as an entry into a world of hedonism and a luxury which can be easily attained.

The novels *I Don't Know How She Does It: The Life of Kate Reddy, Working Mother* by Allison Pearson and *The Devil Wears Prada* by Lauren Weisberger (whose appeal may stem from the fact that both are based on real-life stories, the former being a result of research among working mothers, while the latter being a *roman à clef* about the author's experience as a *Vogue* magazine employee) depict young ambitious female professionals, for whom the city represents a space which has to be invaded. First, they have successfully to conquer the initially intimidating, impressive, phallic buildings in which the prestigious institutions for which they work are located. Both feel constrained by the depersonalisation of their workplace, both have to conform to it, yet both use the means available to transform the hostile environment and tacitly to rebel against the established rules. Their strategies include forming female alliances, maintaining a critical or ironic attitude towards official policies, and using "masculine" excuses from work to turn the gender-related double standard to their advantage. Kate Reddy, the memorable character in Pearson's novel, who tries to "have it all" and reconcile her motherly and professional duties, detects numerous examples of subtle forms of gender politics at her workplace. Her ironic narrative comments on the situation, her clever ploys, which de Certeau would term *la perruque*, and her ultimate revenge on a misogynistic male colleague possibly help the

[21] Jackie Rose, *Slim Chance* (Surrey: Harlequin Red Dress Ink, 2003), p. 209.

readers validate their own anger induced by their personal experience, even if some might be disappointed by the fact that Kate finally resigns from her high-powered job.

The sphere of work represented in numerous novels is thus a place of harsh competition, but it is also a crucial sphere in which social life develops and both professional and personal frustrations are given vent to. Sometimes the frustration caused by the lack of a professional challenge results in the protagonists' negligence towards the tasks they are set. Bridget Jones, who engages in e-mail flirting during her office hours, does so partly out of boredom with the work routine. Similarly, the protagonist in the novel *Slim Chance* experiences her administrative tasks at work in terms of "professional angst," as employment in marketing corresponds little with her degree in philosophy. Most characters cannot help but adopt the position of a "survivor" and resort to various ploys in order to endure either the tediousness of the job or to fulfil the exorbitant expectations of their employers. As a rule, however, the girls ultimately manage to personalise the formal atmosphere of the workplace: the nanny characters establish genuine affectionate relationships with the children they take care of (*The Nanny, The Nanny Diaries*), while the heroines who are office, editing house, or magazine employees are finally promoted, make friendships at work and ease the atmosphere of rivalry and competition (*The Devil Wears Prada, I Don't Know How She Does It*).

Arguably, a sense of success connected with purposeful, tactical behaviour is also mediated through the forms of the characters' identification with consumer culture. As indicated above, the protagonists inevitably internalise some desires induced by the glamour of the metropolis and quickly changing fashions. Being active participants in consumerist practices, they carefully negotiate their position in the consumerist values that impose rigid norms on their social and personal functioning. Consumption rituals are therefore performed by the characters, but they believe that this takes place on their own terms. The intersection of discourses of space and gender is particularly well represented in narrative depictions of recreational shopping, which is supposedly a salient feature of female participation in consumer culture.

Like many other aspects of the protagonists' lives, purchasing clothes and beauty accessories can be seen by the readers as largely tactical. The phenomenon cannot be reduced merely to the aspect of utility, as it has a range of uses, meanings and pleasures for the characters. Apart from the purely consumptive pleasure of buying clothes to look good and fashionable, shopping for clothes is represented as a kind of female ritual, through which the women satisfy their divergent needs.[22] Its functions can be thera-

[22] A study carried out in Britain in 2001 revealed that "shopping therapy" (also called "retail therapy"), which was widely recommended in earlier decades as a pleasurable method to release tensions of everyday life, has in fact turned out to provide short-term

peutic or compensatory, as shopping is shown as a time of relaxation and a counter-reaction to emotional problems, and also social, in that women choose to shop together to give each other advice, or use the time as an opportunity to talk over more serious issues. Often these functions merge with the hedonistic pleasure of self-indulgence and the sense of power that comes with consumer potential.[23] Finally, the tactics of buying clothes and shoes involve attending sales and finding bargains among brand items which normally are not easily accessible due to their high price, a practice analogous to what de Certeau calls "making do."[24]

Even if the protagonists feel somewhat abashed by the fact that they cannot suppress the urge to buy clothes which they do not really need (*Mr. Maybe*, *Slim Chance*, *Engaging Men*), they admit that it is pleasurable enough for them to exceed their credit card limits. While ostentatious consumption and exorbitant consumerist lifestyle are often denigrated — perhaps to tame the awakened consumerist appetites of the readers (*The Devil Wears Prada*, *The Llama Parlour*), generally shopping sprees are seen as a source of pleasure and are accounted for as such, often in humorous ways:

> Now I knew I was wrong to think I had the shopping thing under control at last. Knew that I was still perfectly capable of succumbing to that primal urge that practically made my Visa card ache in my wallet as I followed meekly behind Grace through Bloomingdale's hallowed aisles. The Shopping Urge.[25]

> Call me a hypocrite, if you like, but being aware of the fashion industry's duplicity doesn't make me immune to its considerable charms. I was a victim in all this, too, remember. And Barneys was my new favourite place to succumb to the urges […].[26]

The pleasure generated by excess, by the carnival-like character of a "spree" is self-reflexive and auto-ironic; the protagonists are well aware that by indulging their consumerist desires and succumbing to pleasure which is often beyond their means is a "forbidden fruit." The act of buying an item of pleasure transgresses the values of moderation and frugality inculcated to them by their mothers and often also by their money-conscious

effects, sometimes contributing to the intensification of the feelings of dissatisfaction. It is suggested that the society has recognised the fleetingness of pleasure provided by the therapy and other aspects of consumerist lifestyle (such as diets, investing in one's appearance, etc.), which creates further discontent. See Ben Summerskill, "Shopping can make you depressed," at: 15 Dec. 2004 <http://guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,42734181822,00.html>.

[23] John Fiske, *Reading the Popular* (London and New York: Routledge, (1989) 1995), p. 26.

[24] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 29—34.

[25] Curnyn, *Engaging Men*, p. 94.

[26] Rose, *Slim Chance*, p. 167.

partners. An acknowledgement of the element of subversion, a "little rebellion" against the traditional and still persistent ideology of female responsibility and moderation may be inscribed in Fiske's analysis of female consumption.[27] Employing de Certeau's metaphor of the consumer as a "trickster," Fiske argues that while capitalist economy deprives women of any form of power except consumerist, they use it to their own advantage, drawing from consumption a sense of empowerment and control over the social context in which they live and over ways in which they relate themselves to the social order.[28] For once, a shopping centre blurs the public-private distinction by allowing individuals to leave their homes and "invade" space owned by others, while its primary function is easily transformed and reappropriated by potential consumers, who use this space for a variety of reasons not necessarily related to consumption.[29] This is the case with the protagonist in the novel *The Thin Pink Line*, who thus comments on her Harrod'soholism: "[…] a person didn't need to buy a two-hundred-pound silver satin and sequin bumbershoot in order to have fun looking at one."[30]

It seems therefore that although the novels may not resolve the implied feeling of resentment towards feminism for its apparent inability to offer women women-friendly means and resources to occupy space without constraints imposed by spatially determined hierarchical relations and normalising social procedures, they nevertheless *do* offer their readers a sense of empowerment and control over their social situatedness. Ultimately, there is one more dimension of the female "space conquest" that this argument addresses: it can be found in the very act of reading and popularising the novels. Now that the status of Chick-Lit fictions is growing, and has been established in popular opinion as higher than that of conventional pulp fiction, buying the novels may function for their readers as an act of marking their own space on the mainstream literary market and as a validation of their emotional investment in identity models mediated by Chick Literature. As Janice Radway states with reference to the romance readers she interviewed, the reading functioned for them as a "tacit, minimal protest against the patriarchal constitution of women," in that it enabled them to delineate a space where they are able to validate and satisfy the desires and needs induced by their social functioning.[31] Numerous Chick-Lit readers would probably

[27] Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, pp. 13—42.

[28] Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, p. 25.

[29] Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, p. 17.

[30] Lauren Baratz-Logsted, *The Thin Pink Line* (Surrey: Harlequin Red Dress Ink, 2003), p. 167.

[31] Janice Radway, "Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies," in: *Rethinking Popular Culture*: *Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, eds. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 481.

also agree with de Certeau that "to read is to be elsewhere […], to constitute a secret scene, a place one can enter and leave when one wishes," which is a process characterised by "tactics and games played with the text […], playful, protesting, fugitive."[32]

[32] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 173, 175.

Katarzyna Smyczyńska

Miejska dziewczyna: konstruowanie przestrzeni zorientowanej genderowo w prozie z gatunku *chicklit*

Streszczenie

Analizowany w tekście nurt wpisuje się w obszar współczesnej literatury popularnej — pod pojęciem *chicklit* kryją się różnorakiej maści powieści ukazujące się od ostatniej dekady dwudziestego wieku (niektóre wydawane seryjnie), adresowane do kobiet, których bohaterki to młode, ambitne zawodowo mieszkanki dużych miast. Liczne reprezentacje życia miejskiego w fali *chicklit* składają się na produktywny rodzaj dyskursu, w którym miasto — zwykle jedna z zachodnich metropolii — wyłania się jako miejsce umożliwiające kreację tożsamości indywidualnych i wspólnotowych. Dyskursy przestrzeni obecne w konwencji naznaczone są wprawdzie ideologią konsumeryzmu i polityki płciowej w sferze zawodowej, jednak bohaterkom powieści udaje się poniekąd wziąć przestrzeń miejską w swe posiadanie, zostawić swój ślad w pejzażu miejskim, a w konsekwencji — aktywnie go rekonstruować. Ich obecność to także umiejscowiona w konkretnym czasie i przestrzeni adaptacja uprzywilejowanego męskiego spojrzenia spacerowicza, będąca wyzwaniem dla tradycyjnego utożsamiania przestrzeni publicznej z terytorium męskim. Na podstawie teorii strukturacji wysuniętej przez Anthony'ego Giddensa oraz analizy doświadczenia czytania Michela de Certeau artykuł prezentuje tezę, iż miasta powieściowe to zarówno tereny konstrukcji tożsamości, jak i obszary nieustannie przekształcane przez praktyki bohaterek, choćby działały one w ramach systemu władzy rezydującej we wszechobecnych uprzedzeniach płciowych i konsumpcjonizmie.

Katarzyna Smyczyńska

Ein Stadtmädchen: die Konstruktion des gender ausgerichteten Raumes in den *chicklit* Prosawerken

Zusammenfassung

Die in dem Text erörterte Strömung *chicklit,* gehört zum Gebiet der gegenwärtigen populären Literatur. Der Begriff umfasst verschiedenerlei seit den letzten zehn Jahren des 20.Jhs erschienenen und an Frauen gerichteten Romane, deren Heldinnen junge, berufs-

tätige und ehrgeizige Einwohnerinnen der Großstädte sind. Die in der *chicklit*-Strömung geschaffenen Werke stellen das Stadtleben in zahlreichen Formen dar und bilden einen produktiven Diskurs, in dem die Stadt — meistens eine von den westlichen Metropolen — als ein solcher Ort betrachtet wird, der die Erschaffung von individuellen und gemeinschaftlichen Identitäten möglich macht. Die im Rahmen der Konvention erscheinenden Raumdiskurse werden zwar durch konsumeristische Ideologie und im Berufsbereich durch Geschlechtspolitik gekennzeichnet, doch den Romanheldinnen gelingt es, den Stadtraum sozusagen in Besitz zu nehmen, ihre Spur in der Stadtlandschaft zu hinterlassen und diese Landschaft aktiv umzugestalten. Von dem Vorhandensein der Raumdiskurse zeugt auch die zur konkreten Zeit und im konkreten Raum lokalisierte Anpassung des privilegierten männlichen Betrachtung eines Spaziergängers, die zur Herausforderung für traditionelle Gleichsetzung des öffentlichen Raumes mit einem Männerterritorium wird. Sich auf Michel de Certeau und auf die Strukturierungstheorie von Anthony Giddens stützend stellt die Verfasserin die folgende These auf: die in den Romanen erscheinenden Städte sind Gebiete, auf denen die Identität konstruiert wird, und die von den Heldinnen immer wieder umgestaltet werden, wenn auch diese Heldinnen im Auftrag der auf allgegenwärtigen Geschlechtsvorurteilen und der Konsumption beruhenden Macht handeln würden.

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MAPPING SHAKESPEARE'S CATHOLICISM: SPATIAL CLUES INDICATING THE BARD'S "TRUE" FAITH

The question of Shakespeare's "true" faith has ignited endless disputes throughout the centuries. The hot debates it generated have crossed the boundaries of the academe, as apparent in the dialogue of two fictional characters of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. When Edmund derisively says that "Shakespeare was an Irish Catholic," a stubborn Tyrone counters him by claiming: "So he was. The proof is in his plays."[1] John Shakespeare's inclusion on a list of Stratfordian recusants in 1592 as well as the belated discovery of his Jesuit, spiritual testament of faith in 1757,[2] the inclusion of Susanna Shakespeare's name on a similar list of recusants on 6 May 1606,[3] Richard Davies' famous mid-seventeenth-century allegation that Shakespeare himself "died a papist"[4] Shakespeare's own Catholic connections both among his relatives (the Ardens) and the great Catholic peers of the realm (including the Derbys and the Southamptons) have long persuaded me that the Bard might have been a Catholic. The theories and scenarios woven around this hypothesis have fascinated me for quite a while and will probably keep haunting me as long as I participate in the intellectual ceremonies of Shakespeare studies.[5]

[1] Eugene O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 127.

[2] See Richard Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*: *Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 49.

[3] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 252.

[4] Cf. Samuel Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare*: *A Documentary Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 47.

[5] For previous personal contributions to the topic, see George Volceanov, "Re-membering Shakespeare in the 'Vasty Sea,' " *University of Bucharest Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (2003), pp. 47—57, and *The Shakespeare Canon Revisited* (Bucureşti: Niculescu, 2004), pp. 36—40.

Shakespeare's Catholicism is no news at all if we bear in mind the fact that he was, actually, first exposed as a Catholic as early as 1611, when the Puritan historian John Speed, referred to him alongside the Jesuit leader Robert Parsons as "this papist and his poet, of like conscience for lies, the one ever feigning, the other ever falsifying the truth."[6] And yet this is a historical truth that still seems hard to digest for the British establishment.

Here are two typical examples of scholarly resistance to the very idea of the Bard's "true" faith. A.L. Rowse had no doubts about Shakespeare's Protestantism. For him, Shakespeare was "a conforming member of the Church into which he had been baptized, in which he was brought up and married, his children reared and in whose arms he was buried at the last."[7] Peter Levi endorsed most of Rowse's views and strongly refuted any possible Catholic connection of the Shakespeares but his attitude was somewhat ambivalent insofar as he admitted that Edward Arden died a martyr in 1583, John Shakespeare was persecuted as a relative of the Catholic Ardens, Shakespeare himself had two Catholic schoolmasters at the grammar school in Stratford, he was connected to the Earls of Derby, notorious Catholics of the realm, and Susanna, Shakespeare's elder daughter, was mentioned on a list of recusants in 1606.[8]

It is easy to charge Peter Milward, a Jesuit, with *parti pris* for writing books wherein he contends that Shakespeare's plays do contain a "hidden, allegorical-topical meaning sympathetic to the Jesuits and Rome."[9] But can anyone accuse an impartial scholar like E.A.J. Honigmann of having a "hidden agenda" (the paranoid cliché of Cultural Materialists) when he reconstructs the so-called "lost years" (1585—1592) and shows that the dramatist served for a while in the household of a wealthy Roman-Catholic landowner in Lancashire, Alexander Hoghton, and then joined Lord Strange's Men?

E.A.J. Honigmann has substantiated like no one else before him that one's work and life strongly mirror each other. Ascribing to Shakespeare the epitaphs to John Combe, Elias James, Sir Edward Stanley (grandson of Edward, the third Earl of Derby, d. 1632), Ben Jonson, King James, and Shakespeare himself, Professor Honigmann hints at the connection between Shakespeare and the Stanleys (the Earls of Derby) known as the "Lancashire connection."[10] First suggested" by Oliver Baker (1937), "re-stated" by E.K. Chambers in 1944, taken further by Alan Keen and Roger Lubbock in 1954, the "Lancashire connection" was cautiously endorsed by Samuel Schoen-

[6] John Speed, *The History of Great Britain* (London: 1611), p. 237.

[7] A.L. Rowse, *Shakespeare the Man* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 25.

[8] Peter Levi, *The Life and Times of William Shakespeare* (London: Papermac, 1989).

[9] See E.A.J. Honigmann, *Shakespeare*: *The 'Lost Years'* (Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1998), p. xi.

[10] Honigmann, *Shakespeare*, pp. 77—83.

baum in the 1987 edition of *A Compact Documentary Life*. The argument was further advanced by Richard Wilson in "Shakespeare and the Jesuits" (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 19 December 1997) and at the "Lancastrian Shakespeare" conference held in part at Hoghton Tower under the auspices of Lancaster University's Shakespeare Programme, 21—24 July 1999.[11] The conference was attended by big guns such as Stephen Greenblatt, Richard Dutton, Richard Wilson, and Gary Taylor, who are currently upholding the theory of Shakespeare's crypto-Catholicism.[12] The "lost years" spent by Shakespeare as a youthful country tutor-turned-actor have been paid due attention by all biographers ever since E.A.J. Honigmann had his book first published in 1985. Park Honan and Anthony Holden have minutely commented on the tight connections between the Stratford schoolmaster John Cottam and the Lancastrian milieu (the Hoghtons, the Hesketh, and the Stanleys) in which a young actor "William Shakeshafte" was left a generous annuity at the death of his Catholic patron.[13] That Shakeshafte was, after all, Shakespeare can be proved by the fact that the author's grandfather Richard appeared as "Shakeschafte" and "Shakstaff," as well as "Shakspere" in the Snitterfield records. According to Antony Holden, "in Lancashire, at the time, the familiar local variant was Shakeshafte."[14]

Stephen Greenblatt's latest book (*Will in the World*, New York: Norton, 2004), a new Shakespeare biography added to the endless list of similar works produced in the past two decades, has reignited the perpetual conflict between the supporters of Shakespeare's crypto-Catholicism and those of his alleged Protestant conformism. Alastair Fowler set the tone of a new round of crossfire with his malicious review of Greenblatt's book, eliciting a long series of pro- and con- letters to the editor.[15] The irreverent title sets the tone for the rest of the text, a scathing pamphlet that favours irony to the detriment of scholarly depth. Greenblatt is taken to task for inventing "a narrative of Shakespeare's acquaintance with Edward [*sic* — G.V.] Campion, the Catholic martyr."[16] Had Fowler read Richard Wilson's much neglected and curiously ignored *Secret Shakespeare*, he would have found all the necessary clues that justify such a "narrative." In a long war of attrition, the British Protestant establishment seems to have vacillated between overt

[11] Anthony Holden, *William Shakespeare*: *An Illustrated Biography* (Boston, New York and London: Little Brown and Company, 2002), p. 313.

[12] Holden, *William Shakespeare*, p. 14.

[13] Park Honan, *Shakespeare — A Life* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 64—71; Holden, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 64—75.

[14] Holden, *William Shakespeare*, p. 64.

[15] Alastair Fowler, "*Enter* Speed: A Feverish Life of Shakespeare, Like History on Amphetamines," *TLS* 4 February 2005, pp. 3—5.

[16] Fowler, "*Enter* Speed", p. 3.

academic arrogance/contempt and sheer neglect of most seminal works that have eroded the long-established, official construct of the conforming Bard.

Greenblatt can boast being the victim of a good thrashing (just like Harold Bloom could boast one in the wake of Denis Donoghue's review of his *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1998).[17] Richard Wilson cannot boast such a feat: his recent book has been shrouded in silence and it was just a second-hand scholar who has recently undertaken to bring down his book in a half-page review. It is an irreverent review that closely echoes Fowler's debunking strategy. It turns a blind eye to the topic of the book and to each and every detail in it may represent a breakthrough in Shakespeare biography. It circumvents the extraordinary quantity and quality of the information amassed in the book as well as Wilson's keen insight in bringing together historical facts, geographical details, religion and fiction together. My paper can be construed as a partisan review of Wilson's book, one written in response to Ros King's belittling and mocking *TLS* review. While King has nothing good to say whatsoever but only accuses Wilson of his "preferred technique […] shamelessly to incorporate within the fabric of a single sentence brief, de-contextualized quotations from several different plays, along with citations from other critics, in order to give an illusion of Shakespeare's presence in a colourful story of priest-holes,"[18] I will try to prove that Wilson has accomplished a *tour de force* in reconstructing "where, *geographically* and ideologically, Shakespeare was coming from in the 1580s."[19]

Spatial clues play an essential role in Wilson's attempt to construct a secret, mysterious, elusive, and silent Shakespeare. Stratford, Lancashire and London are places that acquire new meanings under Wilson's scrutiny. The Catholic martyr Edmund Campion, who disseminated the Jesuit testament of faith composed by Carlo Borromeo, the cardinal of Milan, did spend some months near Stratford (which explains the existence of a copy of the testament signed by John Shakespeare) in 1580. He also spent some 6 months with the Hoghtons, in Lancashire, in 1581, before being arrested — the very Hoghtons in whose household the young actor William Shakeshafte had been living for quite a while, probably sent there by his Stratford schoolmaster John Cottam, the brother of Campion's close associate and future martyr Thomas Cottam[20]. Says Wilson: "If Shakespeare was Shakeshafte, he was the member of a household which was for six months, it seems, nothing less than the secret headquarters of the English Counter-Reformation."[21] Cam-

[17] Denis Donoghue, "A Dialogue of One," *TLS* 12 March 1999, pp. 3—5.
[18] Ros King, "If the Glove Fits," *TLS* 18 March 2005, p. 26.
[19] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 117, emphasis added.
[20] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 48—62.
[21] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 56.

pion's secret mission explains the need for the adoption of aliases, hence young Will's refashioned identity as Shakeshafte.

Stratford in Warwickshire and the whole of Lancashire were for decades the nubs of the English Counter-Reformation. The 1583 plot against Elizabeth was planned at Park Hall, not far from Stratford. The regicide chosen for the occasion was John Sommerville, the son-in-law of Edward Arden, Shakespeare's distant uncle on his mother's line. Two decades later, as Antonia Fraser has recently shown, the epicentre of the Gunpowder Plot converged (once again!) around Stratford.[22] Edward Arden was executed and quartered as a traitor. And one of the plotters involved in the later conspiracy was Shakespeare's relative John Grant.[23] These are facts that literary historians have tended to overlook or minimize before. Wilson goes as far as to recount Richard Simpson's daring conjecture dated 1858, according to which the young Shakespeare may have been himself involved in John Sommerville's ill-fated ride to London. Shakespeare may have been the young page who had escorted Sommerville and deserted him shortly before he was arrested.[24] Wilson also muses over the mysterious "butcher" who, according to an intriguing story told by the Jesuit Robert Parsons, "would not lend [Sommerville — G.V.] some money" on his way to London and wonders whether the unidentified butcher is actually the one re-emerging in John Aubrey's anecdote about the young Shakespeare, who would kill a calf "in high style and make a speech."[25]

Interestingly, Shakespeare is the one and only Elizabethan and Stuart dramatist to emerge from outside the golden triangle of London-Oxford-Cambridge.[26] As the son of a persecuted recusant, Shakespeare embraced his literary career after a detour to the recusant North, under the patronage of Ferdinando, Lord Strange (future Earl of Derby between 1593 and 1594). And after Ferdinando's poisoning in April 1594 (as a result of his involvement in yet another Jesuit plot against the Crown), Will and four more ex-members of Lord Strange's Men set up the troupe known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

In London, Shakespeare entered the circle of the Southamptons. And here we come across other details that have been neglected before: the Southamptons' confessor, Robert Southwell (arrested in June 1592 and martyred at Tyburn in 1596), was Shakespeare's distant relative through his mother.

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[22] Antonia Fraser, *The Gunpowder Plot*: *Terror and Faith in 1605* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1996), pp. 114—115.

[23] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 105—122, and 194.

[24] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 112—113.

[25] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 122.

[26] John Dover Wilson, *The Essential Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. 40—41.

Briefly before his arrest, Southwell responded to one of the circulated manuscripts of *Venus and Adonis* with a poem of his own, written in identical stanzas, entitled *Saint Peter's Complaint*, in which he deplored Shakespeare's penchant for erotic poetry in an age that demanded self-sacrifice and militant involvement. Southwell's poem was posthumously published by the Jesuit press in Belgium in 1616. The text was capped by a prose-letter "To my worthy good cousin, Master W.S.," signed "Your loving cousin, R.S."[27] Southwell's execution (with his last words, conceding that he went to death like one of "God's Almighty Fools") may have inspired Shakespeare's famous lines about those "fools of time, / Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime" (Sonnet 124).[28]

Wilson turns to his account another extraordinary detail that has passed unnoticed before. Why did Shakespeare buy the upper floor of the Blackfriars Gatehouse on 10 March 1613 at a price over twice what he had paid for his Stratford mansion? Wilson claims that researchers have investigated the history of the building and "what they discovered is that […] it was a command-post for London Catholics."[29] Curiously enough, no sooner had he purchased his Blackfriars property than Shakespeare leased it again to John Robinson, the only Londoner to be with him at his deathbed. Robinson was steward of the Master of the Queen's Wardrobe, Sir John Fortescue, the head of an active Catholic family with strong Jesuit ties. Seventeenth century documents and much more recent excavations (dated 1923) pointed out that the Gatehouse stood upon a maze of crypts and tunnels, vaults and secret passages, backdoors, by-ways and dark corners that made priest-hunting impossible and turned the Blackfriars into a state-within-a-state of Catholic resistance. It was here that on 26 October 1623 dozens of people lost their lives when the floor of a secret mass-chamber collapsed all of a sudden during a secret sermon. Father Gerard, the notorious Jesuit involved in the Gunpowder Plot, had used the Gatehouse as a hiding place before leaving for Flanders in disguise.[30]

Here is yet another clue to be exacted from Shakespeare's London: in 1623, the first recorded purchaser of the Folio was none other than the ardent collector of martyrs' relics and Spanish ambassador, Count Gondomar.[31]

When he comes to discuss textual clues from Shakespeare's plays and poems, Wilson does not simply mix brief de-contextualized excerpts from several texts. On the contrary, he allots entire chapters to the discussion of clues from one play or another. *Othello*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*,

[27] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 126—127.
[28] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 141.
[29] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 258.
[30] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 258—266.
[31] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 157.

and *Cardenio*, for instance, are minutely discussed in separate chapters. The spatial clues offered by Shakespeare's plays are tightly connected with the England of his days and its social and religious turmoil. The "fictional" space is not always that fictional. Portia's Belmont in *The Merchant of Venice*, where the heroine "doth stray about / By holy crosses where she kneels to pray" (V.1.30—31), turns out to be a replica of Thomas Pound's mansion, also called Belmont. Pound was Southampton's uncle and the place was a "haven of Catholic relief, where young clerics came and went disguised as merchants of the Queen."[32] The master of Belmont funded the Sodality of young gentry formed in 1580 to imitate the French Catholic League.

Similarly, the mythological space of *Venus and Adonis* is filled with anti-Cynthia allusions (Cynthia, or Diana, stood for Queen Elizabeth in the flattering iconography of her personality cult). Thus, *Venus and Adonis* can be read as a poem constructed like priest-holes, concealing politics beneath erotics.[33] And in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (V.1.397—404), Oberon re-legitimizes a forbidden Catholic ritual, the asperging ceremony, the sprinkling of holy water prohibited by the 1594 Act of Uniformity.[34]

The history plays turn out to be imbued with cryptic messages previously undetected. E.A.J. Honigmann pointed out two decades ago that both *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Richard III* are written in homage to the house of Derby.[35] I have likewise shown that the presence of a Derby among the main characters of *Edward III* is due to the same strong allegiance Shakespeare had for his patrons.[36] Richard Wilson proposes a bold re-reading of *3 Henry VI*, according to which the dying Earl of Warwick stands for the dramatist's dear uncle, Edward Arden, former sheriff of Warwickshire. The odd presence of one named Somerville during Warwick's dying speech, one called "my loving son" (Somerville the regicide *was* Edward Arden's son-in-law, indeed), the image "thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge" (V.2.11), Warwick dying with a kiss for the "sweet soul of Montague" (Viscount Montague, the young Southampton's grandfather, was one of the most zealous Catholics of the realm), and many other subtly encoded allusions turn the betrayal of the Lancastrians in *3 Henry VI* into an allegory of the betrayed Throckmorton conspiracy, which aimed at reinstalling Mary Stuart as a queen, this time as the Queen of England.[37]

With Wilson, even a cauldron can provide us with a spatial clue. In Wilson's opinion the Witches' cauldron in *Macbeth* is the very cauldron in

[32] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 157.

[33] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 131.

[34] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 146—147.

[35] Honigmann, Shakespeare pp. 64—69.

[36] George Volceanov, "Introduction," in: William Shakespeare, *Eduard al III-lea* (Pitesti: Paralela 45, 2003), p. xxxvii.

[37] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 119—121.

which the executioner at Tyburn used to throw the organs of the disembowelled Catholic martyrs. Indeed, in the Witches' lines attributed to Shakespeare, the Witches chant over human offal, while in the passages ascribed to Middleton as later additions they refer to animal extracts. Interestingly, the 1604 Witchcraft Act prohibited the "taking up of any dead man out of his grave to be employed in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment."[38] The Act was a covert means of prohibiting Catholics from digging up the remnants of their martyrs and retrieving parts of their bodies as relics. The Puritan prelate Samuel Harsnett actually likened the abuse of dead bodies in witchcraft to the worship of body parts by Catholic congregations. The First Witch's reference "Here I have a pilot's thumb / Wrack'd as homeward he did come" (I.3.28) is an overt allusion to Edmund Campion *racked* in the Tower of London to confess treason. By far the most celebrated relic of the Catholic martyrs, the thumb had been hacked from one of the quarters of Campion's body in the *mêlée* at Tyburn, when the crowd rushed to dip handkerchiefs in his blood[39]. The Witches ultimately acquire a double function in *Macbeth*, standing for the recusant collectors of martyrs' relics and for the Jesuits responsible for instigation to crimes that were paid for not with their own lives but with the lives of the English gentry urged to plot against the crown.

According to Wilson, Othello's handkerchief, "dyed in mummy," points to the very same practice of dipping handkerchiefs and other bits of cloth in the precious blood of those executed at Tyburn. In *Othello*, it is Iago who seems to fulfil the Witches' instigating function. And Iago does, indeed, display many "Jesuitical" features. His very name is an abbreviation of Santiago, or Saint James, of Compostella — the predecessor that served as a model to the Jesuit founder Inigo de Loyola. Iago acts as a confessor throughout the play, he mimics the Jesuit pledge to serve "body and soul," teaches Othello the Jesuit technique of self-examination, conjures images of the Catholic theatre of cruelties such as "I will wear my heart upon my sleeve / For daws to peck at" (I.1.64—65). Iago's final cue, with its blood-curdling lack of repentance, shows his self-glorifying defiance in the Jesuitical spirit of martyrdom.[40]

Othello and *Macbeth* may be read as the anti-Jesuitical manifestos of a disillusioned man, tired to see so many people dying on the scaffold for a lost cause. The climax of the author's despair is obvious in Lear's lines, "we sing like birds i' th' cage," and so "wear out / In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones / That ebb and flow by th' moon" (V.3.8—19). As F.D. Brownlow has noticed, Lear's lines are, in fact, a recitation of Southwell's *Epistle of Com-*

[38] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 189.
[39] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 191.
[40] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 163—169.

fort enjoining Catholics to imitate the birds "that in the cage sing sweetlier and oftener than abroad."[41]

The Tempest provides Wilson with the best opportunity to propose a completely new reading of a play that has been appropriated by the American New Historicists and relocated in a colonial setting (Virginia). Wilson painstakingly argues that the historical and geographical context of *The Tempest* is actually Braudel's Mediterranean, with its pirates, redemptionist fraternities, and liberated slaves. Wilson identifies Prospero as Robert Dudley Jr., the son of Elizabeth's great favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Dudley suited Prospero's psychological and intellectual profile insofar as he was a man of great learning (skilled in mathematics, architecture, navigation, chemistry and physics, author of the six-volume treatise *Arcano del Mare*, author of exquisite maps, one of the greatest explorers of the New World along with his brother-in-law Richard Hakluyt, the designer of the fastest warships of his day, etc.) and a nobleman dispossessed of his birthright and compelled to live in exile. Waging a private war against England in the service of the Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany, Dudley managed to secure a total papal embargo on English trade. So, Dudley was both the most illustrious Catholic exile and the most enterprising of all the Mediterranean pirates. In March 1608 he ambushed the Turkish treasure fleet, while in 1611 he was reported to have a fleet of 40 ships and 2,000 men.[42] But how does this outlandish figure suit the context in which the play was written and performed? Wilson's arguments are worth considering: *The Tempest* was performed at Court on 1 November 1611, on All Saints' Day. A play of repentance and forgiveness may have impressed the spectators by its aptness notwithstanding its startling epilogue. When Prospero begs them to grant an "indulgence," says Wilson, they would have heard not just a breach of the Thirty-Nine Articles, but the most positive affirmation ever made on an English stage of the Catholic belief of intercessory prayer to the Saints and Virgin.[43] *The Tempest* thus closes with a clear petition to its Whitehall audience, on the day of the Saints, for an act of religious toleration. And Wilson's trump card in his demonstration is the original historical context of the play, "one of feverish negotiations over the proposed marriage of the Protestant prodigy, Prince Henry, to Caterina, the daughter of the Catholic Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany."[44] Prospero's plot to regain his dukedom does coincide with the Tuscan motives for this ecumenical match, which were to restore the independence of Milan, fallen under Spanish occupation. In August 1611 portraits were exchanged and in November *The Tempest* was performed. Dudley was the envoy supposed to

[41] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 284.
[42] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 213—223.
[43] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 206.
[44] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 213.

secure the pope's indulgence for the expected marriage. He signed a contract with Prince Henry, drafted to expedite his pardon just three weeks after the play was acted. But he failed to win the papal indulgence. A year later, "Henry suddenly died, and with him the mercy for which the Don had bargained to break his ducal staff and abjure his rough piratic powers."[45]

In 1979 Kenneth Muir complained that "no source has been discovered for the plot of *The Tempest*."[46] In Wilson's re-reading of the play "the nuptials of these our dear-beloved" (V.1.311) point to a Protestant Prince and a Catholic Infanta and the author's revived hopes, embodied in "the 'Duke' Roberto Dudley: pirate, redemptor and renegade Lord of Stratford-upon-Avon."[47] One must admit that this brand-new re-construction of Prospero as an exiled pirate rather than magician, operating on the Barbary Coast rather than in Virginia, might rekindle many undergraduates' and academics' interest in a play whose petrified post-colonial reading, opposing the Westerner to the innocent *Other* of the New World, has become such old news.

Secret Shakespeare is a well-woven detective-story that incessantly takes its readers aback. It is not the Mediterranean alone that can offer clues indicating Shakespeare's religion. Wilson endows Westminster Abbey with the same function in his chapter on *The Winter's Tale*. Between 1605 and 1612 artists toiled on the twin marble effigies of King James's pretended parent, Queen Elizabeth, and actual mother, Mary Stuart. In a masterly readjustment of history, the sculptors imaged the Queen of Scots not as a the duplicitous, volatile, sexually promiscuous political intriguer of Protestant accusation but as a nun-like lady of purity and sanctity, a helpless victim whose very name associated her with the Virgin. Wilson conjectures that Shakespeare "may well have taken heart from the Marian iconography of this monument to a royal Catholic martyr, when he had his king and court kneel, with similar genuflection, before the shrine of their murdered queen of tears"[48] in *The Winter's Tale* (V.3.38—46). Wilson speculates over the fact that when Simon Forman saw the play at the Globe in 1611 he made no mention of Hermione's resurrection, so the scene may have been added for a performance at the Blackfriars, after the unveiling of Queen Mary's tomb. Sixteen years separated the execution of Mary from her son's succession; the same span of time separates Hermione's death from her resurrection. Wilson mentions Julie Lupton's brilliant interpretation of Hermione's return from stone and sequestration as a post-Reform allegory, symbolizing the persistence of Marian iconography through an age of Protestant iconoclasm.[49] Tell-

[45] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 221.
[46] Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Methuen, 1979), p. 278.
[47] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 225.
[48] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 246.
[49] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 262.

ingly, Paulina does not keep Hermione's statue in a gallery but in a chapel, a space of private worship, that points to the Catholic matriarchalism of the English recusant households.

It is hard for me to blame Wilson for his alleged mixing up of scattered quotes from various plays (as Ros King contends). When the quotes come from several texts, they are meant to illustrate clues pointing to Shakespeare's stance in a divided world. Such instances of serial quotes refer to the puns on More (Sir Thomas More, the first and foremost English Catholic martyr),[50] or to the frequent recurrence of Saints' names in Shakespeare's plays in an age when the tide of official action was flowing so strongly against any invocation of the saints.[51] And Wilson's capacity to establish connections between seemingly distant facts and events is astounding. He dwells upon the famous Star Chamber trial of Richard Cholmley's Men, who at Candlemas in 1610 were said to have staged a "seditious interlude" to an uproarious crowd at Gowthwaite, in the house of the Catholic Sir John Yorke, the uncle of three notorious Gunpowder plotters. The clown, William Harrison, testified that, in addition to the interlude and a morality called *Saint Christopher*, the troupe touring Yorkshire also performed two Shakespeare plays, *Pericles* and *King Lear*.[52] Incidentally, *Pericles* was the only play listed in a handwritten catalogue of books dated 1619, in the possession of the English Jesuit mission established in Saint-Omer. And *Pericles* was performed at court on two festive occasions, in honour of the visiting ambassadors of Venice and France, both of which were Catholics.[53] C.J. Sisson was the first to document Sir Richard Cholmley's Men's troubles and their connection with Shakespeare (the Bard's plays as prominent texts in a recusant troupe's repertoire),[54] but Wilson takes his argument much farther and comes to conclude that the 1610 events are closely connected with the context of, and the allusions encoded in, *Twelfth Night* (1601). For the man who denounced Cholmley and the Yorkes was none other than Robert Cecil's cousin, Sir Posthumus Hoby, an impoverished radical Puritan who married a rich heiress in Yorkshire. Thus, Wilson comes to identify Hoby as the would-be upstart Malvolio of *Twelfth Night*. The identification is quite convincing insofar as Hoby's mother, Lady Russell, overtly opposed the opening of a playhouse in Blackfriars. Recent studies have shown that the comedy was first performed at Middle Temple with funds from lawyers affili-

[50] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 173—179.

[51] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 150.

[52] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 271—272.

[53] Willem Schrickx, "*Pericles* in a Book-List of 1619 from the English Jesuit Mission and Some of the Play's Special Problems," *Shakespeare Survey* 29 (1976), pp. 21—31.

[54] C.J. Sisson, "Shakespeare's Quartos as Prompt-copies with Some Account Cholmley's Players and a New Shakespeare Allusion," *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 18 (1942), pp. 129—143.

ated to the Earl of Essex in mockery of the plotting Cecil and Hoby, who were members of Gray's Inn. In Wilson's own spatial terms, "Shakespeare's Illyria maps the religious politics of Elizabethan London."[55] Many incidents and allusions in the play were topical, pointing to Hoby's career in Yorkshire, and Shakespeare almost openly defied him when he made the disguised Feste act under the alias "Master Parson" (the Jesuit Parsons), who alluded to the famous poem saluting "the old hermit of Prague" (Edmund Campion had come to England from Prague in 1580 and had stayed with the Cholmleys at Whitby).[56] Wilson's conclusion is that the 1610 Star Chamber trial was an excellent opportunity for Hoby to pay an old debt to the Catholics he had been waging war against for many years.

It is difficult to emphasize with due accuracy, within the confines of this paper, all the merits of a book that represents a breakthrough in Shakespeare studies. For those still doubting the true faith of the Shakespeares, here is a last example of "Catholic survivalism" excerpted from Wilson's book:

> On January 10, 1564, John Shakespeare, Chamberlain of Stratford, recorded the sum of three shillings "paid for defacing images in the chapel." He did so in compliance with orders of 1547 which had been updated 1559 to prohibit "abused images, tables, pictures and paintings" and specifically "monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages and idolatry." […] And so, as part of a thorough Protestantising that required removing the stone altar, the rood loft, inserting pews and erecting a screen between the nave and the chancel, Shakespeare's father supervised the defacement of these idols, by ordering them to be painted over. To sceptics such as Samuel Schoenbaum, determined to maintain "a secular agnosticism" over "the faith in which William Shakespeare was reared," this collaboration in the rape of the chapel has always been a compelling circumstance "to stir misgivings in the non-sectarian biographer." But, in an authoritative essay of 1994, the foremost historian of Elizabethan religion, Patrick Collinson, has argued that, on the contrary, "the fact that the great doom painting was whitewashed over rather than destroyed suggests the kind of crypto-Catholic conduct of which Puritans complained." […] What does align [John Shakespeare — G.V.] with the strategy of survivalism is that the murals, protected until 1560 by the Clopton family, and for three more years by a temporising Corporation, were at last secreted with sufficient care to remain intact until rediscovered in 1804.[57]

[55] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 279.
[56] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, p. 281.
[57] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, pp. 151—152.

George Volceanov

Śladami katolicyzmu Szekspira: przestrzenne znaki wskazujące na „prawdziwe" wyznanie barda

Streszczenie

Hipoteza na temat kryptokatolicyzmu Szekspira zyskuje od niedawna przychylność naukowców, szczególnie od momentu ukazania się monografii E.A.J. Honigmanna: *Shakespeare*: *'The Lost Years'*. Artykuł jest próbą analizy zasadności tej hipotezy w odniesieniu do wskazówek przestrzennych (miejsca pamięci i miejsca zapoznane, przestrzeń publiczna i prywatna, zamknięta i otwarta, fizyczna i mentalna), jakie zawierają dzieła i biografia Szekspira. Artykuł można uznać za konstruktywną recenzję książki Richarda Wilsona *Secret Shakespeare'a* (2004), pozycji, która spotkała się z niezasłużoną i trudną do wytłumaczenia obojętnością w kręgach akademickich, a szczególnie brytyjskiego establishmentu uniwersyteckiego.

George Volceanov

Dem Katholizismus von Shakespeare folgend: die auf „wahres" Geständnis eines Barden hindeutenden räumlichen Zeichen

Zusammenfassung

Seit neuestem seitdem E.A.J. Honigmann seine Monografie *Skakespeare*: *`The Lost Years`* veröffentlicht hat, findet die Hypothese vom Kryptokatholizismus Shakespeares bei den Wissenschaftlern immer größere Anerkennung. Im vorliegenden Artikel wird es versucht, die Richtigkeit der Hypothese in Bezug auf die in Shakespeares Werken und in seiner Biografie enthaltenen räumlichen Hinweise (Erinnerungsstätten und bekannte Orte, privater und öffentlicher Raum, geschlossener und offener Raum, physischer und geistiger Raum) zu beurteilen. Der Artikel ist sozusagen eine Rezension des Richard Wilsons Buches *Secret Shakespeare* (2004), das auf unverdiente und unbegreifliche Gleichgültigkeit der Hochschulkreisen und besonders des britischen Universitätsestablishments gestoßen hat.

Ryszard W. Wolny
University of Opole

IN SEARCH OF EMPTINESS: A VOYAGE INTO THE HEART OF *TERRA NULLIUS* IN PATRICK WHITE'S *VOSS*

> He was sitting in the middle of nowhere. Which, naturally, was of too fantastical a nature, too expressive of his nothingness.
>
> Patrick White, *Voss*

One of the possible reasons why Patrick White has endeavoured to tackle the theme of Australian "emptiness" is a metaphorical one. By the "Great Australian Emptiness" he meant primarily the omnipresent rule and exaltation of the average, the mediocre. In a letter to the periodical *Australian Letters*, he markedly stated:

> In all directions stretched the Great Australian Emptiness, in which the mind is the least of possession, in which the rich man is the important man, in which the schoolmaster and the journalist rule what intellectual root there is, in which beautiful youths and girls stare at life through blind blue eyes, in which human teeth fall like autumn leaves, the buttocks of cars grow hourly glossier, food means cake and steak, muscles prevail, and the march of the material ugliness does not raise a quiver from the average nerve.[1]

The criticism of the Australian mind and the Australian middle-class society remained with him until his last days; he always felt unbelonging in Australia.

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[1] *Australian Letters*, reprinted in Patrick White, *Patrick White Speaks* (Sydney: Primavera Press, 1989), p. 15.

MAPPING THE EMPTINESS

Apart from this intellectual and artistic Australian emptiness, there stretched millions of square miles of Australian vast, unexplored, uncivilised territory. In the nineteenth century, most of Australia was *terra nullius* and *tabula rasa,* nobody's land that had a clean card — was not mapped and up for grabs. Early colonists created an illusion that there was an inland lake in the Australian wilderness, but E.J. Eyre, one of the early explorers of central Australia, who crossed overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the years 1840—1841, personally did not believe in it. Elsewhere in the letter quoted above, White maintains that E.J. Eyre was one of several sources of inspiration for him to write *Voss*:

> Afterwards [that is, after writing *The Tree of Man* — R.W.] I wrote *Voss*, possibly conceived during the early days of the Blitz, when I sat reading Eyre's *Journal* in a London bed-sitting room. Nourished by months spent trapesing backwards and forwards across the Egyptian and Cyrenaican deserts, influenced by the arch-megalomaniac of the day, the idea finally matured after reading contemporary accounts of Leichhardt's expeditions and A.H. Chisholm's *Strange New World* on returning to Australia.[2]

It is remarkable that for his main hero White has chosen a German explorer, modelling him on the figure of Ludwig Leichhardt who had perished in the Australian desert in 1848. Characteristically, when approached by Bonner, the Sydney sponsor of his expedition and asked whether he had studied the map of the Colony, Voss unflinchingly answers: "The map? […] I will first make it."[3] He shows no definite roots or signs of religious faith in neither God nor any other traditional values. Throughout the book he is presented in a constant search of his own self. William Walsh sees — correctly — the will as the dynamics of his actions and, on the whole, the novel itself:

> The impulse of Voss's actions, and the inaugurating concept of the novel, is not any general belief or idea but the pure shape of the will, a force that has no content but only direction. The compulsion, which Voss feels to cross the continent, comes from the desire to fulfil his own nature or, more correctly and more narrowly, from the force of his own will. The conquering of the desert may seem natural to others for reasons of economics or geography or knowledge, or it may seem simply appropriate as it does, for example, to Mr Bonner, supplied thereby

[2] White, *Patrick White Speaks*, p. 15.

[3] Patrick White, *Voss* (London: Vintage, 1976), p. 20.

> with the pleasures of patronage. Voss is willing to make any outward accommodation to such ideas if it helps him in his primary purpose. For him the expedition is a personal wrestling with the continent, and the continent is the only opponent his pride acknowledges as worthy of his will. "Deserts prefer to resist history and develop along their own lines." They have an intrinsic hostility to submission and they are therefore the proper target of Voss's will.[4]

It is evident that there is a Schopenhauerian/Nietzschean trait in seeing life as (pure) will. " 'This expedition, Mr Voss,' said Laura Trevelyan suddenly, 'this expedition of yours is pure will.' "[5] However, in a letter of 1973, White denies any affinity with Nietzsche: "I've read very little Nietzsche — some of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* when I was at Cambridge. He doesn't appeal to me."[6] Notwithstanding what the author's arguments may be, *Voss* as the novel of imagination undoubtedly offers "[t]he delight of entering the vastly distant foreign pre-historic land, accessible [so far — R.W.] only through books, and finding the whole horizon painted with new colors and possibilities —," as Nietzsche put it in his *Will to Power*.[7] Although the basic motif of the novel is a voyage of discovery as exploration of human nature, of man's true identity, and his relation to the world, it is also a voyage of discovery of the identity of Australia as a country in a more psychological than physical sense. As Judith Wright famously remarked, "Australia is still, for us, not a country but a state — or states of mind. We do not yet speak from within her, but from outside."[8] The point to prove this statement is the fact that the European arrivals — both early and contemporary — had in a prevailing majority of cases decided to settle down along the coastline; therefore, the vision of Australia they possess has always been from the outside. In his essay "Landscape and the Australian Imagination," Bruce Clunies Ross presents a similar vision: "After about two hundred years of settlement, white Australians have created an urban (and suburban) civilisation around less than half the coastline of the country. Most of the population lives there and has done for three generations or more, for within the confines of the coastal strip, Australia was a rapidly urbanised country. This littoral civilisation

[4] White, *Voss*, p. 13.

[5] White, *Voss*, p. 69.

[6] Ingmar Björksten, *Patrick White: A General Introduction*, trans. Stanley Gerson (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976), p. 59.

[7] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann & R. J. Holingdale (New York: Vintage Press, 1968), p. 829.

[8] Judith Wright, "The Upside-Down Hut," in: *The Writer in Australia: A Collection of Literary Documents 1856—1964*, ed. John Barnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 331—336.

is predominantly outward-looking."[9] Likewise, in D.H. Lawrence's highly acclaimed novel, *Kangaroo*, the Englishman, Richard Lovatt Somers, typically describes Australia by saying that "Colonies make for *Outwardness* […]. They all merge to the outside, away from the centre."[10] And even though explorers like Leichhardt or Burke and Wills kept pushing into the centre of the continent, majority of the Australians lingered, both in topographical and mental sense, on Australia's outskirts. To resolve this impasse one has to get rid of the European way of thinking, and, radically speaking, what is required is, in Wright's words, "the death of the European mind, its absorption into the soil it has struggled against."[11] Assuming that by "the death of the European mind" we understand a certain radical cutting off of the ties with Europe, with the rational mind, therefore, there must arise a question: what shall we have instead, what sort of mental space are we going to have, or maybe will it just be an emptiness? Michio Ochi is probably right when he argues that one has to have a great void inside oneself — what White calls being one's own desert — so that it could, later, reflect the country of the mind: "It seems one needs to get isolated among others before one is blessed with the vantage to look into the heart of one's own country; one must have a great void inside oneself that will be a mirror on which in time 'the country of the mind' will reflect itself."[12]

LANDSCAPE/SPACES/PLACES

The uniqueness of the Australian landscape is one of the predominant themes of the novel. As Walsh has it,

> There is in White an almost Wordsworthian sense both of the physical quality of a landscape and its spiritual suggestiveness. It is one of the unifying elements in the novel. At first the country through which the expedition goes has been comforting and easy or exciting and exhilarating. At the Sandersons and Rhine Towers there was a river valley

[9] Bruce Clunies Ross, "Landscape and the Australian Imagination" in: *Mapped but Not Known. The Australian Landscape of Imagination. Essays and Poems Presented to Brian Elliott*, eds. P.R. Eaden and F.H. Mares (Netley: Wakefield Press, 1986), p. 224.

[10] D.H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo* (London: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 146—147.

[11] Wright, "The Upside-Down Hut," p. 335.

[12] Michio Ochi, *Patrick White's Voss* (published in Japan, available at ADFA Library, Canberra, Australia, 1974), p. 646.

> with brown fish snoozing upon the stones, to get to which they had made their way through "a gentle, healing landscape." Now at Jildra it is beautiful in a wilder way: "the wind bent the grass into tawny waves, on the crests of which floated the last survivors of flowers, and shrivelled and were sucked under by the swell."[13]

Further into the bush land, the expedition starts to realise that the thirst begins to dry both them and the countryside:

> As the day grows, they see the river dry and greenish brown pot-holes, and the vastness of the dun country. Voss becomes aware of the infinite Australian distance and, in balance with it, of the immensity of his presumption, and also of that other distance, the one between "aspiration and human nature." The expedition advances into this new country, where exquisite black spiders cling to their hair and the air is beginning to smell of dust, and where the most personal hopes and fears are reduced until they are of little accord, and the men look back in amazement at their actual lives.[14]

Life for the men becomes the more extreme the farther they march into the heart of the unknown land, which contains hardly a suggestion of even a single leaf of grass or dew. In the "heartless" desert, as Laura describes it in a letter, Voss uses his memories, dreams, and letters to maintain a link with her, with civilisation and sanity. This sharpens the reader's sense of isolation, distance, and the danger of the expedition. He is, as he himself declares in a letter to her, "reserved for further struggles, to wrestle with rocks, to bleed if necessary, to ascend."[15]

INTO THE MURDEROUS (BLACK) HEART OF THE LAND

Moving into the heart of "nobody's land," the men are more and more aware of the presence of the "invisible" people, the ghosts of the dark heart of Australia's interior. In Walsh's words, they "are the one form of human life beyond the control of the human will. The blacks appear and disappear like birds or beasts. Their existence is purely a passage from moment to moment, answering some profound instinct for survival, and hardly directed

[13] William Walsh, *Patrick White*: *Voss* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), pp. 27—28.
[14] Walsh, *Patrick White*: *Voss*, p. 28.
[15] White, *Voss*, p. 217.

at all by the conscious will. They drift across the landscape like smoke and are as responsive to the play of the physical life about them."[16] When one of the domesticated Aborigines, Dugald, asks to be sent back to Jildra where they set off on their journey and is given Voss's last letter to Laura, we suspect treason. Indeed, after some time, the old man tears the letter to pieces and tosses it into the wind and walks away with other Aboriginals he met. Walsh stresses the other-wordliness of the Aborigines' being, saying that "[w]hat White renders so accurately and profoundly in these passages about the blacks is the other-wordliness of their existence. They do, strictly, live in another world, one which is the negation of active will, a projection of the appalling land, turning this way and that by some inarticulate sympathy with it. They survive by becoming part of the earth."[17]

MENTAL VOID: BECOMING ONE'S OWN DESERT

Brought up in a prosperous, mercantile Sydney family, Laura shows some clear signs of alienation when she declared that Australia was not her country although she had lived in it. Ochi observes that "[s]uch an emptiness craves to be filled. For long, she has been secretly expecting 'some similar mind' to turn up — not a fellow sufferer to share pity with, but a replenisher of the hollow Colony into the entity that deserves to be her own country. And she finds Voss at last."[18] The stranger, the foreigner, the outsider, by creating his own mental desert manifests his own indestructibility and thus unwittingly becomes a role model for an Australian middle-class woman:

> It was clear. She saw him standing in the glare of his own brilliant desert. Of course, He was Himself indestructible.
>
> And she did then begin to pity him. She no longer pitied herself, as she had for many weeks […]. Love seemed to return to her with humility. Her weakness was delectable.[19]

Elsewhere, Laura makes an unexpected confession to Voss:

> "You are so vast and ugly," Laura Trevelyan was repeating the words: "I can imagine some desert, with rocks, rocks of prejudice, and, yes,

[16] Walsh, *Patrick White*: *Voss*, p. 29.
[17] Walsh, *Patrick White*: *Voss*, pp. 29—30.
[18] Ochi, *Patrick White's Voss*, p. 645.
[19] White, *Voss*, p. 90.

> even hatred. You are so isolated. This is why you are fascinated by the prospect of desert places, in which you will find your own situation taken for granted, or more than that, exalted. You sometimes scatter kind words or bits of poetry to people, who soon realize the extent of their illusion. Everything is for yourself. Human emotions, when you have them, are quite flattering to you. If those emotions strike sparks from others, that also is flattering. But most flattering I think, when you experience it, is the hatred, or even the mere irritation of weaker characters."
>
> "Do you hate me, perhaps?" asked Voss, in darkness.
>
> "I am fascinated by you," laughed Laura Trevelyan, with such candour that her admission did not seem immodest. "*You* are *my* desert!"[20]

Ian Turner, one of the first Australian critics ever to comment on it, sees *Voss* as a parable ("The Parable of Voss" is the title of his article) and the title hero as an allegory of the historical Jesus, arguing that "Voss has his disciples, his persecutors and his betrayer; his agony and his reconciliation; his stigmata, and his crucifixion. He is the divinity who humbles himself before the least of his servants. And he troubles the minds of men, and they record his legend."[21] What is more, he is very critical of the novel itself since it is, in his opinion, very un-Australian not only on the account of its apparent Gothicism but, primarily, because it is "exploring, in an Australian environment, a mind, a way of thinking, that is foreign territory to most Australians,"[22] arguing that a rational realism would be much more characteristic of the Australian ways, where "human skill, hard grafting and a fair measure of luck" were the qualities that conquered the Australian continent. This is exactly the reverse of what White wanted to convey in the novel. As he wrote in *Australian Letters*, he attempted to give to *Voss* "the textures of music, the sensuousness of paint" and "to convey through the theme and characters of *Voss* what Delacroix and Blake might have seen, what Mahler and Liszt might have heard."[23] Australia, as a country and territory of experience, assumes the role of the second most important character in the novel, and becomes an opponent of Voss. Walsh argues:

> Voss, and a central truth about, or experience of, Australia itself have become one. Australia is almost another character in the novel, certainly an impressive and influential force, the complex presence of which

[20] White, *Voss*, pp. 87—88.

[21] Ian Turner, "The Parable of Voss," in: *An Overland Muster*: *Selections from Overland 1954—1964*, ed. Stephen Murray-Smith (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1965), p. 71.

[22] Turner, "The Parable of Voss," p. 74.

[23] *Australian Letters*, reprinted in White, *Patrick White Speaks*, p. 16.

> affects the organization and the feeing of the novel at many different points. Australia is the sole opponent worthy of Voss's will. The will to know Australia is the initiating impulse of the novel. It is Australia which appears in Laura's letters to Voss as the necessary and mysterious context and passion of Voss himself; and to know him requires her to experience the land. To experience here means not only, or not just, external or physical acquaintance.[24]

Walsh gives here examples of the mode of knowledge possessed by Jackie, the Aboriginal who, by decapitating Voss, became a legend among the tribes, and of Laura who, at the end of the novel, says that " 'I am uncomfortably aware of the very little I have seen and experienced of things in general, and of our country in particular, […] but the little I have seen is less, I like to feel, than what I know. Knowledge was never a matter of geography. Quite the reverse, it overflows maps that exist. Perhaps true knowledge only comes of death by torture in the country of the mind.' "[25] In his Introduction to *Critical Essays on Patrick White*, Peter Wolfe shares the opinion that Voss, as the character in the novel, opened up the doors for others to step in and shape Australia's future, which is neither exclusively European nor white:

> Vain and self-acting, Voss wanted no one's approval; he acted to impress nobody. He needed no reason to cross Australia in White's 1957 novel, only a purpose, which, coming from within, ignored outside justifications. Yet his desert trek teaches him that ordeals take on new meanings when shared by others. In weakness lies strength. Here is a truth that defies both reason and vanity. It also helps join him to the human family. Rather than positing an elite of suffering, *Voss* puts self-transcendence within everybody's reach. By failing to cross Australia's dry heart, Voss has created goals for others. Colonel Hugo Hebden, the explorer who twice searches for him after his disappearance, is the first of these others; Voss has inspired him to test his mettle in fresh ways. By such steps, personal development channels into the growth of a national self-awareness. But the Australian future that Voss has helped shape is not exclusively white or European. The aboriginal Jackie, his killer, to whom he is eternally linked, becomes a legend and a prophet. White hints that one of Jackie's dark-skinned hearers will feel vexed enough by his words to discover Voss's place in the aboriginal consciousness.[26]

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[24] Walsh, *Patrick White*: *Voss*, p. 38.

[25] White, *Voss*, p. 446.

[26] *Critical Essays on Patric White*, ed. Peter Wolfe (Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co., 1990), p. 3.

Elsewhere in his Introduction, Wolfe ponders upon Voss's unfinished mission for Australia and her people to bring them closer together:

> After great anguish, Voss dies. But his soul is reborn in others as he expends into a legend. And where does Voss fit in the process? Yes, he enriched the sense of Australianness in those who have responded physically and imaginatively to his struggle. In so doing, he has won a place in both white and aboriginal hearts. But setting aside the question of whether he would have rather renounced this higher purpose in favor of marrying Laura Trevelyan, we must point out that the novel ends before his vision bears fruit. And *will* it bear fruit? Though Colonel Hebden will search for Voss's remains in the desert, he stands no better chance of success than he did when he came back empty-handed from a similar expedition eighteen years before. Yet Hebden does stand *a* chance. As slim as it is, it surpasses any hopes that might have awaited Theodora, Stan Parker, and Hurtle, all of whose epiphanies vanish before they induce a new way of being.[27]

Voss's journey into the desert is in fact a journey into his mental desert, his psychological emptiness, the void he desperately wanted to fill with a motivation to live. It does not mean, however, that his attempt to conquer the external, physical space and the internal, psychological void was suicidal; on the contrary, the main goal of his doomed expedition was to get to know himself, to re-direct the outwardness of the look into inwardness, and to transfer/reflect the immensity of outer space into a compactness of human mind. Though eventually beheaded, in Laura's words, Australia "is his by right of vision,"[28] convinced that it would not come into being until it does by Voss's suffering. White's novel seems, on the whole, to set two spaces in conflict: the outer, coastal space of the city of Sydney and its suburbs and the inner space of the Australian outback, the bush, the desert, the space of savagery. And, finally, Lawrence's Sommers was perhaps right when he said in *Kangaroo* that "somebody will have to water Australia with their blood before it's a real man's country. The soil, the very plants seem to be waiting for it."[29]

[27] Peter Wolfe, "Introduction", in: *Critical Essays on Patric White*, p. 10.
[28] White, *Voss*, p. 29.
[29] Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p. 88.

Ryszard W. Wolny

W poszukiwaniu pustki: podróż do jądra *terra nullius* w powieści Patricka White'a *Voss*

Streszczenie

Autor artykułu podejmuje problematykę pustki w kontrowersyjnej powieści *Voss* (1957) jedynego australijskiego zdobywcy literackiej nagrody Nobla Patricka White'a. Owa pustka pojmowana jest zarówno jako oczywista, fizyczna pustka australijskiego interioru, jak i intelektualna i artystyczna pustka klasy średniej, którą wielokrotnie krytykował w licznych publikacjach autobiograficznych. Wybierając na głównego bohatera swojej powieści Niemca Vossa, którego wykreował, wzorując się na dziewiętnastowiecznym podróżniku Leichhardtcie, podważył powstały na początku dwudziestego wieku nacjonalistyczny mit australijskiego zdobywcy buszu, dokonującego podbojów w imię białej cywilizacji: siłą napędową poczynań Vossa jest wola w czystej formie, a tragiczna podróż, jaką odbywa w głąb kontynentu, to stopniowe odkrywanie złożoności natury ludzi, indywidualnej i zbiorowej tożsamości, jak również ich relacji ze światem zewnętrznym.

Ryszard W. Wolny

In der Suche nach einer Leere: eine Reise in den Kern der *Terra nullius* im Roman *Voss* von Patrick White

Zusammenfassung

Der Artikel betrifft die in einem kontroversen Roman *Voss* (1957) vom einzigen australischen Nobelpreisträger Patrick White dargestellten Leere. Diese Leere ist hier sowohl als eine Wildnis des australischen Interieurs, wie auch als intellektuelle und künstlerische Leere der von dem Schriftsteller schon mehrmals in zahlreichen autobiografischen Publikationen kritisch beurteilten Mittelklasse verstanden. Zum Hauptthelden seines Romans hat White eines Deutschen, Voss, gewählt, der dem aus dem 19.Jh.stammenden Reisenden, Leichhardt, nachgebildet war. Er hat damit die zu Beginn des 20.Jhs herumgeisterte nationalistische Überzeugung von einem im Namen der weißen Zivilisation handelnden australischen Buscherober in Frage gestellt. Die Antriebskraft des Unterfangens von Voss ist reiner Willen und seine tragische Reise ins Innere des Kontinents ist eine allmähliche Entdeckung von der ganzen Komplexität der menschlichen Natur, der individuellen und gemeinschaftlichen Identität, wie auch deren Beziehungen zur Außenwelt.

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Articles collected in this book represent, as is always the case with publications of this type, different scholarly approaches, varying from texts of chiefly informational character, the aim of which consists mostly in signalling the emergence of new phenomena in contemporary literature and culture, through close analyses of selected motifs and themes, to uncommonly thorough studies which open new research perspectives.

Prof. Artur Blaim
(excerpts from the review
of the book)

Regarded individually, the contributions address various contexts that have to do with space regarded as a motif in English literatures. On the basis of chosen literary works, the authors have been able to show the different ways in which space emerges and functions as a vehicle for meanings that connote national, cultural, and ethnic kinds of identity and their dynamic.

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