THE WILD AND THE TAME

ESSAYS IN CULTURAL PRACTICE

Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego
Katowice 1997

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Introduction

"Wildness" is a term of excess. The range of words more or less synonymous with the word *wild* is also, say, excessive. Wild: untamed, savage, ferocious, feral, unbroken, native, agrarian – so much Word for Windows Thesaurus. It also means uncultivated, growing in natural conditions, easily startled, uncivilized, violent, uncontrolled, desolate, waste, unsettled, madly enthusiastic, disorderly, reckless. What makes this term attractive from the point of view of literary or cultural criticism is the possibility of its application, and of analysis of its application, to a very broad range of discursive practices from and equally broad range of perspectives.

Generally, wildness is a term close to otherness. The latter term, however, has been for some time now the domain of the postmodern considerations and theorizations of our condition. Otherness is more general and more capacious than wildness as it demarcates the area of difference, say, metaphysically, to the omission of the natural environment which in the case of wildness is always inscribed within its connotative domain. "Wild" is also "Other", but this otherness is metonymically close, or closer, to nature. Since nature can also be wild, the term "wild" inevitably contaminates nature as a norm and thus makes "norm" yet another always already excessive term.

Wildness, unlike otherness, preserves a trace of familiarity. Thoreau's preservation of the world in nature was, as Tadeusz Rachwał argues in his paper, a simultaneous preservation of the neighbourhood, of the civilized "near-dwellers", regardless of the villainy which Thoreau saw in the village life. Wildness attracts as a sphere of untamed freedom, but it is also repulsive as disorderly and desolate. Hence the projection of wildness upon any kind of unfamiliar spaces and places, upon any "non-European presences and cultures", as Krzysztof Knauer phrases it in his reading of Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, whose presence is thus deprived of the legitimacy of the real.

Wildness is thus both real and unreal, civilized and uncivilized. If there is a method in wildness, a methodology which Wojciech Kalaga discusses in his article, then it actually dwells in the very word "wild" which "is more civilised

than any other word: it not only tames reality, as does any other word, but also immediately, in one gesture, tames that which it proclaims untamed (the wild). To name a fragment of reality (to call it wild, for example) is first to isolate and identify it and than to subdue it to our linguistic will, to tame it, or as some of us would say, to "colonise it". Wildness, unlike madness, remains within the sphere of the familiar, or familial, structuring. This is so because, as Tomasz Kalaga tries to show, the "features of the mad may be identified as features of the wild, but wildness goes beyond and includes that which has little to do with the idea of insanity". Wildness is only a slight madness, a Freddie Mercury wearing bananas on his head in the well known video version of his *I'm Going Slightly Mad.*

A slight madness seems to be also an important aspect of technologically reproduced realities – the case of cyberspace, for example. The possibility of reproduction of the natural *via* numerical to the point of making the latter natural is the case of what Paweł Frelik sees as wildness of technology manifested in cyberpunk narratives where technology goes wild by way of attaining "the state in which it replaces nature, man's original environment. It merges with man and nature in an almost uncontrollable fashion" thus bringing to mind a possibility of the natural having always already been constructed and subject to be replaced by a better construction which could start an existence conditioned by the extinction of the imperfect, and thus unnatural, human race.

Construction of nature is also a constituent of its "ocular" perception whose mechanism, as Sławomir Masłoń sees it, is that of reduction of the surplus, of the excess of what we actually see, of the untamed which our eye tames never allowing the perception to reach the point of assimilation. Hence human seeing is always a narrative, a story of the appearance in the world which "is the compelling need of every creature", which need, in case of human beings, is supplemented by the irresistible urge to speak. Wildflowers and weeds also invite naming, sometimes perhaps even wilder than they wild lives. In her discussion of the ways of seeing mullein in Polish poetry Agnieszka Pantuchowicz somehow feminizes the plant and draws our attention to the translatological problems involved in wildness. Mullein (*dziewanna*) has a number of names whose translation into English seems to be futile: *królewska świeca, szabla, gorzygrot, dziewizna, krotnica leśna, kędzierzawica leśna, kędzierzawica polna.* Phonetically, the name 'dziewanna' might be associated with 'dziewica' (*a virgin*), 'dziewka' (*a maid*) and 'dziwka' (*whore*).

With the coming of the aesthetic, this urge to speak becomes a way of hiding and regressing from otherness through Art whose appeal is the promise of refuge from the Other which it seems to provide. In his essay on Oscar Wilde, Leszek Drong looks at the hopelessness of Oskar Wilde's "going wild", of facing a new self which, even in the confinement of the prison, is always a continuation of the former, "aesthicised" life. Though "one cannot escape sharing a cell with the Other, facing a new, pure self which Wilde seems to be searching for ends up with its renunciation as Other by way of regression to memories. What safeguards art and

artefacts, as Rafał Dubaniowski notices in his reading of Caliban in Shakespeare and Auden, is the presence of a phantom other which always undermines a prospect of totality in the sense of some personal order. What art inevitably implies is some attempt to tame the wild and slippery facets of reality. Art's pursuit is thus always a pursuit of a "wished-for" limitation, of a confinement of the seemingly unlimited approaches of freedom. Perhaps paradoxically, art itself can be judged in terms of wildness and cultivation, as is frequently the case with the Shakespearean criticism whose rhetoric Jacek Mydla discusses in his paper.

Wildness is also a figure recurrent in political discourse as an antithesis of social order. In his reading of Joseph von Eichendorff's "Das Schloß Dürande" Andrzej Wicher claims that regardless of the conservative message of the story, the author's attitude to wildness is ambivalent. Aristocracy, for example, are presented in the story as those who want the people tame, but also as those who "derive all their pride from exercising some control over the creatures of the wildness". Any revolutionary "return to nature" on the part of the tame is thus bound to fail because it is only the class of aristocratic "hunters" who are "naturally" predisposed to somehow control wildness. The wildness of the tame is thus something conceptually different from the wildness of the high. The ambivalence of wildness, in Marek Kulisz's reading of the marginalisation of the nomad, is something which for several centuries has characterised Western thinking. Both attractive and repulsive, wildness is the sphere of human historical existence, and thus also of the political order resting on historicity, is threatened by the possibility of there being a "wilder" order of things dwelling, like the nomads, in a purely geographical space without history. If in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* the Zone presented there is a space which has neither geography nor history, as Donata Minorowicz sees it in her paper, then this sphere becomes the manifestation of the war itself, the manifestation of the struggle for either kind of order.

Perhaps what is at stake in questioning wildness is also the question about the human. An evaluation of wildness necessitates endowing it with a value and thus asking the questions of what *value* is, what *sure* is, what *man* is, the questions which, according to Lyotard, "are taken to be dangerous and shut away again pretty fast".[1] Thoreau's vision of the preservation of the world in wildness is as conservative a vision as it is revolutionary. Perhaps it is in the wild that our tame visions and revisions find their tainted origins. The present volume, though slightly wild as regards the meaning of wildness, provides, as we hope, some tamer perspectives on what, anyway, cannot be quite tamed.

Wojciech Kalaga and *Tadeusz Rachwał*

[1] Jean François Lyotard, *The Inhuman. Reflections on Time*, trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 1.

WOJCIECH KALAGA

Tertium non datur? Wildness and Methodology

Of the two themes of this paper, i.e., wildness and methodology, the latter will come first. This does not mean that it will attempt either to tame or to dominate, or to eclipse wildness. I will start by highlighting a methodological issue and then will seek support from the wild *via* certain analogies. The methodological question that will be brought up surfaced at a departmental meeting with a paper on the marvellous, the feminine, and magic realism by Mary Macullan from the University of North London. During our discussion regarding the problem of the manifestation of the marvellous the discussants divided themselves into two opposing groups whose stances could be epitomized as the emphasis on ***difference***, on the one hand, and the emphasis on ***similarity*** on the other hand.

According to the first group, the similar instances of the marvellous in different cultures are radically and irrevocably different in the sense of manifesting an incompatibility of the categories of those cultures. *Beowulf*, for example, cannot be a manifestation of the same *marvellous* which is embodied in the tales of the South American magical realism. We could say that this stance acts on the principle that no instances of similarity can overpower the differences that accompany them, to the extent that could allow generalizing claims of sameness. The other stance acts on a radically opposite principle, namely that the various instances of difference cannot thwart the fundamental similarity as the basis of systematizing generalizations. On this view, the various manifestations of the marvellous, despite the differences, are similar in the sense of manifesting some common pattern (what we called, by an operational metaphor, an archetypal similarity). Following this stance, the marvellous in *Beowulf*, or say in Ursula Leguin, and in magical realism of South American prose, shares something in common, however ineffable or sublime that something might be.

It is quite obvious that the first stance – the one emphasizing difference – does not renounce similarity as a critical principle. On the contrary, we see the exponents of this stance move between the most distant textual lands for the sake of engineering a bricolage of analogies and similarities. There is one condition, however, which must be observed. These similarities have to be ***contingent*** and not ***necessary***, i.e., they must be incidental, annuling a hypothetical underlying system to prove that globalizing systems do not exist. In other words, they must not be generic similarities which confirm the existence of a totalizing systemic force. Just like the first stance does not renounce similarity, so the second stance – the one emphasizing similarity – does not renounce difference, but uses it as the principle of semantic discrimination within its grids, typologies, and genealogies. Unlike in the case of the first stance, however, these differences must be ruled by ***necessity*** and not by ***contingency***, i.e., in the Saussurean manner they must represent the system itself.

Now, there are two kinds of error which both these stances may commit. First, that error could be primarily ethical, i.e., it could consist in the totalitarian imposition of the globalizing necessity by those who belief in the System, and of the hypocritical pretence of those who denounce all truth (or the possibility of truth), the System including, and at the same time claim that their opponents are wrong. Secondly, the error could consist in the denial or neglect to acknowledge that both positions find their ultimate semblance in the Kantian predicament, i.e., that in *both* cases the structures of mind, of perception, of cognition and recognition (or whatever more or less technical or poetic way one chooses to call them) determine the constitution of the constructed object. The result of these errors is a polarization of stances leading to their incompability and incommensurability. If those errors are avoided, however, the impending polarization will give way to a contestation of the logic of duality.

Let us briefly reiterate. Of the two methodological positions I described at the beginning, the first relies on necessity while the second on contingency. Yet, unless the exponents of the two stances stand by the errors mentioned above, no radical contradiction between them is established. For the opposition between them is not the opposition between extremities of *the same* qualities or values, like that between the necessity of difference and contingency of difference, or between the necessity of similarity and contingency of similarity. On the contrary, while their strong principles, which are the necessity of difference (systematicity) on the one hand, and contingency of similarity (fragmentation, incidentality) on the other hand, remain as central methodological determinants of two extreme poles, there remains a whole spectrum of floating relations of difference and similarity between those two poles. It happens so because the assumption of the former stance (i.e., the necessity of difference) does not in fact exclude the contingency of similarity, even though it relegates it from the centre of its attention; and *vice versa*, the assumption of the second stance (the contingency of similarity) does not exclude the

necessity of difference, but likewise relegates it to the margins of its vision. And it is exactly this slight deviation, a slight curve, an oscillation within the opposition of the two stances – consisting in a clash of necessity and contingency, but a clash relating to two different values – that contests the *tertium non datur* principle and circumscribes an area of common inquiry.

Two interim observations suggest themselves at this stage. First, on a microscale, one notices that – despite appearances – the relation between the two stances is not based on mutual exclusion or incommensurability. While they remain in opposition on many levels of reference, they also share an area of potential consensus. Rather than as a polarized dichotomy or a binary opposition we should look at those stances as determinants of a ***methodological spectrum***. Secondly, on a macroscale, if one were to risk a generalization, the floating relation between the two axes of the opposition (necessity–contingency; difference–similarity) accounts for the continuity, or what Barthes calls *glissement*, between structuralism and poststructuralism (the former, roughly speaking, relying on the necessity of difference, while the latter on the contingency of similarity), and explains why these two discursive formations cannot, in fact, be seen as separated by radical breech.

What has been said so far seems pretty civilised, and it is only here that wildness comes in by way of a certain analogy. This analogy is neither directly conceptual nor directly structural, but is based on the ability of the wild to resist the regime of the *tertium non datur* principle, which, as we have seen, was also overcome by the floating relation of contingency and necessity in our methodological question.

The word "wild" is internally rifted and fissured from within in a way which suggests its particular usefulness for subverting the logic of duality. First, and paradoxically, the word Wild is more civilised than any other word: it not only tames reality, as does any other word, but also immediately, in one gesture, tames that which it proclaims untamed (the wild). To name a fragment of reality (to call it wild, for example) is first to isolate and identify it and than to subdue it to our linguistic will, to tame it, or as some of us would say, to colonize it. We might pastiche Heidegger's "naming is calling"[1] into "naming is taming". The wild existed truly only at the state of untained, undifferentiated wildness before the existence of the word, i.e., before the possibility of the Other. But then, it did not know it was so wild, it did not know it was wild at all. Only naming made it knowingly wild, but unknowingly tamed. Naming is calling, naming is taming. Wild is thus also richer even than those words, which posit their oppositions only for the sake

[1] Martin Heidegger, "Language", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

of their own becoming, but then annihilate those oppositions as invalid (for example, in the poststructuralist discourse *metaphorical* posits *literal* in order to establish its own distinctiveness only to encroach on the semantic terrain of this posited opposition and to monopolize that terrain without exception, thus leaving *literal* empty). In the case of Wild the conflict occurs ***within*** the word, and wildness, albeit retained, is also re-tained. Wildness as a concept contains in itself its own contradiction and thus of itself contradicts the laws of binary logic.

Despite the doubts, or perhaps because of the doubts regarding its clear-cut nature, one feels the need to find a pivotal point which might become a point of reference for the distinction between the cultured/human and wild as the other. That point of reference could be memory, or teleology, or regularity,.or in fact any of the connotative values that enter into semantic play within the opposition; none of those mentioned, however, seems to be able to perform that pivotal role. A factor capable of a radical and definitive insight must come from the utmost moment of existence, and that factor – which also touches other related concepts such as language, interpretation, or being – is ***the invention of death*** as a cultural caesura between two eschatologically separate domains.

A very strong impulse to posit the awareness of death as the pivotal indication of what is appropriately human as opposed to the other (or, metaphorically speaking, to the wild), comes, of course, from Heidegger. His concepts of *Sein–zum–Tode* (Being–towards–Death) and of the profound awe (*Angst*) the awareness of death evokes, determine the authenticity of human existence and differentiate it from OTHER ways of being. But there is an even stronger and more radical impulse which, given its essential dyadicity, comes from an unexpected direction, namely from the poetry of W. B. Yeats:

Death

Nor dread nor hope attend a dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all;
Many times he died, Many times rose again.
A great man in his pride
Confronting murderous men
Casts derision upon
Supersession of breath;
Man knows death to the bone —
Man has created death.

This is primarily a political poem inspired by the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins, Vice-President of the Irish Free State. Let us, however, disregard its political and historical reference and concentrate only on the general judgements that Yeats makes, i.e., on the first couplet and the last line of the poem: "Nor dread nor hope attend a dying animal ... Man has created death."

Here, it is not even the awareness (as in Heidegger), but the invention, the creation of death that distinguishes man from beast. By positing death as a human invention Yeats reinstates the perennial western dichotomy and introduces a radical opposition between the civilized (cultured, linguistic, semiotic) and the non-civilized, i.e., the wild, which does not differentiate between phases of the organic processes occurring in the world, supersession of breath including.

This anthropocentric and dichotomous attitude is confirmed in at least two other poems by Yeats ("The Tower" and "Vaccillation") and also in "The Death of a Hare" where death and wildness actually come together:

The Death of a Hare

I have pointed out the yelling pack,
The hare leap to the wood,
And when I pass a compliment
Rejoice as lover should
At the drooping of an eye,
At the mantling of the blood.

Then suddenly my heart is wrung
By her distracted air
And I remember wildness lost
And after, swept from there,
Am set down standing in the wood
At the death of the hare.

Here, the death of a hare is wildness lost. But the equation of death with the loss of wildness can occur only from the perspective of man: of the one who invented death as the ultimate moment of life. For man, the invention of death as finality entails the concept of necessity, while for the animal – if we impose our anthropomorphic categories again – dying is in a sense a matter of contingency which does not eliminate one from nature, even though it does involve a supersession of breath; organic processes continue to take place embracing the dying-dead organism, albeit differently. By pointing to the eschatological difference between man and beast, i.e., between the order of civilization and the order of the wild, Yeats draws the polar opposition between the necessary and the contingent.

Let us now take a brief look at another poem about man, death and beast, which, however, overpowers the polar duality established by Yeats' "Death".

Kot w pustym mieszkaniu

Umrzeć – tego nie robi się kotu.
Bo co ma począć kot
w pustym mieszkaniu.
Wdrapywać się na ściany.
Ocierać między meblami.
Nic tu niby nie zmienione,

a jednak pozamieniane.
Nic nie przesunięte,
a jednak porozsuwane.
I wieczorami lampa już nie świeci.

Słychać kroki na schodach,
ale to nie te.
Ręka, co kładzie rybę na talerzyk,
także nie ta co kładła.

Coś się tu nie zaczyna
o swojej zwykłej porze.
Coś się tu nie odbywa
jak powinno.
Ktoś tutaj był i był,
a potem nagle zniknął
i uporczywie go nie ma.

Do wszystkich szaf się zajrzało.
Przez półki przebiegło.
Wcisnęło się pod dywan i sprawdziło.
Nawet złamało zakaz
i rozrzuciło papiery.
Co więcej jest do zrobienia.
Spać i czekać.

Niech-no on tylko wróci,
niech-no się pokaże.
Już on się dowie,
że tak z kotem nie można.
Będzie się szło w jego stronę
jakby się wcale nie chciało,
pomalutku,
na bardzo obrażonych łapach.
I żadnych skoków pisków na początek.

[*A Cat in an Empty Flat*

To die – you don't do that to a cat.
For what should a cat do
In an empty flat.
Climb the walls.
Rub its back against furniture.
Nothing has changed – it seems,
but it has.
Nothing has been moved – it seems,
but it has been.
And the lamp is out at night.

One hears footsteps on the stairs,
but not the footsteps.
Nor is the hand that puts the fish on the plate
the one that used to be.

Something here does not begin
at the usual time.
Something does not happen
as it should.
Someone was here, and was,
and then suddenly was no more
and persistently is not here.

One has looked into the wardrobes.
One has run through all the shelves.
One has squeezed oneself under the carpet to check.
One has even done the forbidden
and scattered the papers.
What else can one do.
Sleep and wait.

But let him just come,
let him just show himself here.
He will soon find out
such things are not done to the cat.
One will walk towards him
as if one did not want to at all, -
very slowly,
feet sulking.
And no jumping, miaowing at the start.]

The strategy of the poem relies on an internally incongruent persona. Even though the monologue is in the third person, and in spite of its anthropomorphic tinge, the speaker in the poem is the cat describing its own experience of absence. The first line – despite an apparently impersonal tenor – is integrated into the monologue's unity and reflects the cat's awareness of death ("To die – you don't do that to a cat"). As we proceed, however, that awareness of death is put into question, particularly in the third stanza and especially through its final stylization of naiveté ("Someone was here, and was, and then suddenly was no more"). Eventually, the last lines reflect the cat's innocence of the knowledge of death ("But let him just come... etc."). What occurs in the poem is an anthropomorphization of the cat through the projection of a human perspective (after all, as Yeats suggests, it is man who has created death) – a kind of a taming of the cat (wild) – and at the same time a rejection of that perspective. In effect, the dichotomy man–cat, or more generally: civilised–other, is broken and fuzziness retrospectively dominates the poem. The epitome of this fuzziness, and a foretoken of the contestation of binarity, are the four pre-final lines of the first stanza ("Nothing has changed – it seems, but it has").

If the Yeats' poem foregrounds death as the radical mark of humanity, Szymborska's poem – while subtly confirming the anthropomorphicity of death – at the same time circumscribes a terrain common and undistinguishable to man and the other (the cat, the wild). Yeats establishes death as a binary logic of the

difference BETWEEN; Szymborska establishes death as a cojoining difference, a difference which not only demands, but also entails similarity, or in other words a difference WITHIN. When referred to the theoretical question posed at the beginning of this paper, Yeats illustrates the methodology of polarity: looking through his glasses at the two stances described earlier one would be determined to discern only oppositions. Szymborska, on the other hand, is a methodologist of the spectrum: while only subtly signalling the binarity of the poles, she most of all explores the illogical terrain between them. It is this wild terrain of the spectrum, which contests the *tertium non datur* principle, that I want to postulate as the area of our exploration.

MAREK KULISZ

Non-representation of the Wild: Marginalization of the Nomad

The West's attitude towards the wild has for several centuries now been characterized by ambiguity. On the one hand there has been the admiration for tigers burning bright, for the sublimity of high mountain peaks, and for the freshness and innocence of what was not yet spoiled by civilization; but on the other hand there has been the fear of and contempt for the uncivilized and primitive. In this paper I shall discuss several aspects of the latter, I shall try to analyse the West's perception of the nomad – the other who refused to enter what the West considered to be civilization.

"...the nomads have no history; they only have a geography".[1] This diagnosis, of itself explaning to some extent the marginalization of the nomad, is a result of recent insight, though its first part has doubtless been known for ages. My effort here will be to find out what it means that the nomad has no history, which in fact entails interpreting the opposite as well, i.e. what it means to "have" (a) history. Such a task must involve certain simplifications but that is only because I shall try to give an account of a marginalization, that is a simplification. One cannot marginalize a race, nation, ethnic group or an individual without making simplifications about their life, culture, intelligence, etc. The moment one starts noticing refinement and subtleties, marginalization ends.

In my attempt to explain the nomad's exclusion from history I shall concentrate on the West's perception of nomadism in relation to the following: the State,

[1] G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, "Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine", in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), p. 393.

society, culture, religion, and civilization. None of these can of course be discussed separately because there is considerable overlap between them, and I am not going to introduce any arbitrary divisions. The concepts will just be highlighted to show that they, in the meanings given to them by the West, are in fact "responsible" for the nomad's exclusion from history.

I shall discuss the views of four eminent sholars: I. Kant, R. W. Emerson, C. G. Jung, and J. Bronowski. Each of them wrote about or simply referred to nomadism when analysing a different aspect of social life. By putting their analyses together it becomes possible to obtain an overall picture of what can be called the marginalization of the nomad in the Western world.

Nomads *vs.* the State

On the first page of "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History"[2] I. Kant makes a distinction between two orders: that of nature, to which the laws of mechanics are applicable, and that of free will, which is specifically human and which cannot be studied in terms of cause and effect. The important thing for a philosopher of history or a historian to realize about these two orders is that in the first case events are predictable, while in the second they are not (the only predictability to speak of with reference to free will is based on the hope that one day humanity will get fully convinced that the laws of conduct already formulated by practical reason are the best to abide by, i.e. they assure the speediest advancement towards enlightenment).[3] Man's life is a combination of both orders, but it has not always been like that. At the beginning man was just an animal species fully controlled by instinct. He was very well-off in that state, but unfortunately it was a hindrance to his development. And then, at some "point" in time, came the awakening of reason, the act of transcending nature.

[2] I refer to three essays by Kant: "Muthmasslicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte", "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltburgerlicher Absicht", and "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung", published in Poland under the title *Przypuszczalny początek ludzkiej historii i inne pisma historiozoficzne*, trans. M. Żelazny, I. Krońska, A. Landman (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Comer, 1995). In Britain the essays were published in a volume entitled: Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. H. Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[3] The distinction between the events determined by external measurable forces and the activities that have their origin in free will is discussed at length by M. Żelazny in the introduction to *Przypuszczalny początek*... The distinction is of great significance to Kant's thought because it forms the basis for the division between the realms of speculative and practical philosophy. As far as mechanics, or science in general, is concerned we have to bear in mind the fact that in the eighteenth century it was shaped according to the laws formulated by Newton and Kepler; hence the exagerated, by modern standards, hopes of predictability.

Since Kant's analysis is a philosophical – today we would say anthropological – interpretation of the first few pages of the book of Genesis, he illustrates his ideas with suitable quotations. Thus, according to him, the progress from the care of nature to freedom is presented in the Bible as eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In other words man ate what instinct (Nature, Providence) had told him not to eat – a step that no animal has yet taken.

Kant does not mention the nomad at this point, but if we look deeper into his argument, we can discern the first sign of marginalizing the nomad: If the birth of reason was connected with the differentiation and enrichment of man's diet, and if we assume that the human mind has always functioned in the same way, i.e. it has kept on transcending nature, we would have to admit that nomadic tribes have lagged a long way behind town-dwellers in this respect, because their diet has changed very little throughout ages. On the steppes of Mongolia, for example, they still prepare and preserve food the way it was done in the times of Genghis Khan, while in Europe we not only have national cuisines but even regional ones, and they still keep changing – think of the variety of cookery books on the publishing market, and the effectiveness of commerce that has made our diet almost completely independent of seasons (i.e. nature). The above comparison makes us see the nomad as someone still within the grip of nature, certainly not on the same level as animals but definitely below the intensity of freedom[4] achieved by the sedentary.

Man's relation to animals is also mentioned by Kant. He points to verse III,21 of the book of Genesis: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." (*AV*) Kant interpretes it as man's realization of his superiority over animals. From that moment on he has treated them as tools and means to his ends, they ceased to be his equals.

Again, though Kant does not write about it, town-dwellers have considered themselves more advanced, because from their point of view the nomad had to keep on moving in search of new pastures, or to follow the animals he hunted, which prevented him from settling down and thus from engaging in activities that were thought necessary for civilizational development: he did not build anything permanent, he was not able to accumulate any surplus that could have later been traded for something else, and that would have allowed him to divert his attention from sustenance to, for example, inventing and modernizing his technologies, etc. In short, the nomad was seen as no less a slave to his animals than they were to him.

These however, as was stated above, are not the conclusions drawn by Kant. He interpretes the Biblical events (eating unknown fruit, making use of animal skins, etc.) as the original moments of the awakening of reason, which, according to him, had on the one hand beneficial, but on the other hand regrettable conse-

[4] The word *freedom* is used here in the meaning given to it by Kant at the beginning of his essay, i.e. independence from nature.

quences, because man using the power of his imagination started developing needs and cravings in an artificial way – not only beyond natural urge, but even against it. In this way there appeared in man a host of superfluous and excessive inclinations, following which was a waste of time and a hindrance to development. Kant, then, would be able to refute our arguments about man's relation to animals and the changing diet, because he does not make simple equations in which the complexity of intellectual operations together with their results equal progress, and simplicity is synonymous with retardation.[5] I decided to mention the arguments, as they are still present in Western thought.

Kant's marginalization of the nomad becomes more obvious in his discussion of the mechanisms of social relations and his views on the future organization of mankind. In *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* we read that the means employed by nature to develop in man all his original capacities is the antagonism of these abilities within society. Kant calls this phenomenon the unsociable sociability of men and argues that it is the cause of proper social order. Man is a social animal and at least in childhood and youth the company of other people is indispensable to him – neither physical nor mental development is possible without it.[6] At the same time almost every person would like to arrange everything to their liking. Yet having one's own way in society means attempting to make other people change *their* ways, which of course they refuse to do. What is more someone who imposes his own will on others is well aware that if the situation was reversed, i.e. if another person's will was imposed on him, he would put up similar resistance. There exists, then, a permanent conflict between the sociable and unsociable both within every person and within society. Even though the unsociable tendencies are a source of a number of vices, Kant praises them because of the resistance they arouse. It is precisely this resistance, he argues, that stimulates all the strength and energy in man, that makes him overcome his laziness, and thus helps him to realize his ambitions and to achieve a prominent

[5] It is difficult not to agree with Kant, but in that case we will have to face a practically unsolvable problem of defining the criteria that would allow us to distinguish between intellectual activities that are unnecessary and those that help us in our progress towards enlightenment, perfection. For example, was it a waste of time and effort to invent the internal combustion engine? Do we need it to become better people? What does *better* mean in this context? The difficulties of our dialogue with Kant arise from the fact that he believed in progress towards life organized according to the rules proposed by practical reason, whereas now at the end of the twentieth century the idea has seriously been questioned.

[6] Modern social sciences have made us more aware of the fact that socialness is necessary in human life not only in its external form, i.e. as social environment, but also as a force operating from within. Let us take language acquisition as an example: It is obvious that to master his/her mother tongue a baby must be talked to. But, as Roman Jakobson observed, the first verbal function acquired by babies is the phatic one, which means they feel the need to communicate before they are actually able to formulate and receive any informative messages. In other words, one can assume that language develops from the need to maintain contact.

position in his group. Man's talents would for ever remain dormant without the unsociable tendencies and the resistance they arouse.

To make his meaning clearer Kant compares people to trees. In forests, where they grow close to one another, trees have to fight for air and sunshine, so they spring up for the sky and are straight and tall as a result. Whereas in places where each of them has plenty of room and is free to shoot out branches in every possible direction, they are stunted and twisted. We encounter here an interesting paradox that can be expressed in the following way: The less freedom you have, the freer you become.[7] The paradox is a result of confronting two different meanings of the word *free*. In the first part the meaning is general, *free* can be defined as "not limited, restricted, or controlled"; in the second it is more specific, "independent of nature, instinct", i.e. "not restricted, controlled, etc. by nature, instinct". We can rephrase the paradox now and say: You have to give up being *free* in order to be *free from*.[8] In this line of reasoning the state of being *free* is of course less desirable, because it is merely natural. Being *free from* on the other hand demands effort and can thus be seen as an achievement, especially that the original, primitive, natural freedom is understood here as remaining within the grip of nature. The difference, then, is not just semantic, it is also, or first of all, ethical. Progress would be a march from one instance of *free-from* to another.

Kant does not mention the nomad at this particular point, but he does a number of times in "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History" (the essay we discussed first, but which in fact was published two years after *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, in 1786). At the bottom of one of the final pages there is a note about the Bedouin, which is put there as a supplementary comment on the distinction Kant makes between two types of sovereignty that characterize nomadic and sedentary peoples. Town-dwellers and villagers chose man as their sovereign, while pastoral tribes would only recognize God in this position. Arab Bedouin, we read in the note, still call themselves children of some sheikh, the founder of their tribe. In no way, however, could that man be their master, i.e. he was not in the position to use violence or force against them, because

[7] A very similar paradox is mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari in their discussion of the relation between the State and its philosophers, for whom "the State is the becoming of reason. ... Always obey. The more you obey, the more you will be master, for you will only be obeying pure reason, in other words yourself..." G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 375–6.

A commandment of this sort can be found at the end of Kant's "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'" Of course it does not mean that Kant speaks in favour of despotism, just the opposite – he is strongly against it. Despotism is taking away people's freedom by force, while he tries to persuade the reader/citizen to take an attitude that could be called conscious discipline.

[8] G. Orwell writes about this distinction in "The Principles of Newspeak":

> The word *free* still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as 'This dog is free from lice' or 'This field is free from weeds'. It could not be used in its old seanse of 'politically free' or 'intellectually free', since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, ...
>
> *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), pp. 241–2.

in pastoral tribes, where there is no such thing as immovable property that would have to be left behind, any family that do not like something about their tribe can easily leave it and join another one. What in effect Kant says is that nomad organization is looser. It certainly is in the sense that it is not projected unto immovable property and in this way allows more freedom of movement. But Kant would reject such freedom. If a nomad family is free to break away from their tribe at any moment, should we not think of them, and indeed of the whole tribe, as a bunch of scattered trees? The desert, steppe, and prairie give every 'human tree' ample room, yet the price to be paid for it is too high, since you pay with what is human in you. The nomad's latent abilities cannot develop, because he is not forced to develop them. Whenever he meets resistance that he should overcome, that could stimulate him, he ducks out. Seen in this light, nomad organization appears to be doomed to disappear.

It is small wonder, then, that there is no place for the nomad in Kant's vision of the future. History to him is an advance towards better and better systems of government. There is no history outside the State.[9] *History is the history of the State*. (We find here the same attempt to delimit meaning as in the case of freedom. Just as there is no *freedom* only *freedom from*, there is similarly no *history* only the *history of*.) With the assumptions made by Kant it can hardly be any other way. He is of the opinion that nature, or Providence, 'has' a plan concerning the development of humanity – reason finds it difficult to accept the opposite view according to which the development is planless, i.e. haphazard and chaotic. The wisdom of nature, which is taken to be an axiom in other fields of knowledge, must also comprehend man. In other words man together with his freedom – reason's ability to transcend instinctual behaviour – is part of nature's wisdom and in consequence of her plan, he is not an exception to it. The plan, however, cannot be brought to fruition in the individual because our life span is too short; only the human race as a whole will see its potentialities realized. Therefore a great number of generations, each passing on its enlightenment to the next, will be needed to attain a level of development in which nature's intention will reach its fulfilment. Kant claims that the *only* environment in which this can happen is the State,[10] where we find the forest-like atmosphere necessary for the development of the 'human trees'. He argues that by studying the history of the State we can actually discern a pattern that opens out an encouraging perspective: we shall see how in very distant future humanity develops all the abilities with which it was equipped by nature. From this point of view what is outside the State is of little relevance, perhaps no relevance at all. By rejecting the State the nomad excludes himself from nature's plan, i.e. from history.

[9] Cf. Propositions seven, eight, and nine, in "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose".

[10] When Kant writes about the State, he means the type of organization found in "our part of the world", i.e. Europe. An organization such as the Mongol Empire would not be considered a state.

Nomads *vs.* Society (Agri-culture)

There is at least one point on which Emerson would fully agree with Kant: the growing complexity of man's needs has nothing to do with progress. Just the opposite. "Man the Reformer" begins with bitter criticism of contemporary society. Its functioning and its institutions are described with such words and phrases as "abuses, impediments, theft, fraud, selfishness, vitiated by derelictions, routine and obsequiousness", etc. A young man (the essay was originally "A Lecture Read before the Mechanics' Apprentices' Library Association") looking for employment must at the outset of his career forget about his dreams, prayers, and ideals. Society is so full of vices that it is completely unfit for a man of virtue to live in. And it is not just a matter of a certain number of corrupted individuals that you can refuse to deal with. There is no way one can avoid being implicated in the system because society, due to the more and more complicated division of labour, is organized in such a way that goods and commodities before reaching you pass through many hands. You cannot know whether what you get has not been vitiated somewhere on the way, and even if you do know, you still take it because there is no other way to obtain it – you will not start producing your own sugar, making your own bricks, furniture, clothes, etc.

The reform Emerson writes about is a new type of education. Briefly, it is a return to simplicity and self-reliance, which can be achieved through manual labour, especially farming. Young men could begin their careers, and those of us who are no longer young could change theirs, by renouncing the wealth accumulated by the past generation and "putting ourselves into primary relations with the soil and nature, and abstaining from whatever is dishonest and unclean, . . ."[11] This purifying move will bring a number of beneficial changes into your life: manual labour, apart from being good for your health, will make you freer, less dependent on others, and will help to develop your faculties. Emerson gives negative examples first, showing how we disable ourselves when we refrain from working with our hands. A son who inherits from his father a rich estate, and is not given the skills and experience which made the estate, will soon be turned into a watchman; to him his possessions will not become means, but will be his masters. When you get your goods just by signing cheques, you not only make yourself dependent on other people but also impair your faculties. Confesses Emerson: ". . . I feel some shame before my wood-chopper, my ploughman, and my cook, for they have some sort of self-sufficiency, they can contrive without my aid to

[11] "Man the Reformer", in R. W. Emerson, *Selected Essays*, ed. L. Ziff (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 134.

The two essays by Emerson that will be discussed are: "Man the Reformer" and "History", in R. W. Emerson, *Selected Essays*, ed. L. Ziff (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985).

bring the day and year round, but I depend on them, and have not earned by use a right to my arms and feet."[12] But manual dexterity is not enough. In order to be self-sufficient you have to lead a simple life. "Society is full of infirm people who incessantly summon others to serve them", because most of us are convinced that we cannot live without "sofas, ottomans, stoves, wine, game-fowl, spices, perfumes, rides, the theatre, entertainments,"[13] etc.

What Emerson writes in praise of his wood-chopper, ploughman, and cook can without any reservations be written about the nomad, e.g. the North American Indian. In fact, in the mid-nineteen century, when Emerson delivered his speech, the Indian of the Great Plains was a much better example, almost the epitome, of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. He knew very well how to get his food and prepare it, how to make his shoes, clothes, tools, weapons, houses, etc., and he did not need anyone to serve him. Some of the passages in "Man the Reformer" could indeed be chosen as mottos to treatises on the life of nomads:

> Can anything be so elegant as to have few wants and to serve them one's self, so as to have somewhat left to give, instead of being always prompt to grab? It is more elegant to answer one's own needs than to be richly served. ... it is an elegance forever and to all.[14]

Yet these lines were not written with the nomad in mind. Why should they, one can argue. It is only natural that Emerson concentrates on what he thought of and felt towards people he met everyday, and not on what he could possibly feel towards the Indians who lived far away from him somewhere on the prairie. But Emerson also writes about Spartans and ancient Romans, they are the examples to be followed, which may provoke us to ask the following question: Why should a founder of American philosophy, when explaining to his young countrymen how to live a good life, i.e. a life of few wants, speak of ancient Greeks and Romans rather than contemporary American nomads? Why does he not even mention them? The answer is so simple that the question appears to be hardly worth asking, even stupid. Says Emerson: "A man should have a farm or a mechanical craft for his culture. ... We must have an antagonism in the tough world for all the variety of our spiritual faculties, or they will not be born."[15] The tough world, then, is to have an important function, it is not simplicity for simplicity's sake, we need it for our culture – "our higher accomplishments, our delicate entertainments of poetry and philosophy". In the nineteenth century very, very few people would think of Indians as having a culture. They were called savages. Their life, though characterized by simplicity and self-reliance, was perceived as in a sense fruitless, i.e. not fostering culture.

[12] Ibid., p. 136.
[13] Ibid., p. 141.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 135.

An etymological detour will help us understand Emerson's attitude better. The word *culture* is derived from Latin *colere* – to till, and originally, in the Middle Ages, *culture* meant first of all *cultivation*, the tilling of land. At that time the word was not used in the senses it is used today, and in which Emerson uses it.[16] We have no reason to assume that the change, the enrichment of the original meaning was accidental. More probably it reflects the way in which Europe constructed its meanings. In this particular case we learn that culture ("the variety of our spiritual faculties") has its source in husbandry. Culture and agri-culture are two sides of the same coin. We should not be surprised, then, that Emerson, an admirer of ancient Greeks and Romans, considers the agricultural life to be so important.[17] It does not mean of course that he expects everyone to become a farmer. For him "the doctrine of the Farm is merely this, that every man ought to stand in primary relations with the work of the world".[18] There is, however, no indication in the essay that this doctrine includes what the nomad does. How could it? Who would include the *nomad* in the doctrine of the *Farm*?! Unless one would like to write about what the farm is not. Those who do not culture their land, who even refuse to possess land, are of no interest to Emerson. The world of the nomad remains outside discourse.

In "History" there is about a page devoted to nomadism. Worth pointing out is the fact that Emerson realizes there is a close link between geography and nomadism. He puts it the following way: "The geography of Asia and of Africa *necessitated* a nomadic life. ... The nomads of Africa were *constrained* to wander, by the attacks of the gad-fly, which drives the cattle mad, and so *compels* the tribe to emigrate in the rainy season and to drive off the cattle to the higher sandy regions."[19] The idea of the nomad being *forced* to wander is expressed three times in just a few sentences. To Emerson then, contrary to Deleuze and Guattari, the nomad does not have a geography; geography "has" the nomad. In other words, he is merely part of geography. We must remember that to be forced means to be deprived of choice, i.e. to some extent dehumanized because it is freedom of choice that, among other things, distinguishes people from animals.

Interesting is the way in which Emerson presents the contrast between nomadism and sedentarism: "... the nomads were the terror of all those whom the soil

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[16] Cf. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, ed. C. T. Onions (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[17] "In general one may say that the husbandman's is *the oldest and most universal* profession, and that when a man does not yet discover in himself any fitness for one work more than another, this may be preferred."

"Man the Reformer", p. 137. [Italics mine.]

[18] Ibid., p. 137.

[19] "History", in R. W. Emerson, *Selected Essays*, ed. L. Ziff (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 161. [Italics mine.]

or the advantages of a market had *induced* to build towns."[20] Inducing points to a relationship markedly different from that of forcing. To induce, when used with reference to humans, indicates persuasion on the part of the agent and taking a decision, making a choice, on the part of the patient. The word, of course, may also mean an influence different from persuasion, but not one that would eliminate choice altogether. The nomad, then, is forced to live the way he does, while the sedentary has himself chosen his. Comparing these two we see they not only differ but also form a hierarchy, with the sedentary on a higher level because choice makes him more human.

The main argument put forward in "History" is that we must, while reading it, internalize history, or else it will be meaningless to us. Emerson even goes so far as to say that "there is properly no history, only biography".[21] There immediately arises the question whether all we find in history is worth internalizing. Since the answer is predictably negative, we may ask more precisely: What is worth internalizing, and what is not? Emerson does not pose these questions, but he provides answers to them. The reason why we ask them is that we expect there is some kind of correspondence between what one internalizes while reading and who/what one is, of which previous internalizations form an important part. In other words, ground must be prepared in one's mind for new things coming in. (The unconscious no doubt plays an important role in this process, but as it is, by definition, inaccessible to consciousness, we shall not speculate about it and concentrate on Emerson's conscious efforts.) Interestingly enough, the ground is ready for the reception of nomadism, in fact nomadism is already there: "And in these late and civil countries of England and America these propensities [Nomadism and Agriculture] still fight out the old battle, in the nation and *in the individual*."[22] The statement is very important, it says that nomadism is a propensity, i.e. a *natural* tendency or inclination within every person.[23] If so, then we have a contradiction here. Why should nomadism be a propensity in the case of Englishmen and white Americans, and a constraint in the case of Mongols, Bedouins, and Masais? Because of geography? It would mean that when you lead a nomadic life, you do so because it is forced on you by geography, and when you finally have a choice and become a farmer, then your nomadism takes the form of a propensity. It does not sound very likely, does it? More probably geography makes it possible, or easier, for the propensity to activate itself. Anyway, Emerson does not see any contradiction here.

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[20] Ibid. [Italics mine.]

[21] Ibid., p. 153.

[22] Ibid., p. 161.[Italics mine.] The idea is repeated a few lines below on the same page: "The antagonism of the two tendencies is not less active in individuals,"...

[23] Almost all dictionaries define propensity as *a natural tendency*, some even use the adjectives *innate* and *inherent*.

To Emerson, nomadism, whether natural or enforced, is to be rejected. First of all, in its original form it does not really deserve attention, it is too primitive, so Emerson concentrates on its modern manifestations, which according to him are trade and curiosity (tourism), and which he calls a progress from the gad-fly. From his point of view it must be so; trade and curiosity are not forced on anybody, not on the individual, and therefore cannot be seen as merely a change of form; they are definitely signs of progress. Secondly, new forms of nomadism become dangerous and harmful when internalized. Let us have a look at the final comparison of nomadism and sedentarism:

> The pastoral nations were needy and hungry to desperation; and this intellectual nomadism, in its excess, bankrupts the mind through the dissipation of power on a miscellany of objects. The home-keeping wit, on the other hand, is that continence or content which finds all the elements of life in its own soil; and which has its own perils of monotony and deterioration, if not stimulated by foreign infusions.[24]

What are the advantages of nomadism? Emerson does not mention any. Sedentarism, on the contrary, offers something very precious and important: self-sufficiency, both material and intellectual. The home-keeping wit, we are told, finds *all* the elements of life in its *own* soil. True, it has its perils, but there is an effective way to deal with them – they can be averted by foreign infusions. And how do you fend off the perils of nomadism? That again, as with the advantages, Emerson does not say, and he does not really have to. It seems to be obvious: The best way to avoid the perils of nomadism is to settle down. Emerson leaves us in no doubt that nomadism, irrespective of the forms it may take, is to be steered clear of.

One of the reasons why we decided to include Emerson in our analysis was that we expected to find in his essays comments on the frontier, which in the nineteenth century was to a large extent a line separating the State from nomadic tribes. To put it in a more straightforward way, we hoped to find something about North American Indians.

The word *Indian*, however, poses a problem that we have to address before we go on. Our interest here is focused on nomadism, but obviously not all Indians were nomads, in fact many were not, especially those living east of the Mississippi River or the Pueblo in the Southwest. To associate Indians with nomadism only is a gross mistake. And yet, this is precisely what America and Europe have been doing for more than a century now. The model, perhaps we can even say the archetypal, Indian that emerged from novels, paintings, and later also from films is a fearless warrior and a hunter galloping on his mustang through the prairie; his "house" is a painted conical tent – the tepee, his "village" is a camp; only the palefaces try to limit his freedom of movement. This is the image that little boys cherish so much, and the only one that most adults will conjure up when asked

[24] "History", pp. 161–2.

about the North American Indians. What is peculiar about the image is that it is being reinforced all the time, and not only in such feature films as *Dances with Wolves*. In 1992, for example, a kind of documentary was made, entitled *The Real Story of Custer's Last Stand*, in which a white man (Jack Palance) and an Indian (Floyd "Red Crow" Westerman) reconstruct for us the events that led to the battle of Little Bighorn and the battle itself. The only Indians that are shown to us are the nomads from the Great Plains, and the film ends with Jack Palance saying: "As for the death of Crazy Horse,[25] it meant the end of an era. The Indian nations, as the world used to call them, came to an end, and with them a way of life. Too bad! It was a good life."

What Jack Palance says is inaccurate. Indians lived in different ways in various parts of North America. Why, then, did the life of the nomadic tribes become in the eyes of the white man the Indian way of life in general? Was it because the colonists, in the process of building a new nation and a new state, needed something against which they could define themselves?[26] Or was it because nomadism was considered a primitive way of life, inferior to sedentarism, which view, as we know, was used by the colonists to justify their advance? They called it the advance of civilisation, but it actually was little more than an advance of greed, and perhaps somewhere at the back of their minds they felt that what they represented was, to quote Marlow from *Heart of Darkness*, "only brute force – nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others". Or was it simply a matter of supply and demand? At some point in time boys, both big and small, would have no longer bought another set of stories about farmers[27]; they wanted something more exotic.

These are the problems that we expected Emerson to help us with. But he baffles us even more, not only because he marginalizes the nomad, but also because he refuses to write about Indians. Let us return to the beginning of the passage Emerson devoted to nomadism: "In the early history of Asia and Africa, Nomadism and Agriculture are the two antagonist facts. The geography of Asia and of Africa necessitated a nomadic life."[28] Emerson could have written something very similar about nineteenth-century America. He does not explain what he means by the geography of Asia and Africa, but we can easily guess that he must have thought of the steppe, desert, and savannah, because these are the regions the nomads

[25] Crazy Horse was killed in 1877, a year after the battle.

[26] Deleuze and Guattari write that "the State itself has always been in a relation with an outside and is inconceivable independent of that relationship. ... the outside of States cannot be reduced to 'foreign policy', that is, to a set of relations among States". "Treatise on Nomadology", p. 360. The *outside* can adopt various forms, it is not necessarily situated outside the geographical borders of the State.

[27] According to Emerson "every man passes personally through a Grecian period". ("History", p. 162.) Most of my friends and I would rather admit to have passed through an Indian period.

[28] "History", p. 161.

wandered, in fact they still do. Now, "History" was published in a collection of essays in 1841. Almost forty years earlier, in 1803, the United States bought from France a huge territory, about a quarter of the present US area, called the Louisiana Purchase. It extends from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. What the colonists could see on entering the newly acquired territory were just limitless expanses of the prairie and semidesert, i.e. exactly the kind of geography that, according to Emerson, necessitates a nomadic life.[29] And indeed, that is where the North American nomads were to be found. If, then, in his own country and in his own time could Emerson find such a good illustration of his views, why does he not write about it? Is it possible he did not notice it? Did he think the examples from the early history of Asia and Africa would be more interesting and more convincing to the American reader than those from contemporary America?

After the passage devoted to nomadism, which comes more or less in the middle of the essay, one reads "History" waiting, almost impatiently, for the Indian to appear, but he does not until the very last sentence: "The idiot, the Indian, the child and unschooled farmer's boy stand nearer to the light by which nature is to be read, than the dissector or the antiquary."[30] When you tell somebody that they know less about something than an idiot, you just tell them they know very little or nothing at all, you do not mean to praise the idiot, do you? Idiots, children and unschooled farmers' boys are to be taken care of and schooled; they cannot be held responsible for their actions, at least not fully; they must not be left to themselves. The fact that the Indian is put on one plane with them partly explains why Emerson chose not to write about him – idiots and children do not make history,[31] strictly speaking not the kind of history Emerson would consider worth internalizing.

We have already said that not all North American Indians were nomads, but on the other hand the reverse is also true, i.e. at that time all the nomads in North

[29] Again, we are not told why the geography of Asia and Africa necessitated a nomadic life, but that is probably because Emerson considered it to be obvious: the land was unfit for cultivation. In the nineteenth century the same was still true of the prairie, let alone the semidesert (that is why parts of the Great Plains were called "badlands"). "Only modern agricultural machines can slice deep enough through the thick sod covering the prairie." Z. Teplicki, *Wielcy Indianie Ameryki Północnej [The Great Indians of North America]* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1994), p. 295. [Translation mine.]

[30] "History", pp. 172–3. Earlier on page 157, before nomadism is mentioned, Emerson writes about "the head of an old sachem", but only to show us the resemblance between human features and a mountainside, which has nothing to do with nomadism or sedentarism.

[31] Emerson admires childlike simplicity but only in adults: "The Greeks are not reflective, but perfect in their senses and in their health, ... Adults acted with the simplicity and grace of children. ... They combine the energy of manhood with the engaging unconsciousness of childhood". ("History", p. 163.) Can we not say the same thing about the Sioux, the Cheyenne, and other peoples from the Plains? We can now, but in the nineteenth century their simplicity was called savagery.

America were Indians, with very few exceptions of certain trappers and cowboys perhaps, whose ways of life might have borne some resemblance to that of the nomads. By marginalizing Indians altogether Emerson marginalizes the contemporary nomad, though he does not appear to be aware of it. The conflicts between the colonists and native Americans that kept erupting from the seventeenth century were just called Indian Wars, and for a long time no one seemed to notice that, as the new American state expanded west of the Mississippi River, the battles and skirmishes with Indians became more and more signs of a confrontation between the State and the nomad organization.

Nomads *vs.* Religion

For centuries nomads have been thought to be irreligious. A brief analysis of a few lines in C. G. Jung's "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass" will help us to understand why.[32] The title is informative enough, and there is no need for any further introduction here. The only thing we would like to add is that the study is not a theological one; Jung, as can be predicted, approaches the subject as a psychologist. Of particular interest to us is the section called "The Psychological Meaning of Sacrifice", and especially its first part about the sacrificial gifts. The substances used in the transformation rite are, as we all know, bread and wine. Today after two thousand years it is impossible to explain clearly why these two were chosen. Jung presents the following interpretation of their significance: The task, the whole process of producing bread demands a lot of effort, care, patience, and devotion. Bread therefore can be seen as a projection of what is best in man. Jung also points to the words from *Paternoster* – "our daily bread", which reveal man's anxiety for his existence, and which also, though indirectly, instruct him to produce bread, which will make his life secure. Man, however, "doth not live by bread only", so bread is accompanied by wine. For at least two reasons. First, wine possesses a certain substance which from time immemorial has been called "spirit"; second, its cultivation, as in the case of bread, demands hard work and permanent care. Both bread and wine are "expressions of cultural achievement". They are "cultural products" which can "easily stand for the psychological conditions of their production, that is, for those human virtues which alone make man capable of civilization".[33]

[32] In the edition we use here it is published as the second chapter of C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Western Religion*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London and New York: Ark Paperbacks, 1988), pp. 97–192. The editors inform us that it was first published as a lecture in *Eranos Jahrbuch 1940/41*. It is also to be found in the 11th volume of Jung's *Collected Works*.

[33] *Psychology and Western Religion*, p. 149.

What Emerson only implies in his essays, here is stated openly and straightforwardly: culture and civilization are the fruits of the cultivation of land. The brief remark about nomads comes then as no surprise:

> Where wheat and the vine are cultivated, civilized life prevails. But where agriculture and vinegrowing do not exist, there is only the uncivilized life of nomads and hunters.[34]

As we can see, the nomad, just because he refuses to settle down and cultivate land, is placed outside culture, outside civilization, and as a result outside the religion of the civilized. Christianity with its idea of the *new* covenant has always been perceived in the Occident as progress, not only in comparison with Judaism but obviously with any forms of worship that preceded it.[35] And since Christianity's central rite is so inextricably linked with agriculture, it became easy for farmers to think that cultivated land was the only environment in which Christianity could possibly appear and develop. The nomad would not have simply been able to create such complex and subtle symbolism, his way of life has prevented him from doing so.[36] A confirmation of this view can be found, for example, in *The Biblical Dictionary*. Under the headword "Sacrifice" we come across the following sentence: "The offering of a sacrifice was originally characterized by simplicity, typical of nomadic peoples."[37] If so, then the refinement, subtlety, and complexity of the symbolism of the Eucharist is the achievement of the sedentary. In this way farming gains the significance of a religious act. (The close link between religion and agriculture is also, though in a different context, established by Emerson: "But the nomads were the terror of all those whom the soil or the advantages of a market had induced to build towns. *Agriculture* therefore was a *religious* injunction, because of the perils of the state from nomadism."[38])

What we have written about religion and agriculture could, as in the case of culture and agriculture, be inferred from etymology. *Colere* means not only to *till*, to *cultivate* but also to *worship*, to *honour with worship*. And indeed, the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* lists *worship* as the first, i.e. the earliest meaning of *culture*. Again, we have no reason to assume that it is by chance that one word means both *cultivation* and *worship*. More tenable is the assumption that in the

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Cf. especially *Hebrews*, verses VIII–XIII, where it is also called "a *better* covenant". [Italics mine.]

[36] Christian symbolism is of course by no means reducible to sedentarism. One can easily find images that can be regarded as having originated among pastoral nomads, e.g. Christ is often pictured as a shepherd, and he is also called "the Lamb" and "the Lamb of God". What we attempt here is not a close analysis of Christian symbols but an account of a marginalization, which, as was already mentioned, is basically an account of a simplification.

[37] "Ofiara", in H. Langkammer OFM, *Słownik biblijny [Biblical Dictionary]* (Katowice: Drukarnia Diecezjalna, 1989).[Translation mine.]

[38] Emerson, "History", p. 161.[Italics mine.]

European mind these two meanings have a common root. As this way of thinking about religion has prevailed for a long time in history, it is understandable why the nomad was seen as either irreligious or his forms of worship were dismissed as "pagan rites". And to be irreligious or pagan did not simply mean to be different. It meant that the Word (*Logos*) was not revealed to you, you were not among the chosen people.

Nomads *vs.* Civilization (Settlement)

In *The Ascent of Man* J. Bronowski argues that civilization started about 10 000 BC, when an "event" called the 'agricultural revolution' took place. Before that, "man in all parts of the world that he had reached was a forager and a hunter, whose most advanced technique was to attach himself to a moving herd as the Lapps still do."[39] 10 000 BC was the end of the Ice Age, and there appeared in the Middle East a kind of wild wheat, which people began harvesting. They were no longer forced to wander in search of food, they could cease to be nomads. Those who did so became villagers, and they are the fathers of civilization. They accumulated the first surplus; they started building houses, later on cities; they created "a technology from which all physics, all science takes off".[40] Bronowski follows the evolutionary model, so according to him there is a linear passage from nomadism to agriculture, and he sees the change as a huge step in the ascent of man. Nomadism is left behind.[41] It was made primitive and obsolete by the appearance of wheat and the decision of those who chose to settle.

[39] J. Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man* (London: Futura Publications, 1984), p. 36.

[40] Ibid., p. 45. And on p. 52 we read "that civilization is made by settled people".

[41] To illustrate his thesis Bronowski gives the example of the history of the Israeli people as it is related in the Bible, "the history of a people who had to stop being nomad and pastoral and had to become an agricultural tribe". (*The Ascent of Man*, p. 45.) For some reason Bronowski forgot about what the book of Genesis says about the relation between the nomad and the sedentary. Expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden God says unto Adam:

> cursed is the ground for thy sake;
> in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the
> days of thy life;
> thorns also and thistles shall it bring
> forth to thee;
> and thou shalt eat the herb of the
> field:
> in the sweat of thy face shalt thou
> eat bread,
>
> (*AV*)

This is followed by the story of Adam and Eve's children, in which the division into (pastoral) nomadism and agriculture already exists: "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller

Reading Bronowski's account of nomadic life one gets the impression that it is one of the worst things that has ever befallen man: "It is a life without features. ...an adventure that leads nowhere. ...a journey at the end of which "there will still be nothing except an immense, traditional resignation", etc.[42] Even the nomads' fantastic, stupendous achievement – the idea of riding the horse – is presented to us as first of all a threat to the surplus of grain, i.e. a threat to agriculture, i.e. civilization, because the horse gave nomads speed and manoeuvrability, which helped them to defeat peasants and rob them of the surplus they accumulated. Bronowski claims that warfare was, in a sense, created by the horse. But luckily for civilization, even Mongols, who for a time established the supremacy of the nomad over a huge part of the world, finally became settlers in the countries they had conquered, because "civilization can never grow up on the move".[43]

In this way we have come to the third meaning of *colere* – to dwell, to inhabit. In most dictionaries the definition of the verb *to dwell* is "to live as a permanent resident". (*Inhabit* is usually explained as "to dwell in".) But *to dwell* is also defined as simply "to live", e.g. to dwell in a forest, so it may perhaps be possible to regard the following sentence as semantically coherent: The Bedouin dwell in the desert. In this case, however, dwell means something different. When we say that, for example, a forest ranger dwells in a forest, we actually use an ellipsis, because what we mean is that somewhere in the forest the ranger has a house or a cottage, to which he returns every afternoon or evening, in other words he dwells in a particular point in space. But when we say that the Bedouin dwell in the desert, we do not imagine or think of any particular points. The Bedouin do not return to their tents, they take the tents with themselves.[44] The Bedouin dwell in the desert – there is no ellipsis here. In ancient times and still in the Middle Ages, when the world was not yet mapped and it was rather senseless to say that someone dwells in the steppe because it meant nowhere, nomads were not seen as dwelling somewhere; they were seen as *coming*, usually from nowhere, at best from a direction. It was particularly true of the Huns and Mongols. The *dwell* in colere, then, since it is linked with agriculture, must mean settlement, permanent residence.

We can propose now the following equation:

colere (settle, till, worship) = culture

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of the ground." (*AV*) According to the Bible, then, the two orders, nomadic and sedentary, emerged simultaneously. Biblical scholars argue that the Cain-and-Abel episode was added to the original text later, which does not change our interpretation, because if we decide to analyse the episode separately, it will only corroborate the view that in Biblical times nomadism was not perceived to be a way of life in any way inferior to sedentarism.

[42] *The Ascent of Man*, p. 39.

[43] Ibid., p. 37.

[44] *Tepee* is a word taken from the Siouan languages. It gets its meaning from the combination of *ti* to dwell + *pi* used for. Obviously the *ti* in tepee has nothing to do with permanent residence.

This is "civilization, as we [the West] understand it",[45] and within it, as we have tried to show, there is no room for the nomad.

At the beginning of this chapter, when analysing the three essays by Kant, we noticed that for Kant history is the history of the State. Obviously Colere and the State form some sort of unity, though it is difficult to find out what exactly the relation between them is. First of all because we do not know whether the State is a "product" of agriculture or whether the contrary is true.[46] Whichever is correct, the close interrelation between the two cannot be questioned. The answer to our initial question – Why do the nomads have no history? – can be phrased as follows: The nomads have no history, because history has always been the history of the State/Colere. It becomes particularly obvious when one tries to find something about nomads in ancient times. The Hyksos are a good example. A typical dictionary entry provides the following information about them: "*Hyksos* – a member of a nomadic Asian people, probably Semites, who controlled Egypt from 1720 BC until 1500 BC."[47] No one knows who the Hyksos had been and what they had done before they invaded Egypt, and what happened to them after they had been expelled from the country. Their history is the history of their reign over a state. Even *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, by far more informative in matters of history than any dictionary, gives only the accounts of the Hyksos reign over Egypt. (Also interesting is the fact, mentioned by *Britannica*, that according to Manetho, the Egyptian high priest and historian of the 3rd century BC, the Hyksos rule was godless, which confirms what we have written earlier that nomads were thought to be irreligious.) The last piece of information about the Hyksos given by *Britannica* is this: "The Hyksos thereafter [after their expulsion from Egypt] disappear from history." Entering the State the Hyksos entered history; leaving the State they left history. One may find it difficult to believe, but it is as simple as that. And the same was true of other nomads.

[45] *The Ascent of Man*, p. 36.

[46] For a long time the former was believed to be true, but this view is now disputed. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the State is older than agriculture. "... it is the State that creates agriculture, ... It is not the country that progressively creates the town but the town that creates the country." ("Apparatus of Capture", in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 429.)

[47] *Collins English Dictionary*, ed. M. Makins et al. (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991).

TADEUSZ RACHWAŁ

Wildness and Disobedience: Thoreau's Walking

In the beginning of his "Civil Disobedience" Thoreau heartily accepts the Emersonian ("Politics") motto of that government being best which governs least. Since, ideally, the government which governs least is one which does not govern at all, what we confront is a project of living in a state where there is a government which does not govern, a free state in which the government does not have any right over "my person and property but what I concede to it".[1] Thoreau came "to this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad",[2] not to change it but to independently be. The only state in which such a being is thinkable to Thoreau is one in which government is free individual's ***neighbour***, "which treats the individual with respect as a neighbor" and which would "prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not anywhere seen".[3]

Rather than fraternity, Thoreau sees neighbourhood as the third element supplementing the liberty and equality of the French Revolution watchword. Yet, as we shall see, Thoreau himself will go away from this neigbourhood which, as a form of state, still obstructs the independence of living.

Etymologising the German *bauen* (building) Martin Heidegger, in his seminal essay, reconstructs its real and lost meaning of "dwelling" *via* its roots in Old English *neahgebur*, "*neah*, near, and *gebur*, dweller. The Nachbar is the *Nachgebur*,

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[1] Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience", in *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, ed. O. Thomas (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 243.

[2] Ibid., p. 232.

[3] Ibid., p. 243.

the *Nachgebauer*, the near-dweller, he who dwells nearby", in order to find this trace of dwelling in the verb *bin*, in *to be*, in being.[4] This dwelling-being is not a virtual inactivity. "When we speak of dwelling," writes Heidegger,

> we usually think of an activity that man performs alongside many other activities. We do not merely dwell ... we practice a profession, we do business, we travel and lodge on the way, now here, now there.[5]

In the light of Thoreau's claim of not bettering the world, of living in it as it is, the question of productive activity and neighbouring seems to be at least worth problematizing. In other words, the question is: What kind of activity is Thoreau's living in the world?

Thoreau would like to see an individual as a respected neighbour of the state where respect means noninterference, a peaceful cohabitation of the neighbour of the state with individuals who are themselves each other's neighbours. Since neighbours, unlike brothers, are not related to each other by familial bonds, there can be no constitution other than the law of individual property that unifies the neighbourhood and preserves it. However, at least in Lockean terms, property can only be gained by labour understood as active transformation of Nature, as a removal out of the state "that Nature hath provided and left it in". To work is to remove from Nature, to take from it and improve by making things one's own. A neighbour without a property, without a part of nature as a part, or extension of himself can thus live, say, only on the road, at the outskirts of the propriated territory, or in Nature in whose preservation Thoreau sees the preservation of the world where there are no roads at all. Thoreau's living is a third kind of neighbourhood, a living in which Heidegger's dwelling does not quite mean building, but a nomadic kind of dwelling nearby, though away from the settled territory of workers. This last neigbourhood is, perhaps, the one he had imagined, but which he had never seen.

Thoreau begins his essay on walking with a statement which he himself calls an extreme one:

> I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil, – to regard man as inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society.[6]

Rather than dwelling and building in society, man inhabits nature which is thus translated into a home which need not be erected, a home which is, perhaps like

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[4] Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. and ed. Albert Hofstader (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 146–7.

[5] Ibid., p. 147.

[6] Henry David Thoreau, "Walking," in *Great Short Works of Thoreau*, ed. W. Glick (New York: Harper, 1982), p. 331.

that of a snail, a part and parcel of the natural human constitution. What he calls the inhabitant of nature is actually a sojourner in it who, in the primitive ages, still

> dwelt, as it were, in a tent in this world, and was either treading the valleys, or crossing the plains, or climbing the mountain tops. But lo! men have become the tools of their tools ... We now no longer camp as for a night, but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven. We have adopted Christianity merely as an improved method of *agri*-culture. We have built for this world a family mansion, and for the next a family tomb.[7]

Absolute freedom and wildness is the freedom of dwelling without parcelling the world into this and that, for instance, a nomadic living in which nature is one's home. Men as "tools of their tools" have separated themselves from nature by settling down and improving their mansions, by parcelling out not only the land, but also the interiors of their houses to the point where the distance between the kitchen and the parlor makes cooking such a secretive kind activity as if the host "had a design to poison you". The language of parlors, we read in *Walden*, has degenerated into *parlever*, an idle talk of sorts which is as distant from nature as the kitchen from the parlor.[8] Then Thoreau as it were politicizes the question of cooking and eating mapping the topography of the house upon that of the world and asks: "How can the scholar, who dwells away in the North West Territory or the Isle of Man, tell what is parliamentary in the kitchen?"[9] Kitchen is the space where the raw gets cooked, a space where the civil meets the necessity of life which, ideally, does not need any cooking. The Hottentots, Thoreau informs us, "eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw" while Northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic raindeer

> as well as other parts, including the summits of the antlers, as long as they are soft. ... They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and slaughter-house pork to make a man of. Give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure, – as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw.[10]

The wild is distasteful to the civilized taste in the manner living in the forest, for instance, is inconvenient. What Thoreau's project of return to nature also involves is the critique of the civil as aesthetic, of civilization as ideological aestheticization of the world, of its transformation into a safe, comfortable and nice environment. Yet, as is well known, Thoreau never went too far from the civil, always keeping Concord at some available distance. He always dwelt nearby, as a neighbour

[7] Henry David Thoreau, "Walden", in *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, ed. O. Thomas (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 25.

[8] Ibid., p. 162.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Henry David Thoreau, "Walking", p. 349.

occupying the space which nobody really wanted. He walked away from the "merely civil", away from public roads. According to Paul Virilio, "the political power of the State is polis, police, that is, management of public ways".[11] Thoreau saw villages as "a sort of expansion of the highway" deriving the word "village" from

> the Latin *villa*, which together with *via*, a way, or more anciently *ved* and *vella*, Varro derives from *veho*, to carry, because the villa is the place to and from which things are carried. ... Hence, too, apparently, the Latin word *vilis* and our vile, also *villain*. This suggests what kind of degeneracy villagers are liable to. They are wayworn by the travel that goes by and over them, without travelling themselves.[12]

Not to be vile, one has to have the power of disobedience to the guidance of the public road and walk away elsewhere. A neighbour to the civil must disobey the civil ethics and aesthetics by becoming mobile, by becoming an unguided traveller who, like e.e. cummings' seeker of truth, follows no path. "I can easily walk ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at my own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do."[13] Walking, one is also disobedient to one's own civility, one recesses "civilized, political life to distant views from hilltops" or escapes it altogether, as Anne D. Wallace notices.[14]

Viewing the civil as a distant political prospect demands, of course, shaking off the civil from oneself, leaving behind a part of one's consciousness as alien. We should walk not quite as ourselves but spiritually follow the bodily instinct. We should not "direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither", says Thoreau then telling us that he feels "alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit".[15] This split of body and spirit, the inability to easily "shake off the village", as Thoreau phrases it, makes him feel that "I am not where my body is, — I am out of my senses".[16] This touch of slight madness, of its necessity in any movement away from the social, makes the existence of the society of neighbours thinkable. Thoreau quite clearly realises the, say, erratic character of his openness to wildness when he suggests that one more estate within the social structure. "The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to

[11] Paul Virilio, *Vitesse et Politique* (Paris: Galilée, 1977), p. 21. Quoted in: Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Nomadology. The War Machine*, trans. B. Massumi (New York: Semiotexte(e), 1986), p. 60.

[12] Henry David Thoreau, "Walking", p. 338.

[13] Ibid., p. 337.

[14] Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture. The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 185.

[15] Henry David Thoreau, "Walking", p. 336.

[16] Ibid.

have subsided into, the Walker – not the Knight, but the Walker Errant. He is a sort of fourth estate, outside of Church and State and People."[17] Though outside the three estates, the Walker is also an estate, the one who dwells near the other three without obeying their laws.

[17] Ibid., pp. 332–3.

RAFAŁ DUBANIOWSKI

Wildness Redeemed: *Homo salvaticus* in W. H. Auden's *The Sea and the Mirror*

> One must, according to the same principle of dichotomy which is repeated endlessly, distinguish within melody itself a principle of life and a principle of death, and hold them carefully separated one from the other.
>
> (Jacques Derrida)

If William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is ruled by any musical principles, this is Ariel that clearly embodies and voices civilized music and somehow, being ordered by Prospero, sings the virgin island into divinely aesthetic existence. His melody implies the one of orderly life whose meaning is discovered in repetitive manifestations of an artefact. The grand spectacle of art as performed by Prospero and Ariel, however, would not be feasible without this wellspring of discordant music and savage sounds – the body of Caliban. It is necessary for the harmonious creation of Prospero to be repeteadly undermined and threatened by the savagery and monstrosity of Caliban's nature. They represent the naked body of *physis* that cannot be crowned with any cultural requisites, nor can they be beautified or got rid of for good. Caliban refuses to budge and step into an aesthetic dream, and therefore he must be made use of as an element in an artistic puzzle.

One cannot help noticing that it is Caliban who in fact orchestrates, in some primordial way, all aesthetic movements on Prospero's island. A target of constant abuse and a source of incessant repulsion, Caliban is the legitimate savage proprietor who, as it were, provides archetypal clay of creation. If Prospero's civilized nature stands for the distilled, rationalized music and may be here identified as a principle of life, Caliban then comes as a harbinger of death, though

always announcing some regeneration. Participating in a symphony of order, yet never fully transformed by harmony, Caliban acknowledges the purpose and result of Prospero's creation, when he observes that "...the isle is full of noises,/ Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not...".[1] Markedly, he becomes an indispensable link in the pattern of creation, he appears to provide an always horrifying link in a spectacle of a universal dichotomy – a pattern of life and death.

Described as "the born devil on whose nature/ Nurture will never stick",[2] Caliban is posited as perennial wild presence, necessary for an artistic illusion. It is through him that the civilized world and all its merits can be shown – virtues of Miranda and of Prospero, in the first place. He essentially belongs in the ethical scheme of the play and assumes a stance of a barbaric touchstone for any marks of civility and refinement in Prospero's repertoire. Therefore, I would be inclined to interpret Caliban's dramatic stature as that of some ubiquitous body, which in a crucial way, makes history/-ies on Prospero's island possible and eventful.

Before Prospero comes to the island, Caliban possesses it without even knowing he is a possessor. Also he is at one with a landscape, as the most powerful instrument of detachment, namely language, has not yet been given to him. He significantly resembles a comic character, who could easily take part of a satyr in Dionysius's carnival. In this sense Caliban occupies some semiotic space as contrasted with the realm of signification – to use Julia Kristeva's expression – a realm "which is always that of a proposition or judgement, in other words, a realm of position".[3]

Caliban in this pre-thetic reality, still unnamed and therefore uncorrupted ambience, assumes no position at all because he is completely speechless, which reminds one of a paradisal, isomorphic myth that sees objects and words as some inviolable unity. Yet in the course of Prospero's 'revels' Caliban is educated to the point of being able to make a conscious religious choice concerning repentance and his mode of being. In Act V he declares:

> ...and I'll be wise
> hereafter,
> And seek for grace. What a thrice-double
> ass
> Was I to take this drunkard for a god,
> And worship this dull fool![4]

[1] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 51.

[2] Ibid., p. 63.

[3] Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 43.

[4] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, p. 77.

Now Caliban is showing glimpses of religious understanding and appears to be reconciled with his disproportioned self, which may be restored in the search for grace. He renounces idolatry on the apparent transcendental basis.

It is at this stage of the dramatic development that Auden seems to take over in his *The Sea and the Mirror. A Commentary on Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'*. Here, Caliban is already a voluble creature who has been equipped with a sophisticated idiom of the later Henry James. In a section entirely voiced by himself, Caliban functions utterly in a realm of significations, putting on a costume of the audience, an apprentice in art, and being himself respectively. He skillfully displaces meanings, indulges in rhetorical fireworks, reveals and hides himself behind a remarkable grammatical curtain. In a gesture embracing not only the microcosm of Shakespeare's play but any existing artefact, Caliban instantly shatters illusions of an illusion, thus addressing the audience:

> If now, having dismissed your hired impersonators with verdicts ranging from the laudatory orchid to the disgusted and disgusting egg, you ask and, of course, notwithstanding the conscious fact of his irrevocable absence, you instinctively do ask for our so good, so great, so dead author to stand before the finally lowered curtain and take shyly responsible bow for this, his latest, ripest production, it is I – my reluctance is, I can assure you, co-equal with your dismay – who will always loom thus wretchedly into your confused picture...[5]

What he seems to claim is that theatrical illusions will never fully succeed in creating an untarnished world, some pure form devoid of corporality. In his speech to the audience, he becomes its echo, a kind of a linguistic mirror in which inexplicable nostalgia for a real world and still miraculously unchangeable one wishes to control an artefact legitimizing the audience's existence.

As art, both in Shakespeare and in Auden, implies some attempt to tame those wild and slippery facets of reality undermining reason and its diktats, a pursuit of art becomes a wished-for limitation, which is agreeable and consequently tangible due to its pretences of freedom. What seems to safeguard any artefact is the presence of a phantom *other* eternally undermining a prospect of totality in the sense of some personal order. The spectators in Auden's poem thus express their fears through Caliban's mouth:

> Must we – it seems oddly that we must – remind you that our existence does not ... enjoy an infinitely indicative mood, an eternally present tense, a limitlessly active voice, for in our shambling, slovenly makeshift world any two persons, whether domestic first or neighbourly second, require and necessarily presuppose in both their numbers and in all their cases, the whole inflected gamut of an *alien third*, since, without a despised dreaded Them to turn the back on, there could be no intimate or affectionate Us to turn the eye to...[6]

[5] Wystan Hugh Auden, *Collected Poems* (New York: Vintage International, 1991), p. 422.
[6] Ibid., p. 426. [Italics mine.]

Therefore art immanently belongs to and becomes verified by the untamed and the phantom grammar of "an alien third". In fact, Caliban in his refusal to leave the microcosm of the play creates a space for otherness, thus opening up a vacuum for "a despised and dreaded Them". He becomes a primordial *other* and, by being savagely strange, he constantly threatens any order. As Zygmunt Bauman, referring to Georg Simmel, notices in his *Modernity and Ambivalence*, a stranger is someone who refuses to be confined to his distant land and refuses to leave the country he has come to; he is "somebody who arrives today and refuses to leave tomorrow".[7] Caliban's distant island seems to be a virgin island, untouched by Prospero's wand and free of any political intrigue. He endangers an aesthetic complacency of the audience by always looming up as a monstrous body, reclaiming wildness as his perennial property and recharging wobbly civilizational resources.

When the *other* is named and in thus symbolically tamed and appropriated in a language, *otherness* evaporates and becomes a subject to codes of grammar and to emblems of culture. Terry Eagleton in his *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* interestingly remarks that "getting a fix on the subject opens up the dizzying prospect of an infinite regress of meta-subjects".[8] In this context, the act of changing 'the alien third' or decentring him into a conscious 'I' runs parallel to some annihilation of identity. As a result, the wild 'he', the monstrous body of Caliban appears to validate the rough sea of life as reflected, aesthetically re-constructed, and instantanously tamed in the mirror of art. Auden, symbolically playing with personal pronouns, seems to gesture towards an inescapable fissure immanent in existence, towards the dichotomy constituted by the interplay of life and death, which dichotomy is infinitely longing to be translated into graspable portions of an aesthetic illusion that leaves out death and enjoys only the melody of life.

Caliban is indeed teaching his audience a lesson of existence. Representing both natural limitations and artistic freedom, he now embodies Ariel himself and comments on this irredicable lacuna disclosed by the performance. The aim of the aesthetic microcosm is claimed to

> ...make you unforgettably conscious of the ungarnished offended gap between what you so questionably are and what you are commanded without any question to become, of the unqualified No that opposes your every step in any direction...[9]

It seems that an artistic success is paradoxically found in its perfected incompleteness, in some eternally–to–be–finished whole. The vacuum equals the abyss cancelling out language or rather presupposing it, and resembles to a considerable degree

[7] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), p. 87.
[8] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 73
[9] Wystan Hugh Auden, *Collected Poems*, p. 442.

a Heideggerian prerequisite of the nameless void, which brings one back to the fold of being. In his *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger thus describes the existential rift:

> Man must be equally able to uncover the falsehood of the public as well as the impotence of the private. Before he speaks, man must let himself be transformed by the call of Being, which exposes him to a danger of scarcely being able to say something. Only then can the preciousness of word be restored, and the life in the Truth of Being will be given back to Man.[10]

Caliban lives in the gap between the public and the private, standing perhaps for an ideal objectivity, a reconciliation of the extreme subjective and the total objective. He appears to act as a shepherd of *being*, again in a Heideggerian sense, and thus finds himself closest to the truth about Being.

As his elaborate language falters and begins to dissolve towards the end of his speech to the audience, Caliban gradually begins to enter a taboo realm of the unnameable. In other words, he is restoring a semiotic reality – his island of pre-Prospero's times: culturally mute but primordially voluble emblems of nature. His intuitions transcend the oppressive immediacy of his body and point out to a possibility of religious fulfilment:

> ... – when our reasons are silenced by the heavy huge derision, – There is nothing to say. There never has been, – and our wills chuck in their hands – There is no way out. There never was, – it is at this moment that for the first time in our lives we hear, not the sounds which, as born actors, we have hitherto condescended to use as an excellent vehicle for displaying our personalities and looks, but the real Word which is our only raison d'etre. ...only now ...are we blessed by that Wholly Other Life from which we are separated by an essential emphatic gulf of which our contrived fissures of mirror and proscenium arch – we understand them at last – are feebly figurative signs, so that all our meanings are traversed and it is precisely in its negative image of Judgement that we can positively envisage Mercy.[11]

It is because of the wild and the untamed announcing the demise of the civilized music, the deformed and the monstrous threatening any form or order, that one is able to see through gross textures of reality and face silence, which appears to be an ideal way of perception in an aesthetic dreamland. Otherness then, which is an immanent quality of wildness, becomes for Auden an instrument of grace, and an absolute goal of art generating estrangement, decentring identities, and ultimately pushing one into the void of *being* guarded by silence. It anticipates language and culture, word and sign, in the unspeakable no man's land. Caliban's "seeking for grace" in *The Tempest* is intuited by Auden as acknowledging the

[10] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrel Krell (New York, 1997), p. 223.

[11] Wystan Hugh Auden, *Collected Poems*, p. 444.

disproportionate body to be a redeeming mould that leads one to an encounter with *otherness*. The speaking monster appears to have colonized the flimsy and hallucinatory impulses of reason, only for an instance accommodated in a work of art. According to Auden's lyrical consciousness, the wild body can never be tamed nor colonized, as any seizure of *the other* endlessly cancels out homelessness – itself a poetic guarantee of transcendence and redemption.

Perhaps redemption as understood in the context of continuous exchanges between the principles of life and death, restores an original silence of Caliban's unspeakable happiness, cancels out the ambivalence of a fragmented language, and brings the self to the fold of *being*, the savage body remaining the only one to be redeemed. A redeemer, though he cannot be fully recognized, may eternally renew himself in the mirrors of art as long as his scandalous, hybrid body is dismembered and domesticated in a carnival of aesthetic illusions.

ANDRZEJ WICHER

Wildness and Revolution in Joseph von Eichendorff's "Das Schloß Dürande"

Baron von Eichendorff's story "Das Schloß Dürande" concerns the French Revolution. The author could be expected to give a rather partisan view of the subject, being a German nationalist, a member of an old aristocratic family, a zealous Catholic, a veteran of two wars against Napoleon in which he took part as a volunteer, and, perhaps needless to add, a conservative. We might with reason expect that "Das Schloß Dürande" will turn out a piece of rather crude anti-revolutionary, or maybe even anti-French, propaganda, but this does not seem to be the case, although the work in question is indeed, beyond reasonable doubt, anti-revolutionary.

Eichendorff's literary criticism contains, to be sure, some scathing remarks against the so called *Deutschfranzosen* ("Frenchified Germans"), who were numerous and influential especially in the eighteenth century, and who gravitated towards Paris as the capital of the civilised world.[1] This in itself puts Eichendorff in a rather paradoxical position as a conservative and as a romantic, in the former capacity he is obliged to defend the traditional forms of the European civilisation, in the latter he feels duty bound to pour scorn on those who seem to imitate that "European civilisation" too eagerly, i.e. at the expense of their own nationality. They are shown as hybrid creatures whose condition is essentially homeless and nomadic, they belong nowhere.

[1] Cf. Joseph von Eichendorff, "Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands", in *Ausgewählte Werke*, in 5 vols, ed. Hans A. Neunzig (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung GmbH, 1987), vol. 5, pp. 139 and 189.

Speaking about the language societies that came into being in Germany in the eighteenth century, he says the following:

> Their common and very topical purpose was to purify the German language that had gone wild (*die verwilderte deutsche Sprache*) and to emancipate it from the oppression of Latin, which had overwhelmed the language of educated people; their models were the so-called "academies" that had long before arisen in Italy for the sake of the refinement (*Veredelung*) of the vulgar speech.[2]

The concept of the language that has "gone wild" is here associated, surprisingly enough, with the idea of getting rid of the supposedly excessive influence of Latin, even though Latin was in those times, and for some people still is, synonymous with high civilisation. It seems then that you may become a barbarian, at least in Eichendorff's eyes, if you follow civilisation too closely, and thus wildness and bookish learning are by no means mutually exclusive. It may also be observed that Eichendorff is speaking here the language of a modernist, and of a *quasi* revolutionary who wholeheartedly approves of an attempt to free the language of his country from the dead wood of the past. On the other hand, this process of emancipation is conducted in the name of "purifying" the language, which may mean trying to return to the supposed pristine glory of the times when that language was not yet affected by the corrupting foreign or civilisational influence, a concept that might be called reactionary if it did not appear in even the most radical thinking of all times, cf. for example the Marxist glorification of the so-called "primitive community". Thus the nationalist thinking in Eichendorff is often curiously reminiscent of a revolutionary discourse, and it shows a rather ambiguous attitude to the concept of wildness.

The author of "The Castle Durande" was born a little more than a year before the outbreak of the French Revolution, and there are reasons to believe that he regarded himself as a child of the Revolution, even though the Revolution might have been, from his point of view, more of a wicked stepmother. He writes, for example, in his autobiographical sketches, of the great impression that the execution of Louis XVI had on his family and on him in his early childhood:

> And then came from Racibórz (*Ratibor*) an officer riding across the fields of corn, and he brought us the news of the execution of Louis XVI. A tragic impression. I, however, was looking towards the Carpathians as if having a foreboding of the new times. – Over there a new epoch was raging at full speed...[3]

The quotation suggests, perhaps with the benefit of hindsight, that he, although only a child of five, fully realised of the importance of what was going on in France

[2] J. von Eichendorff, "Geschichte der poetischen...", p. 145.

[3] Joseph von Eichendorff, ed. Manfred Häckel, *Eichendorffs Werke in einem Band* (Berlin und Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1978), p. XIV.

at that time, and treated it as the beginning of the new times. Talking about his longest novel, *Ahnung und Gegenwart* ["Presentiment and the Present Time"] he said that it was finished "before the French reached Moscow",[4] which again suggests that he measured his life with dates and events related to the French social upheavals, or the movements of the French, post-revolutionary army. He also wrote an important study called "The Nobility and the Revolution", a text to which we shall still return.

"Das Schloß Dürande" tells a story of a "man of the people", called Renald, a typical representative of the subordinate class, though by no means a very poor man, a hunter by profession, who has (or thinks he has) reasons to suppose that his younger sister, Gabriella, whose legal guardian he is after the untimely death of their parents, has been kidnapped and seduced by the son of a rich and proud landowner, the Count of Durande. The story is set in France on the eve of and during the Revolution, it develops as if it were a classical tale about an honest commoner who is driven to despair by the cold blooded arrogance and perfidy of the representatives of the *ancien régime*. Renald tries in vain to persuade the old count and his young son, who are his feudal overlords, to disclose the whereabouts of his sister, he then tries to bring the counts to justice through legal action, but to no avail, and he even turns to the king himself, i.e. to Louis XVI, but equally in vain. He is even arrested during his attempt to approach the king, and locked as a dangerous madman, which is done at the instigation of the old Count of Durande, who behaves towards Renald in a typically high-handed and malicious way. Renald manages to escape from the mental institution, and, taking advantage of the Revolution, which has just started, he decides to get his own back on the counts, so he attacks their castle and eventually takes it at the head of a group of zealous revolutionaries. A short time before that happens Gabriella appears again this time trying to come to the young count's rescue, but unfortunately, she gets mortally wounded by the revolutionaries when entering incognito the castle. She meets the count, and it turns out that much as she has been in love with him, she chose to stay away labouring under an illusion that he was unfaithful towards her and preferrred "a beautiful maiden of Paris". The count disabuses her of that false notion and professes his undying love for her, but he soon notices that she is moribund, and cannot be saved. At that moment a bullet flies through a window and hits the count, who dies, as a result, almost simultaneously with his beloved. Renald, when everything is over learns the truth from an old servant of the house. He realises that his suspicions and accusations were completely ungrounded, that virtually nothing happened that could justify his revenge, and all the blood that was spilled, including that of his beloved sister. In an act of despair he sets fire to the powder stored in the conquered castle and blows himself up together with the castle.

[4] Volkmar Stein, *Joseph von Eichendorff – ein Lebensbild* (Würzburg: Stiftung Kulturwerk Schlesien, 1993), pp. 41–2.

We have here to do with a deeply ironical narrative in which the protagonist's undoubtedly noble instincts and motives turn out to be mainly based on prejudices and misconceptions which he develops by "jumping to the conclusions", although, admittedly, his misconceptions are fuelled by the brutality of the elder count, and the fierce pride of the younger. Eichendorff clearly cannot fully rationalise the revolution, he sees it exactly as an explosion of irrational passions, an explosion that easily becomes completely blind and self-destructive, in keeping with the old tradition of representing the revolution symbolically as a revolving snake ("uroboros") that devours its own tail.[5] Needless to add, the subject of wildness may well be expected to stand in the centre of the author's interest. And so it is.

The story begins with a vision of the ruins of the castle of Durande, situated in a picturesque, though wild, landscape. Then we are provided with a description of Renald's house, which is a hunter's lodge, displaying an imposing pair of antlers above its entrance, and often approached quite closely by wild animals. The latter are called in the story, *das Wild*, literally "the wild", which can also be translated as "game", although the word can also be applied to a single animal. It is also at the very beginning that we can see Renald as a hunter of people lying in wait for his "wild", i.e. for the mysterious seducer of his sister: "from time to time the barking of a dog could be heard from the villages, or the screaming of the wild animals (*den Schrei des Wildes*) in the wood. He, however, paid no attention to this, he was taking aim at quite a different wild animal (*ein ganz anderes Wild*)".[6] The scene is indeed quite heavily fraught with wildness, the symmetrical wildness of the hunter and the hunted, the wildness of the wild animals, the wildness, or madness of the madly jealous brother, and "wildness" of the young aristocrat which is that of a scapegoat, innocently threatened with a violent death, but also that of a woman hunter, a seducer who is well aware of his position of superiority towards women (and men) of the lower class. The dialectics of the hunter and the hunted is of course one of the central, and recurrent motifs of the story.

The heroine, Gabriella, feels a special affinity with the wild nature. She wants to wander through the woods at night in order to speak and commune with mountains, rivers, and trees. She is ready to interpret a peal of thunder as a greeting from her beloved. She tells her monastery friend, Renate, an unfinished fairy tale the main motif of which is an escape from a castle guarded by a "dreadful giant". On the name-day of the monastery's prioress, the nuns are allowed to take part in a grape harvest during which Gabriella climbs the highest lime-tree in the vicinity in order to see the world around and to listen to migratory birds, in consequence of which she is scolded by the prioress and called "a wild wood bird", which makes

[5] Cf. M. Oesterreicher-Mollwo, *Leksykon symboli*, trans. J. Prokopiuk (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo ROK Corporation SA, 1992), p. 115.

[6] J. von Eichendorff, *Eichendorffs Werke*..., p. 271. [The translation of all Eichendorff quotations is mine.]

her wish that she really were a bird. Soon afterwards she sees fleetingly her young count Durande when he is leading a group of hunters. The Prioress, on seeing him, calls him "a falcon that is follows by a pigeon", a reference to his trailing behind him a white scarf which Gabriella lost on the night when Renald tried to shoot the count.

During Renald's conversation with the old count the former tries to obtain a leave in order to find his lost sister, the count guesses, wrongly as it turns out later, that she must have been together with his son, and describes the young count as "a young, wild swan that must be plucked, but with moderation". Under the weight of such malicious allusions Renald shivers in a helpless rage and is compared to a lion that is tied up (*ein gefesselter Löwe*). In his conversation with a revolutionary agitator who plays a rather sinister part in the story, the latter tries to stir his anger towards the count by calling the aristocrats, "the lords of the forest, to whom all wild animals (*das Wild*), of lower and upper regions, belong", and referring to the "simple people", the mythical "us" by saying: "Aren't we accursed dogs that lick the shoes that kick us?"[7] The discourse of the wild is strongly contrasted here with that of the tame, but the boundaries between the two are not so clear at all. The aristocrats are shown as those that want the people tame, but also as those who derive all their pride from exercising some control over the creatures of the wilderness, i.e. from being, like the young Durande, essentially hunters.

Hence comes perhaps the most interesting aspect of "The Castle Durande", the fascination of the counts Durande, and of the aristocracy in general inasmuch as they are symbolical of it, with wildness in general, and the wildness of the revolution in particular. The old count is very ill when he learns about the successful escape of Renald from the mental asylum. It is a great blow for him and for those under him:

> There was a lot of confused running to and fro in the whole of the castle; the count was seated on his velvet bed. There he tried in vain to rise, sinking back he shouted: "Who says that Renald is not mad?" Since nobody spoke, he lowered his voice; "You don't know Renald, he can become terrible, like a raging fire – does one leave a murderous animal at large? – A lion is beautiful when it shakes its mane, if only it were not so bloodthirsty!"[8]

A short time afterwards the old count dies in a sublime mood, having a vision of his long deceased wife who becomes in his mind almost identical with the Blessed Virgin. In a somewhat similar fashion the young Durande suffers from a great ennui in the context of which the news of the revolution casts a kind of spell on him:

[7] Ibid., p. 287.
[8] Ibid., p. 298.

> The ball was not yet over, but the young count had heard there a lot of wonderful things about the fiery signs of a revolution, about the secret movements of fully armed military units, about the Jacobins, "friends of the people", and the Royalists, so that his heart swelled as if a windstorm were drawing near. . . . Furious and exhausted, he threw himself on the coach. "I am so tired", he said, "tired of desire and always more desire, boring desire! I wish there were a war!"[9]

His wish is of course granted sooner than he expects. The count finds his class pride in the face of the deadly danger. He addresses his faithful retinue of hare hunters in the following way:

> "We have long enough played at war in the wood", he said "now the hunt turns against us, we are now the wild animals (*das Wild*), we must get through. What shall it be! Another lunatic asylum is thrown open, a raging St Vitus's dance is going on in the whole country, and Renald accompanies it on his violin. I have nothing to do with the people, I did them nothing but good, if they wanted something even better, they should have demanded it in an honest way, I would have given them willingly, but I'm not going to be scared into giving up a single piece of my ancestral land, I defy their defiance![10]

Being of a hunter race, the count certainly found running with the hares a rather novel experience. The revolution is from his point of view first of all a fascinating, though evil, hunt, made perhaps even more fascinating through the fact that he and his class have become hunted animals.

Eichendorff in his work "The Nobility and the Revolution" ["Der Adel und die Revolution"] refers to the process of the softening or decomposition of the aristocratic class solidarity through the ideology of the Enlightenment, in which he distinguishes a true and a false enlightenment:

> The problem was no longer one thing or another, it was life in its entirety that was problematic, Satan was being driven away with Beelzebub, it was a war of everybody against everybody else. A crass materialism was inseparable from bodiless abstractions, a delicate humanism was fraternising with the bestiality of the mob, the pigheaded mankind was hurried with blood hounds to a new happiness, philosophy, superstition, and atheism were crashing into each other, so that in the raging confusion nobody knew any more the friend from the enemy.[11]

According to Eichendorff, who has mainly German conditions in mind, the attitudes of the nobility towards the revolution varied, and ranged from instinctive, and bloodthirsty hostility, through pretended indifference, to a suicidal attitude of an unhealthy fascination in the case of the most bored noblemen who treated the

[9] Ibid., pp. 288, 289.

[10] Ibid., p. 302.

[11] J. von Eichendorff, "Der Adel und die Revolution", in *Ausgewählte Werke*, in 5 vols, Vol. 4, p. 364.

revolution as: "a highly refined amusement, and were jumping headlong into the flaming crater of the volcano".[12] The noblemen in "The Castle Durande" certainly do not go that length, but they also are fundamentally ineffectual, world weary and show a suicidal drive and a predilection for pompous gestures, which makes the old count desire to blow up the whole castle, an intention that is paradoxically fulfilled later by his enemy. Significantly enough, the latter, though a commoner, follows also the noble, even if somewhat anachronistic, occupation of a hunter.

The final words of "The Castle Durande" summarise well the above sketched theme of wildness and madness, and express also succinctly the conservative message of the tale:

> These are the ruins of the castle Durande, that appear overgrown with vine among woody hills on beautiful spring days. – You, however, take care not to awake the wild animal in your breast, so that it doesn't suddenly break free and devour yourself.[13]

[12] Ibid., p. 356.

[13] J. von Eichendorff, *Eichendorffs Werke*..., p. 313.

JACEK MYDLA

Titus Andronicus or the Dramatization of Wildness

Wildness and Shakespeare Criticism

There is a tradition of regarding Shakespeare's talent and work in terms of the opposition between the wild and the cultivated. In the *Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare's plays, S. Johnson evokes the platitudinous metaphor likening the Bard's *ouvre* to a wild forest where the flora of poetry grows unrestrainedly:

> the composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity.[1]

Milton's couplet from *L'Allegro* (ll. 133–4), with the metaphor of the unpremeditated Muse-nightingale, gives a finishing touch to the image: "sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child, / Warble[s] his native wood-notes wild".

However, as there is more than one meaning to the word "wild," there is also another side of Shakespeare's wildness, a more virulent and derogatory one for a change. *Titus Andronicus* is the play that has long passed for a wild affair in any meaning the word can carry. First of all, it has been censured as the poet's unruly piece of juvenile muddle, extravagantly gory and devoid of decorum.

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[1] S. Johnson, *Selected Writings: "The Oxford Authors" Series* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 436.

S. Johnson was appalled and voiced his disapproval thus: "The barbarity of the spectacles, and the general massacre which are here exhibited, can scarcely be conceived tolerable to any audience."[2] Others were less discriminate in their rebuke and described the play as "a heap of rubbish" (Ravenscroft),[3] "intended to excite vulgar audiences" (Coleridge),[4] "one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written" (T. S. Eliot).[5] Fortunately, in the past few decades a reversal in criticism has been taking place culminating in the 1995 edition of the tragedy for the Arden Shakespeare,[6] which, along with the successful recent productions,[7] gives the play its due credit. This is not to say that the imputed bizarre nature of the work is thereby done away with, and indeed in what follows I shall argue for the assumption that the tragedy is one of the most deeply-searching and radical artistic approaches to the motif of wildness ever.

The following brief analysis of the representation of wildness in *Titus Andronicus* will be undertaken in two stages. After an introductory paragraph suggesting a possible differentiation of the meanings of "wild," we shall relate the thus-obtained categories to the drama in order to illustrate the aptitude of the undertaken task. This part of the presentation will then be followed by a dispute over the play's artistic exploits and dilemmas within a wider ideological spectrum.

The Meaning of "Wild"

The OED enumerates 15 meanings of the word "wild".[8] They can be roughly grouped in three main categories: topographical, psycho-aesthetic and

[2] J. Bate, *Introduction*, in Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* (London: Routledge, The Arden Shakespeare, 1995), p. 33.

[3] Cf. E. M. Waith, "The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*", *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1957), p. 39.

[4] Ibid.

[5] J. Bate, *Introduction*, p. 34.

[6] I am greatly indebted to J. Bate's inspiring *Introduction* in his new edition of the play for the Arden series. The year 1995 also saw the publication of a vast collection of criticism of the play, both literary and theatrical: Ph. C. Kolin, *"Titus Andronicus": Critical Essays* (New York: Garland Pub., 1995).

[7] J. Kydryński relates his impressions of P. Brook's production (with Laurence Olivier as Titus and Vivian Leigh as Lavinia) and the performance given by the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Poland in these words: "Znakomity zespół dał wtedy spektakl fascynujący, pozwalający zapomnieć o wszystkich niedostatkach sztuki. ... Momenty, w czytaniu dziś dla nas groteskowe, bynajmniej nie śmieszyły, niektóre sceny ...wywoływały wstrząs, ale wstrząs pełen zachwytu nad kunsztem aktora. W całości ta makabreska przynosiła niewątpliwie *katharsis*, działała oczyszczająco i pobudzająco." (*Posłowie*, in W. Shakespeare, *Najżałośniejsza rzymska tregedia Titusa Andronicusa*, trans. M. Słomczyński (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1986), p. 143.)

[8] A possible development from "wild beast".

ethical.[9] The following review shows that language carries an indecisive attitude to wildness, but an increasingly derogatory evaluation of the phenomenon becomes manifest.

A. Topography

> "Wild" means [1] "(of animals) living in a state of nature, not domesticated"; [2] "growing in a state of nature, not cultivated"; [3] "produced or yielded by wild animals or plants (naturally, without cultivation)"; [4] "(of a region) uncultivated or uninhabited (waste, desert, desolate)".

This seems to be the topos of archetypal wildness,[10] spontaneously intruding upon the user of the English language where the senses of "wild", "wood", "wilderness" intertwine providing ready-made associations: "Wild" as a noun meaning "a beast", "wild animals collectively", "hunted animals"; "wood" as na adjective meaning "insane" but also "wild", "extremely excited", etc.[11]

This category of the wild is defined through locale and origin. It becomes one counterpart in the demarcation between the human and the non-human (hence the poetic and ideological topography of the wild). On the one hand it stresses man's detachment from nature. Territories settled and subdued by man's hand are delineated against those unspoilt, impenetrable, unsettleable. On the other hand, the latter provide the standard recess for the native Muse, as in the above-quoted lines on Shakespeare from Milton's *L'Allegro*.[12]

[9] The numbering of the *OED* entry is given in square brackets. The meanings listed in the dictionary as the fifteenth ("aimed wide at the mark", "at random", "astray") are not included. Some simplifications of the original definitions could not be avoided.

[10] See e.g. Milton's description of the paradisiacal sylvan scene in *Paradise Lost* (Book IV, 131–72).

[11] All the synonyms are taken from the respective *OED* definitions. For Shakespeare's use of *wood* in this meaning see: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* II.i.192.

[12] They provide another example of the self-generated string of stock-associations supplied where one word would perfectly do the trick; e.g. "woodnote" is defined as "a *natural untrained* musical note or song like that of a *wild* bird in a *wood*" (*OED*).

B. Psychology and Aesthetics

"Wild" means: [9] "(of the sea, stream, weather) violently agitated, rough, stormy, tempestuous, raging, full of disturbance"; [10, 11] "highly excited, agitated, vehement or impetuous, violent"; [12] "not having control of one's mental faculties, demented, distracted, foolish, unreasonable"; [13] "(of actions) going beyond prudent limits; rashly venturesome, going to extremes of extravagance"; [14] "artless, free, unconditional, fanciful, having barbaric character".

The primary object of reference here seems to be the unpredictable, uncontrolled phenomena in nature, inspiring awe and overpowering. The common denominator in the above listed meanings lies in their reference to human experience of nature in both the external or internal sense. The idea of extremity is perhaps the most characteristic of the notion of "wild" in this category. The stigmatisation of something or somebody as wild implies either aesthetic or psychological evaluation where conventions, or a sense of decorum, provide the measure. "Wildness" describes Hamlet's "antic disposition" with its precedent in Kyd's Hieronimo and, more directly, in the character of Titus.

Poetic fruitfulness of the affinity between violent occurrences in nature and human passions is obvious and has often been exploited. It is in *Titus Andronicus* that Shakespeare tried his hand at the rhetoric of an emotion brimming over. After suffering another blow of Fortune, Titus delivers a lament of archetypal figurativeness:

> If there were reason for these miseries,
> Then into limits could I bind my woes.
> When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o'erflow?
> If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,
> Threatening the welkin with his big-swollen face?
> I am the sea.
>
> (III.i.220)

C. Ethics

"Wild" means [5] "(of persons) uncultivated", "uncivilised", "savage", "uncultured", "rude", "rebellious", "resisting government"; [6] "not submitting to control or restraint", "disposed to take one's own way", "uncontrolled"; [7] "unruly", "insubordinate", "wayward", "self-willed"; [8] "fierce", "savage", "ferocious", "furious", "violent", "destructive", "cruel".

In this class of synonyms the element of evaluation, so characteristic of our intuitions concerning the word despite its baffling ambiguity, is most conspicuous. The unrestrained is seen as intrusion, as violation of values, be it life itself, chastity, urbanity (culture, heritage). Here transgression does not translate into spatial relationships (as is the case in 1.) as it occurs *within* a social context. Wildness as savageness or barbarism has a threatening emphasis and "wild" in this sense is a morally pejorative epithet.

In many contexts this category is used metaphorically with the help of the remaining two. And again in *Titus Andronicus*, physical circumstances of atrocity closely correspond to the wrongful deed itself, sharing its qualities: Lavinia, Titus' daughter, was "Ravished and wronged as Philomela was, / Forced in the ruthless, vast and gloomy woods" (IV.i.52). In *The Rape of Lucrece* human propensities towards evil are transposed onto what we called the topography of wildness: "In men, as in a rough-grown grove, remain / Cave-keeping evils that obscurely sleep" (l. 1249).[13]

In all of the above-distinguished categories the quality of wildness has no definite aesthetic value despite the fact that it may and often does acquire one within a given artistic context. In other words, marking an element of a given artistic creation as wild (the character of Hamlet, for example) obviously cannot imply that a like classification of the whole work of art is justifiable. Wildness, in any meaning that can be ascribed to "wild", *within* a work of art does not automatically delimit the range of its aesthetic appreciation. At the outset of our analyses, therefore, the inference stating the allegedly poor quality of works as barbaric and horrifying in content as *Titus Andronicus*, seems to be unjustified.

Wildness in *Titus Andronicus*

A. Civil Wilderness

The topography of wildness in *Titus Andronicus* is elaborate. The tragedy opens in Rome in the midst of a political crisis. The pomposity of Titus' entrance as victorious conqueror of some barbaric lands soon gives way to the disgrace of

[13] However, the converse is also possible, when, to strengthen the image, the poet subjugates violation (notion 3.) within a pastoral context (notion 1.): "Yet doubt I much if heaven can give / A place where I so soon would live / As this sweet garden, sacred haunt / Of birds whose soft melodious chaunt / *Ravished* mine ears; the nightingales here sang..."; *The Romance of the Rose*, l. 653 (trans. F. S. Ellis).

a fatal domestic altercation. In Act II the setting changes as the action shifts to a hunting park or "chase" in the surrounding wood. There a catastrophe strikes following which the City turns into a wilderness of inhumanity.

The City as setting is a clear prompt. "Rome suggests ...a military civilisation, self-conscious masculinity, stoical self-denial, the inexorable rule of law – the collection of ethical icons that long dominated the European sense of culture."[14] True, but the standard antithesis between barbarity and civility is not taken for granted. Even before changing the setting Shakespeare questions the stereotype. Discord creeps into the heart of the established order in the way the supposedly civilised fraternise with the barbarians or imitate their rituals and codes. The antithesis between Romans as the civilised nation and Goths as their barbaric counterpart is introduced at the outset and then largely reflected in the play's macroscopic topography. None the less it is by no means a clear-cut opposition. In the 1st Scene/Act, Shakespeare makes use of both the upper and the lower extension to the basic level of the stage. The gallery "aloft" stands for authority and jurisdiction; the cellarage where the war-dead are laid – for the value of heritage. The rites of commemoration, subject to varying moral evaluation, lead to a sort of culture clash. The Goth queen, Tamora, now a captive, pleads for the life of her son about to be sacrificed in a bloody rite to appease the spirits of the war victims. The Goths, as we first hear them speak, are appalled at the barbarity of the *quasi*-civilised act of human sacrifice ("O cruel, irreligious piety!", I.i.133) that sets in motion the spiral of retribution.

In a rapid reversal Tamora and her retinue are liberated and elevated to a superior position. Titus – anticipating Lear in his fatal wilfulness and lack of foresight – is the inadvertent cause of the imminent miseries. He helps impede lawful election, breaks the betrothal of his daughter to Bassianus provoking a broil in which he slays one of his sons and finally, in order to amend the impasse, suggests a panther-hunt outside the urban gates that supplies his enemies with an ideal opportunity to get even.

Saturninus' marriage to Tamora is symbolic. In pursuing his selfish goals and because of his blindness to the true nature of the marriage which is to advance her personal revenge the new emperor invites disorder and lawlessness. Some critics even see in Shakespeare's portrayal of Saturnine in *Titus* and the rapist Tarquin in *Lucrece* an element of revolutionary republicanism.

The already-mentioned manoeuvre in setting introduces a clear topographical antithesis: the forest outside the city becomes a scene of deceit, fornication, murder, ravishing, and mutilation. Here the lower level of the pit-trap adopts further meanings, becoming a representation of the nether realm suggestive of – as a critic has it – the fecundity of evil.[15]

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[14] G. K. Hunter, "Shakespeare's Earliest Tragedies: *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*", *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), p. 5.

[15] A. H. Tricomi, "The Aesthetics of Mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*", *Shakespeare Survey*, 27 (1974), p. 18.

The hunting-event is of course yet another advance in the direction of exploring the wildness theme. Being customarily treated as a manner for a civilised society to "get back in touch with the wild",[16] hunting for sport changes its initial meaning as diversion turns into man-hunt. First Lavinia, the rape-victim, comes to share the properties of the hunted game. Marcus, the first sympathising person to meet her after the rape, sees her as she "flies away". The comparison is self-evident: "O, thus I found her, straying in the park / Seeking to hide herself, as doth the deer."(III.i.89)[17] Titus and his kin gradually realise their metamorphosis into the game, the "wild", but their hunters are no less inhuman for that. Ultimately the City itself loses its civil qualities. Titus comforts his son sentenced to banishment:

> dost thou not perceive
> That Rome is but *a wilderness of tigers*?[18]
> Tigers must prey, and Rome affords not prey
> But me and mine.
>
> (III.i.53)

Shakespeare exploits fully the artistic resourcefulness of the wild setting in act II. Titus enters the soon–to–prove–fatal domain in an elated and amicable mood of serenity: "The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey, The fields are fragrant and the woods are green." (II.i.1) In the same mood Tamora makes libidinous advances to her black paramour – a sylvan sequence strongly inspired by a narrative in the *Aeneid*.[19] The pastoral mood is stuck but only as a counterpoint to the intrigue. The audience knows that the backwoods are already penetrated by knavery and that traps are set. The two "lustful" rapists, Tamora's sons, prompted by the arch-villain, Aaron, see the surrounding as opportune: "The palace is full of tongues, of eyes and ears; / The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf and dull: ... / There serve your lust, shadowed from heaven's eye, ..." (I.i.628) Soon, Titus referring to the act of the ravishing of Lavinia in the selfsame place he extolled, echoes Aaron: "[Lavinia was] forced in the ruthless, vast and gloomy woods." The victim, by physical mutilation denied the possibility of oral expression, partakes of the properties of the wild setting having become a dumb witness to the crime. Here Shakespeare enriches the standard representations. Wildness is portrayed as lack of discernment even on the most basic level of sensory perception. The cruelty

[16] J. Bate, *Introduction*, p. 7.

[17] The *OED* lists "shy", "avoiding the pursuer" as one of the meanings of "wild".

[18] Both L. Ulrich and M. Słomczyński in rendering the key metaphor try to stay in tune with the setting of the previous act, translating it as – respectively – *jaskinia tygrysów* and *matecznik tygrysów*.

[19] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book IV; during a hunt, enamoured Dido makes love to Aeneas after taking refuge from the storm in a cave.

of insensitivity is to some extent counterbalanced by the presence of "the eye of heaven", evidently meant to signify a sense of the original guilt inscribed in the awareness of man's relapse into savageness.

This inhumane nature of the territory is finally summarised in Titus' remonstrance juxtaposing culture (including religion and art) and barbarity and fusing them in a powerful image of a cruel (dis)play:

> O, why should nature build so foul a den
> Unless the gods *delight in tragedies*
> (IV.i.58)

From the perspective of the topography of wildness the restoration of order taking place towards the close of the play does not bring any new developments. Theatrically, both the extensions of the basic level of the stage return to their initial senses of jurisdiction and cultural continuity.

B. The Poetics of Dismemberment

Even in terms of stage technique, Lavinia attracts the most attention of the viewer and becomes the central character. At the beginning of Act II.iii she enters, as the stage directions read, "her hands cut off and her tongue cut out, and ravished". This not only creates a dra(u)maturgical precedent,[20] challenges the inventiveness of the director and the actress, and puts a strain on our sense of decorum – it also gives the tragedy its internal impact. Titus' complacency is shaken; revenge becomes a must, but before a scheme of retaliation can be embarked on, Lavinia has to recover her *lingua*.[21] Her secret has to be retrieved ("forced out"); she has to be reopened both to help reveal the ravishers and her husband's murderers, and to purge the name of the Andronici of the taint of false accusations (soon to breed a cruel sentence and merciless execution).

It seems to have been important for Shakespeare to present the wickedness of the Goths as native in contrast to the literature-cognisant tactics of Titus' schemes. The shearing off of Lavinia's hands was meant as a security device against a written testimony and *not* to forestall Lavinia's following the example of Ovidian Philomela, who divulged the secret of having been raped by Tereus, her sister's husband, by means of a piece of embroidery. Nevertheless, the audience, Shakespeare presumes,

[20] I assume that in the context of such a cathartic play as *Titus Andronicus* this coinage fusing "drama" and "trauma" has some justification.

[21] Meaning of course both the organ of speech and language. Lavinia does this *via* literature.

ought to recognise the resemblance as Titus' kin do. In Marcus' speech (II.iii.13–43) on meeting his bleeding niece, the names of Tereus and Philomela both appear twice, echoing Aaron's ominous: "His [i.e. Titus'] Philomel must lose her tongue today" (II.ii.43). This modelling of the lifelike suffering presented on stage against the literary precedent enhances the effect, univocally stressed by critics, of the metamorphosing violation as impersonalisation or loss of the individual self.[22]

The savageness of what happens on stage is from now onwards related to the fictive world of a work of literature. In taking up the Ovidian motif, Shakespeare not only created a technical difficulty for the production of the tragedy but also posed a question for himself as an artist. Ovid's Philomela is turned into a nightingale. She regains her voice by becoming a songster of her woes and the Muse. In the *Metamorphoses* we find a chilling description of the way in which the severed organ, "emancipated" and metaphorised into a domesticated animal, seeks to reunite with the owner:

> The stumpe whereon it [the tongue] hung
> Did patter still. The tip fell downe, and quivering on the ground
> As though that it had murmured it made a certaine sound
> ... The tip of Philomelaas tongue did wriggle to and fro,
> And nearer to hir misstresseward in dying still did go.
>
> (A. Golding's translation[23])

The story of Philomela appears twice in Shakespeare's plays, for the first time in *Titus* and later in *Cymbeline*.[24] Naturally, it is repeatedly recalled in *The Rape of Lucrece*, and an interesting handling of the motif is also found in Sonnet CII, where Shakespeare not only carries out the traditional matching of the nightingale with the mythical sufferer but identifies himself with the latter as well, anticipating Milton's metaphor of the wild Warbler.[25] We would expect a lover and an aspiring poet to resort to this sort of metaphor, combining, as is the case later in one of Milton's sonnets, Muse and Love.[26] However, whereas Milton evades the

[22] E. M. Waith, p. 42.

[23] A. Golding's translation of 1567, *Appendix*, in W. Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, p. 279. Here we can perhaps recognise the same *lingua* with whose charm wild animals were tamed by Orpheus, hacked to pieces by the Ciconian women. "Wonderful to relate, as they [the poet's limbs] floated down in midstream, the lyre uttered a plaintive melody and the lifeless tongue made a piteous murmur, while the river banks lamented in reply." Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book IX, trans. M. M. Innes (Penguin Books, 1973), p. 247.

[24] Cf. A. Thompson, "Philomel in *Titus Andronicus* and *Cymbeline*", *Shakespeare Survey*, 31 (1978), pp. 23–32. J. M. Nosworthy, the editor of *Cymbeline* for The Arden Shakespeare traces Shakespeare's knowledge of the Philomela-myth to Chaucer, Gower, and Painter; cf. the 1994 edition of the play, p. 51.

[25] Cf. also *The Passionate Pilgrim*, xx

[26] "Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate, / Both them I serve, and of their train am I." (Sonnet I)

association, leaving out Philomela's name, Shakespeare, whom we know to have cold-bloodedly (mis?)handled the tragic potential of the story strives to institute himself as misery turned into a pleasing tune. Indeed, in skilfully juggling the expected references, such as "tongue", "lay", "pipe", "mournful hymns", "wild music", etc., the simile becomes highly self-conscious:

> Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
> When I was wont to greet it with my *lays*;
> As *Philomel* in summer's front doth *sing*,
> And stops her *pipe* in growth of riper days:
> Not that the summer is less pleasant now,
> Than when *her mournful hymns* did hush the night,
> But that *wild music* burdens every bough,
> And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
> Therefore, *like her*, I sometime hold my *tongue*,
> Because I would not dull you with my *song*.
> (Sonnet cii)

The tragic as well as ironic potential of the rape-and-revenge narrative is hushed. The savage element of sexual enforcement, mutilation and the ensuing revenge through murder and cannibalism, which traditionally neutralised the primordial wildness of the bird's performance and confused the sexes in the process,[27] undergoes partial suppression. However, the initial wildness is not retrieved, nor is it meant to be. Philomela,[28] the Muse or/and the nightingale,[29] is invested with new mythology as a songster of "mournful hymns" of a supposed inborn or native quality. It is no wonder that such examples of the poetic artifice should provoke a demythologising backlash. "A melancholy bird? Oh! Idle thought! / In Nature there is nothing melancholy", was Coleridge's response aiming at restoring the bird, and calling its admirers, back to Nature, whose idea actually proposes a refreshing of the *myth* of positively charged wildness:

> And youths and maidens most poetical,
> Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
> In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
> Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
> O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.
> My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
> A different lore: we may not thus profane
> Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
> And joyance! ...

[27] It is the *male* nightingale that trills, not the female. This firmly established confusion is a fine illustration of the detachment of the myth.

[28] Lit. "lover of song" from Gr. *philein* and *melos* ("a song", "a dirge", but also "a limb").

[29] Oryg. "nightgale"; from the Teut. "night song".

> And I know a grove
> Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
> Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
> This grove is wild with tangling underwood, ...
> But never elsewhere in one place I knew,
> So many nightingales; and far and near,
> In wood and thicket, over the wild grove,
> They answer and provoke each-other's song, ...
> (The Nightingale, 35–58)

The invocations to "a most gentle Maid" or "Warbler" (ll. 69 ff.) sustain the long-surviving allegory of the poetically domesticated companion to mankind. Hence the need for a more radical emphasis of the disparity between the primeval but unresponsive, inarticulate and depersonalised wildness and the dismal realities of human existence:

> And [the nightingales] sang within the bloody wood
> When Agamemnon cried aloud
> And let their liquid siftings fall
> To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.[30]

This lengthy digression brings us back to Shakespeare's handling of the problematic motif in his tragedy in search of an attempt at rethinking and disputing the vacillating heritage which the playwright himself joined in a more compliant manner in his poetry. Having repeatedly reinforced the classical parallel for the tragic incident, Shakespeare makes the characters exploit it extensively. Once again Marcus draws the connecting lines dwelling now on the motif of singing: "[Lavinia's tongue] is torn from forth that pretty *hollow cage* / Where, like a *sweet melodious bird*, it sung / Sweet *varied notes, enchanting every ear*". (III.ii.85) This is not only another step taken towards dissipating Lavinia's identity against the conventional topography of aesthetically laudable, "native", wildness, recurring in Milton's verse. The Ovidian precedent in which the gods turn Philomela into a nightingale is here reversed and the human wildbird becomes a "speechless complainer". Shakespeare evidently places the natively innocuous and delightful *before* the savage but does it help to disencumber either of the poetic visions of transformation of their caustic irony?

[30] T. S. Eliot, *Sweeney among the Nightingales*. The Philomela narrative in the Ovidian version appears in a more redeeming context in *The Waste Land*. First evoked in line 99 it then recurs as a half-articulate motif: "Twit twit twit / Jug jug jug jug / So rudely forc'd / Tereu" (203–6) reminiscent of a passage from *The Passionate Pilgrim*, as already indicated (see note 25).

C. Revenge and Voicelessness

Being a tragedy of revenge, *Titus Andronicus* brings wildness on the agenda through the very definition of "revenge". In one of his essays, F. Bacon writes as follows:

> Revenge is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office.[31]

The rhetoric of the argument uses the common images of wildness: nature as the untamed and "weedy" necessitating of the restraining function of the law. However, there is a kind of revenge tolerable in special circumstances: the incapacity of law, or more precisely, the absence of a law to deal with this or that particular wrong.[32] Here, as in the other aspects, *Titus Andronicus* treats the motif of injustice with the characteristic extremity. On the one hand, the evil is impenetrable: the emperor sees only the tip of the cunning wickedness corrupting his estate. The savage are in power and the authorities of the law are either inapt or silent. The play treats us to a grisly display of the hacked bodies of the characters; severed limbs and heads lie around. Those who suffer injustice are always in the spotlight, but it is the theatrical presence of the appalled audience that silently secures the required compassion in view of the on-stage atrocities. Empathy is trimmed down to a group of martyred, muted (emotionally or physically) family members. Moreover, the tragedy questions the tradition of the rhetoric of sympathy.

One of Shakespeare's preoccupations in *Titus Andronicus* appears to be truth and meaning(lessness) in their manifold manifestations and involvements in the process of communication. The interdependence between thought, language, speech, and sign is poetically and dramatically elaborated under the predominant metonymies of tongue and voice. Conventional means of expression and their linkage with truth undergo a breakdown, and consequently have to be either re-examined or replaced. In the wilderness of tigers where tradition and culture are paid lip-service and substituted by a reign of resentment and injustice, social interaction has lost its operative medium of communication. Lavinia, the tongueless-handless sufferer, is the living exemplification of this deficiency. A new alphabet has to be "wrested" in order to establish the truth buried in her speechless memory.

It has already been mentioned that the character of Lavinia means for Shakespeare more than just a victim who must be avenged. The character is far more

[31] F. Bacon, *Essays* (London: J. M. Denet and Sons Ltd., n. d.), p. 13.
[32] Ibid.

complex and the tragedy probes its complexity to the bottom. Firstly, unlike Philomela's in the *Metamorphoses*, Lavinia's secret is heavier, as apart from having suffered herself she had also witnessed the murder of Bassianus, for which her two brothers were then unjustly beheaded. In consequence, she has become the warped key not only to the secret of her "private" misfortune, but also to that of the whole of the Andronici whose disgrace is the chief cause of the father's anguish. Understandably the character somehow both reveals and conceals the savage acts.[33]

The predicament of speechlessness is by no means an unambiguous state-of-affairs and Shakespeare does not shun its perplexity. The scandalously guiseless spectacles are confronted by an insurmountable urge towards oral or written expression. The urge however is repeatedly frustrated, most conspicuously in the act of removing Lavinia's tongue. This incident alone would not make *Titus Andronicus* a tragedy of voicelessness were it not for its dense fabric of intertwining motifs of the loss or recovery of voice. Naturally, being a multi-personal event a play confers voice to only one character at a time thus dispossessing the others of the privilege of speech. In other words, there is a natural surplus of silence over speech on stage.[34] In *Titus Andronicus* silence plays a key role. Silencing is either forceful, from the most brutal forms of the removal of the organ of speech or killing[35] to simple gagging which occurs twice, not to mention other instances of physical mouth-stopping.[36] The crucial event, easily overlooked, is the loss of voice by Titus in the first scene of the drama. By no means a paragon of spotless virtue, Titus rashly and self-willingly renounces his political say bestowing the "voices and suffrages" (I.1.222) of the people upon Saturninus thus botching up the election. He loses his public voice never fully to regain it. His futile complaints delivered to stones after the Judges have passed him by or fixed as notes on arrows and shot wildly at the silent heavens, his outburst of laughter replacing relief into rhetoric – all depict the agony of becoming figuratively voiceless, i.e. impotent and vulnerable. His public merits have stopped speaking. And the agony is aggravated by the presence of the mut(e)ilated daughter and the two severed heads of his sons.

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[33] Titus calls her "a map of woe".

[34] Cf. A. Krajewska, "Milczenie w dramacie" ["Silence in Drama"], in *Problemy teorii dramatu i teatru*, ed. J. Degler (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1988), pp. 94–103.

[35] Aaron stabs the Nurse, who has brought him the illegitimate child, as precaution against "a long-tongued, babbling gossip" (IV.ii,152; anticipatory of Hamlet's attitude to Polonius?). He then ransoms the baby's life by delivering an inventory of his intrigues and crimes.

[36] The mutilation of Lavinia is as much a subterfuge used by the ravishers to escape detection as it is, at least in a dramatically ostensible manner, a reaction to her offensive frankness. When faced with the prospect of being given over into the clasps of Tamora's 'lustful' sons, Lavinia contradictorily combines invectives stating Tamora's true nature with pleas for instantaneous death. Finally, before they abduct her, her mouth is covered (II.ii.173–84).

The nature of the affliction dictates the logic of revenge and prescribes its devices. The operation of mouth-stopping becomes an instrument of revenge *sui generis*. Tamora's sons are gagged before being spectacularly slaughtered on stage (V.ii.164). To borrow a phrase from *Othello*, "all that is spoke is marred" either by ill-intent or by its shocking literalness. Speech is double-edged; it rescues and mars. Before his mouth is "stopped", Aaron takes the opportunity to express his wish of going to hell in order to torment others with his bitter tongue (V.i.150). He delights in recounting his crimes simply as just another opportunity to accumulate evil:

> 'Twill vex thy soul to hear what I shall speak
> For I *must talk* of murders, rapes and massacres,
> Acts of black night, abominable deeds,
> Complots of mischief, treasons, villainies
> Ruthful to hear yet piteously performed ...
> (V.i.62–6)

But in this war of and for words it is the victims who have the moral mandate to speak:

> TITUS: Sirs, stop their mouths; let them not speak to me,
> But let them hear what fearful words I utter.
> (V.ii.167–8)

In his urge to *write* first his complaints and then a plan of revenge, Titus resembles Hamlet, who after his interview with the ghost proceeds to tabulate the mind-blowing message. But Hamlet is a Titus who failed to relate his task to a precedent and therefore found himself "lapsed in time". The latter's cannibalistic banquet as the counter-retaliation is prepared "by the book", i.e. according to the fictitious "original", the *Metamorphoses*, which previously served Lavinia as an ingenious means to restore communication and trigger off revenge.[37] During his queer solitary musings over the favourite book in his study he "sets down in bloody lines" the course his requital will take. He becomes another collating author (Shakespeare's own likeness in the process of composing the play!) as he endeavours to outwit Aaron, the masterminding intriguer. And "what is written shall be executed". (V.ii.15) The analysis of the mounting heap of piled-up analogies and borrowings yields a perplexing image: Shakespeare's Hieronimo-like protagonist orchestrating a scheme copied from a book of poetry. Ironically, the similarity between Lavinia's predicament and that of Philomela is not only a channel through which the reality (truth) of what has happened to her peers in.

[37] This active role, in my opinion, restores to Lavinia a part of the individuality or authenticity, she was robbed of in being related to a precedent.

The final act of killing his daughter, after the plan of unmasking and copycat requital has been effectuated, is also marked by a sense of emulation. It, too, has its literary precedent, this time in (a history book by) Livy:

> TITUS: A *pattern, precedent* and lively warrant
> For me, most wretched, to *perform the like.* [*He kills her*]
> (V.iii.43)

Letter and Stage *vs.* Barbarity?

In the light of what has been already said, the point to raise for a pertinent criticism of the play ought to be the relationship between literature and wildness. In *Titus Andronicus*, literature takes on an instrumental role, being actively but also equivocally related to the problem of revenge.

As we have stated, beside offering a stageful of horrors, Shakespeare introduces "literary patterning"[38] as a principle of construction and development of the revenge-motif. Instead of simply inserting or reusing the few literary precedents he exposes them not only self-consciously but, in some measure, ostentatiously and provocatively. Indeed, in *Titus Andronicus* the approach to the letter is as important as is the approach to the voice and to the tongue as its "engine".

In his enlightening article on the use of metaphor in *Titus Andronicus*, A. H. Tricomi notes the peculiar relationship between language and event. In the tragedy, metaphor does not, as usually is the case, transcend the limitations of the stage but rather "becomes literalized".[39] Figurative language, challenged by horrific events, undergoes "deliberate constriction".[40] The critic points to Shakespeare's endeavour to outdo the classical sources, i.e. Seneca and Ovid "by utilizing living stage in the telling of a tale more horrifying and pathetic than that of either of his models".[41] It seems to me that two further points need to be made for the interpretation to be complete: It is not directly Shakespeare who challenges the precedent, it is Titus himself, although, which has to be admitted, Shakespeare makes Lavinia suffer more deeply than her predecessor in affliction. Moreover, A. H. Tricomi fails to explore the full potentiality of his classification of the play's figurativeness as literal, or of what he calls "the ironic denigration of metaphor".[42]

[38] The term is used by J. Bate in the *Introduction*. See also *Titus Andronicus* IV.i.55–8.
[39] A. H. Tricomi, p. 12.
[40] Ibid., p. 13.
[41] Ibid., p. 19.
[42] Ibid., p. 13.

To give due credit to the complex texture of the play, we have to observe its process of literalising in the different meaning of the word "literal". "Literal" is not only "verbally exact" or "without metaphor, exaggeration, inaccuracy", but also "pertaining to letters or literature".[43] Titus takes up the role of literalising the revenge in this double or triple meaning of "literal".

The idiom of the play, literalised through a dehumanising mutilation, is redeemed in a reverse process: metaphorising and rendering unreal which take place in the second part of the tragedy. The reversal begins when Titus' laughter (III.i.265) decisively declares the bankruptcy of rhetoric when confronted with the facts. Unlike Hamlet, who erases the content of his mind in order to be up to revenge, Titus shuts himself up in his study to ruminate over books. This fiction-like, deliberately dramatised nature of his revenge is further emphasised by the pla–within–the–play device: Tamora and her sons put on a show in order to fix Titus in his supposed madness and incapacitate the impending political overthrow.

> TAMORA: I will enchant the old Andronicus
> With words...
> ...were his heart
> Almost impregnable, his old ear deaf,
> Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue.
> (IV.iv.89)

Titus sees through that masquerade, which is not devoid of some elements of grotesque, and takes his revenge on the "actors". *His* plot has its climax at the cannibalistic banquet where he serves the guests dressed up as a cook. Obsessed with the idea of following antique precedents and turning them into spectacles, Titus stabs Lavinia as the last act in *his staging* of the drama.

Both Titus' revenge and the action of Shakespeare's tragedy are intended to be regarded as reality, if theatrical, that outstripped its literary model. What had been set down in poetry or history and educated young generations of the civilised is to take life. The piece of fiction provides a common denominator which helps transfer thoughts, reveal the truth and restore order. Titus himself is said to have been a teacher of literature to the younger generation;

> LUCIUS: [*to his son*] Many a story hath he told to thee,
> And bid thee bear his pretty tales in mind
> And talk of them when he was dead and gone.
> (V.iii.163-5)

[43] All definitions come from the pertinent *OED* entries.

Are they the "stories" with which Imogen beguiled her time before going to sleep[44] or which Lucrece heard retold in the trills of a nightingale?[45] Read by Shakespeare at school they suggested to him a most shocking theatrical experiment whose idiom weaves classroom passages of Latin into schemes of gory revenge.[46]

> The "craftier Tereus" is ultimately Shakespeare himself, who is outdoing Ovid in both the horror and the ingenuity of his narrative.[47]

Titus Andronicus provokes reflections over the power of dramatic art: Is the story of Philomela presentable on stage, and if so, ought it to be produced? Some optimistically minded critics choose to believe in the didactic power of the theatre, or more precisely speaking, in the educating potency of catharsis. Jonathan Bate argues that "if Chiron and Demetrius had seen a dramatization of the Philomel story, instead of read it cold-bloodedly in the classroom, they would have wept for her instead of re-enact her rape".[48] This interpretation is generally in spirit with Shakespeare's. In *The Rape of Lucrece* we read an apology for the visual arts: "To see sad sights moves more than hear them told." (l. 1324) Let us *believe* the Poet *trusting* that his execution of the letter on stage exorcises the barbarity it has come to epitomise. Otherwise the spectacle would transform the theatre audience into "the gods" reproached by Titus for taking cruel delight in tragedies put on in the "foul den" of the stage. But then again, is it not Shakespeare, the up–and–coming dramatist and actor, speaking his mind through the mouth of his protagonist:

> Let us that have our tongues
> Plot some device of further misery
> To make us wondered at in time to come.
> (III.i.134)

[44] Cf. *Cymbeline* II.ii. 45–6.
[45] Cf. *The Rape of Lucrece*, l. 1128–48.
[46] Cf. Chiron's remark in IV.ii.22–3. and Aaron's aside following it.
[47] A. Thompson, p. 24.
[48] J. Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 112.

TOMASZ KALAGA

The Wild, the Unconscious, the Mad

While the medical science recognises a number of symptoms which point to a particular mental disease and the methods of diagnosis and treatment are very advanced, madness still remains a vague and unclear term. This opaqueness becomes evident when one attempts to position a barrier separating sanity and insanity, and finds that the two elements of the binary opposition are, in fact, blended into one another without a precise point of distinction. Instinctively one feels that such a border must exist, but its location remains unclear. When investigating, for example, the effects of a horror story, which deals with madness, upon its reader one cannot resist the impression that the narrative in some way provides a very close insight into insanity. This insight exists, however, only in the form of a short-lasting emotional imprint; by no means is it an actual dynamic process of crossing a supposed barrier between sanity and madness. Madness stubbornly avoids enclosure into semantic boundaries: attempts at finding the line which separates the world of the normal and the world of the mentally sick seem futile.

The initial question of where such a border exists, should perhaps be replaced by an inquiry into the reasons behind the inability of its direct establishment. Some sort of mental fuzziness hovers above the concept of madness, and it will be this vagueness that will come under discussion during the course of this article.

The introduction already hints that madness will be treated here not on the level of its physical signifier, i.e. its symptomatic, medical representation, but solely as a mental concept. Its physical results are the domain of psychiatry, psychology and sociology. The article will only deal with its signified, a universal opposition to normality, which exists on the mental plane; an abstract conceptualisation of insanity.

Madness or the mad may be presented as an aspect of wildness or the wild. For reasons which will become apparent shortly, the wild will not be given any specific definition at this point in time. It may, however, be understood as a concept of large semantic scope, encompassing phenomena beyond our control or understanding, some of which may fit into the broad category of the Other. The reason for prescribing madness under the category of the wild, and not *vice versa*, lies in the size of the semantic scope of the two terms. Despite their common characteristics, the wild seems to extend further – features of the mad may be identified as features of the wild, but wildness goes beyond and includes that which has little to do with the idea of insanity.

The terms madness and wildness share in three distinct features. These common points exist on the grounds of the semantic definition of the two words, or more precisely, in the nature of interpreting and attaching meaning to their signifiers.

Firstly, whatever notion of their signified one may possess, there may be noticed a distinct ambiguity and lack of transparency as to their precise meaning. They entail spiritual, sociological, and psychological states, without ever completely separating themselves from one of the categories while being applied to another. Their connotations are interwoven into a complex matrix which reaches into many different aspects of human perception.

Secondly – and this is the reason for initial refraining from precise description of the wild, any definition that one may possess of these two terms is always based on exclusion. To comprehend the concepts embraced by the signified of the mad and the wild, one perceives them as what they are not. Mad is all that is not sane, normal, or acceptable, wild is all that is not tamed, civilised, or controlled. This peculiar way of defining terms by their binary opposites, and only by their binary opposites, stems from the third similarity – namely, the subject who operates with the two signs always believes himself to stand on the side opposite to the one expressed in their signifier.

The wild and the mad is employed and understood in speech or thought precisely from the point of view of its opposite equivalent – the sane and the tamed. The peculiar nature of these terms does not allow for their user to employ them in auto-description. It is always the Other that has to be deemed wild or insane. Thus the arbitrary character of the concepts becomes transparent – their employment is strictly subjective. A person may be called a madman, but he will consider others to be insane and himself normal. Similarly, the wild knows not its wildness, a statement beautifully illustrated by the Holy Crusades, where either side believed the enemy to be a barbaric infidel. Any auto descriptive use of the concepts is strictly hyperbolical, "I am insane with jealousy" or "what I did was really wild", for example. In reality, the signified of the mad and the wild is projected unto the stance opposite to and unapproachable by the subject using them.

The nature of the two signified that have just been discussed, bears a startling resemblance to the one found in the Jungian concept of the unconscious.

Beginning with a short definition of the unconscious, one may note the similarities that it has with the mad and the wild and touch upon the odd relationship that exists between the three, a conclusion which may shed some light upon the initially presented problem.

The Jungian classification of the human *psyche* begins with establishing the *ego* as the foundation and the centre of the sphere of the conscious. The *ego*, as the subject of the acts of consciousness has the potential of widening its scope of experience indefinitely, but its practical boundaries lie at the threshold of the unknown. According to Jung, the unknown may be divided into external and internal. The external belongs to the surrounding world, i.e. to the environment and is reachable through sensory perception. As such it may become part of the conscious in form of impressions.

The internal unknown is termed the unconscious. Jung divides it into three categories – the temporary subliminal, which may be recalled at will – memory for example, the subliminal – which cannot be recalled at will but occasionally enters the domain of the conscious, and that which may never enter the conscious or has not yet done so. Another classification is also applied: the unconscious is divided into personal and collective. The personal unconscious constitutes an integral part of the whole of personality and may as well at some stage become part of the conscious though processes leading towards self-knowledge and self-development. The collective unconscious on the other hand is composed of the archetypes and almost never enters the consciousness.[1]

The influence of the unconscious, particularly the collective one, upon the *ego* is tremendous. The personality in Jungian terms is a combination of the two, and it is incorrect to assume that the processes for which the *ego* is responsible, occur without being in some way influenced by the unconscious. The functions of *ego* are always dependent on the unconscious. This is a very important point, which must not be ignored if the relationship between the wild and the unconscious is to be noted.

One should now focus on this relation, by pointing to the similarities between the nature of the signified of the "unconscious" and "wildness" and "madness". The common features of the wild and the mad are, to remind, the broadness and ambiguity of their meaning, definition through exclusion and the positioning of their operator at the point of view of their binary opposite.

The signified of the unconscious shares these characteristics. As the unknown, it is naturally unclear and opaque. The primary feature of the unknown is its lack of precise semantic boundaries. The unconscious is *terra incognita* – as it may never be fully understood, it remains mystical and beyond complete analysis. It forms no precise image of its scope and extent; as a matter of fact, for all one knows, it may be indefinite. In this respect its reach is even greater than that of the wild and the mad.

It is also defined through exclusion. Since its extent remains clouded, only description through elimination is possible. The unconscious as immediately

[1] C. G. Jung, *Archetypy i symbole*, trans. J. Prokopiuk (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1976), pp. 59–64.

unreachable to the subject, entails all that the conscious, the *ego*, doesn't. It is not possible to approach the unconscious by ascribing to it advert features – any features appear only by the way of contrast with the conscious. If it were otherwise, unconscious would no longer be unknown.

And thirdly, a fact perhaps the most important of all, the meaning of the signified is, at least seemingly, understood and employed from the point of view of the *ego*. Direct speech and thought are ascribed to the conscious. As one is most frequently unaware of the operations of the unconscious, the sign is used by the conscious part of the personality. This does not exclude the possibility of the unconscious taking part in the creation of its very meaning – it is known that it has a tremendous influence over thought processes, an idea which is in fact crucial to its relationship with the wild an the mad. However, immediate operations on the sign "unconscious" are always performed by the conscious. While its origins may lie in the overlapping area of the two components, its realisation is left to the conscious.

One could now classify the unconscious, like it was done in the beginning paragraphs of the article with madness, as an aspect of the wild and not be entirely mistaken. After all, the unconscious is untamed, unapproachable, uncontrollable, and as such it seems to fall under the extent of the wild. This is one possible relationship between the two concepts.

However one must not forget the role the unconscious plays in the processes for which the *ego* is responsible. The signification and as such the signified of wild, must from the psychological point of view influenced by the unconscious. While falling into the scope of the wild's meaning, the unconscious at the same time takes part in the creation of this very scope. Psychologically the unconscious creates the connotations of the wild, semantically it falls into the created categories. The unconscious conceives a concept which inherits its very characteristics, a concept through which it may be described, but at the same time, due to the nature of this concept, avoid any concrete definition. The wild – as an immediate offspring of the unconscious, may, just like its parent, be described only through exclusions and only from the contrasting point of view.

At the beginning madness was classified as an aspect of the unconscious. One may broaden the definition now, by suggesting that in the signified of madness, the signified of wildness finds its more concrete realisation. Madness is the embodiment of the wild's more sublime features, and is without question easier to conceptualise. Nevertheless, it bears the wild's ties with the unconscious. This relationship enforces upon its signified the shadings of ties the wild has with the unconscious. It is endowed with the opaqueness and ambiguity. Attempts at placing it within accessible frames is futile as it is branded by the unreachable nature of the unconscious. The signified of madness will remain unclear because as the wild personified, it cannot escape the overwhelming influence of the unconscious upon the *ego* that attempts to limit its meaning and create artificial boundaries.

LESZEK DRONG

Of Wild(e)ness and Carceral Subjectivity

The final stage of Oscar Wilde's life was marked by an accumulation of unexpected events which culminated in a most startling *dénouement*. His attachment to Lord Alfred Douglas gave rise to a conflict between Wilde as a supposed corruptor of the youth and the Marquis of Queensbury, Douglas's father. In an attempt to provoke litigation, Queensbury accused Wilde of sodomy and the depravation of his son. The writer could not but stand his ground. He sued Queensbury for libel and lost the case. Subsequently, Wilde was charged with acts of gross indecency which had been brought up in the course of the Queensbury trial. And again the court found him to have been on the wrong side of the law. He was sentenced to two years of imprisonment with hard labour.

Oscar Wilde commenced his term with a very vague realisation of the transgression he had committed. His conduct prior to his confinement can be described as that of a pliant stalking-horse. Manipulated by his lover, he was trapped into bringing about his own destruction. In the course of a complex lawsuit his legal status underwent a radical change; initially the plaintiff, Wilde soon turned into the defendant. The alteration of the roles which were imposed upon him rather than accepted willingly shows that at that stage things got entirely out of his control. Wilde acknowledges later that his "will power became absolutely subject to [Douglas's]".[1] The present essay attempts to analyse the implications of that subjection and the extent to which one can be confined to one's own subjectivity. It tries to open the gates leading to the discursive field which has its locus in the jail yard or, more specifically, in a carceral cell which is a subjective zone *par excellence*.

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[1] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis and Other Writings* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 103

Through most of his sentence Wilde suffered all the rigours of the penitentiary discipline. He was allowed to read but his books were censored; he was allowed to write letters but they were meticulously scrutinised by the prison authorities. At the end of his term, however, and mainly thanks to the leniency of the new governor of the Reading Gaol, he contrived to write a longer prose narrative in the guise of an epistolary text. Ostensibly, the letter was addressed to Lord Alfred Douglas but Wilde by no means intended it to be a mere piece of correspondence. He asked his friend Robert Ross to copy it before sending to Douglas and preserve the text which became "the only document that gives any explanation of my [Wilde's] extraordinary behaviour . . ."[2] That Wilde attached considerable significance to the shape of his self-revealing testimony can be inferred from numerous revisions and corrections that he introduced. Although Vyvyan Holland in the introduction to *De Profundis* emphasises that the strict prison rules allowed the prisoner only one sheet of paper at a time and thus Wilde could never revise the finished document,[3] Richard Ellmann points out that Major Nelson, who was the Governor of the Reading Gaol, relaxed the rules and allowed Wilde to keep the whole text in his cell and revise it or rewrite it when necessary.[4] Ultimately, as it stands, *De Profundis* defies Wilde's own assertion that "there is in it nothing of rhetoric".[5] It is precisely an instance of what Paul de Man calls "performative rhetoric"[6] by means of which the autobiographer – and *De Profundis* is to a large extent an autobiography – aims at affecting extratextual reality.

In order to discuss Wilde's text it is necessary to negotiate the various modes of subjectivity that both the writer and the character designated by that name may assume. Moreover, to avoid getting embroiled in the extratextual aspects of *De Profundis*, one should bear in mind that the Wilde of numerous biographical accounts is yet another literary character whose life and opinions, as we know them, are anything but factual.

In Wilde's case, the autobiographical impulse, that urge which Jean Jacques Rousseau describes as a compulsion to leave behind "a witness in my favour that will sooner or later triumph over the machinations of men",[7] seems to have originated in the Reading Gaol. The carceral circumstances, the precipitous course of his career culminating in his downfall and ultimate ignominy, must have prompted him to meditate upon that image which one leaves behind in the memory of men. His prison record indicates that soon after he had managed to come to terms with

[2] Quoted in the introduction to Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 92.

[3] Vyvyan Holland, "Introduction" to Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 91.

[4] Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 479.

[5] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 198.

[6] Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 282.

[7] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions* (London: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 525.

his life behind bars, Wilde asked for several books which included St.Augustine's *Confessions*, Pascal's *Pensées* and Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*.[8] That the reading of those pious texts exerted some influence upon the shape of *De Profundis* can be inferred not only from the title of Wilde's autobiography. Alongside his fascination with Catholicism, it contributed to the overall tone of the letter which is that of a humble confession; "A man's very highest moment is, I have no doubt at all, when he kneels in the dust, and beats his breast, and tells all the sins of his life."[9] Wilde consciously models himself on a penitent confessing subject feigning obeisance to the verdict of the Law which he accepts as the verdict of God. He embarks on a task unique in his career, namely, that of disclosing the truth about his life. But he cannot fail to introduce some melodramatic overtones into his account; in the conflict between Art and veracity it is always the former that gets the upper hand. Inasmuch as he takes pains to convey a very detailed and touching picture of his humility and degradation, he endows his carceral predicament with vivid aesthetic qualities and his confession becomes a pose assumed for want of better ones rather than a spiritual watershed.

The tendency to view himself as an aesthetic subject dates back to Wilde's Trinity years. In order to instil artistic undertones into his career he used to sign his contributions to the academic magazine with the complete set of his initials "O.F.O.F.W.W". (Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde).[10] What he found attractive about that *nom de plume* was, no doubt, a certain regular pattern of reiteration. Later on, he travelled under an assumed name of Lord Robinson,[11] the pseudonym selected by no means at random. Finally, when he was transferred to the Reading Gaol, he enthusiastically embraced his new cognomen "C.3.3" which also promised some symbolic significance.

The course of events that led to his confinement was ineluctable and left Wilde powerless to defend himself. In court, listening to the indictments aimed at his conduct he suddenly realised that the image and import of one's life story were essentially involved in the exercise of power and authority. "How splendid it would be if I was saying all this about myself",[12] that is how in *De Profundis* he summed up his reaction to the accounts of his trangression given by the hostile prosecutors. In this desire to be the sole author of his *curriculum vitae* there surfaces the impulse common to all autobiographers. What Wilde desires is to regain control not so much over his own life, which is in the hands of the jury, as over the narrative portraying his tempestuous career. He strives to master his own representation,

[8] Cf. Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, p. 456.

[9] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 197.

[10] Cf. Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, p. 16.

[11] The idea of "donning" a false name for the duration of a journey or a period of transition is also explored in Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*. Cf., e.g., p. 145.

[12] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 197.

and reclaim the copyright – *le droit d'auteur* – for his biography. His text proves that it is not enough to steer the course of one's life; one has to hold sway over the elusive flickers of descriptions and epithets, metaphors and similies, in short, over the discourse which constitutes the only permanent human subject.[13]

Paradoxically enough, Wilde comes to appreciate the power of the discourse of the self in the house of detention. It is his experience of the penitentiary mechanisms that allows him to grasp their actual importance. Accordingly, he applies writing as a means of resisting those mechanisms. His resistance is aimed primarily at isolation which is, as Michel Foucault observes, a basic principle of confinement.[14] Isolation forms a convenient hold for the application of power leading to the transformation of the convict; "through the reflection that it gives rise to and the remorse that cannot fail to follow, solitude must be a positive instrument of reform".[15] What the process manifests is also the asymmetrical distribution of power rendering the prisoner's identity dependent on the carceral discipline. Thus, by moulding his own model in ink, Wilde fends off the possibility of becoming a penitentiary object shaped according to the demands of the Law.

Michel Foucault, in reading the intricate alterations of disciplinary mechanisms in the eighteenth century emphasises the association of power with knowledge.[16] In point of fact, a parallel theme of *Nosce teipsum* dates back to the ancient Greece. That in order to exercise self-control and authority over oneself one requires self-knowledge becomes evident from Socrates onwards. Foucault describes that phenomenon in *The History of Sexuality* as the relation to truth constituting the ontological foundations of subjectivity.[17] The imperative "know thyself" becomes a prerequisite for the formation of selfhood whose shape and foundations rest on that self-centred cognition. In other words, self-examination is not restricted to its epistemological function but one is, first and foremost, *defined* by one's relation to oneself;

> It's then a matter of *forming* and recognizing oneself as the subject of one's own actions, not through a system of signs denoting power over others, but through a relation that depends as little as possible on status and its external forms, for this relation is fulfilled in the sovereignty that one exercises over oneself.[18]

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[13] Cf. Emile Benveniste, "Subjectivity in Language", in *Problems in General Linguistics* (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1984), pp. 223–30.

[14] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 236.

[15] Ibid., p. 237.

[16] Ibid., p. 224.

[17] Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, Vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 89.

[18] Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, Vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 85 [emphasis mine].

In this structure of the application of power one seems to be its subject and its object at the same time. But the necessary detour through self-knowledge that one must make on the way to oneself implies the exercise of discourse, that is, it essentially involves "the detour through the Other", to use Derrida's phrase.[19]

The Other may manifest his/her/its existence on the printed page of an autobiography as well as on the polished surface of a *speculum*. When Narcissus falls for his reflection in the water his desire is as selfless as it is irresistible. According to Mikkel Borch-Jakobsen, what Narcissus actually desires is to become a subject and identify himself with the illusory mirror-image which constitutes his representation.[20] Similarly, Wilde expects that Art, as the supreme *speculum*, will allow him to see his true features and disclose himself to others. Art is to him "the great primal note by which I... revealed, first myself to myself, and then myself to the world; the great passion of my life".[21] What is at stake here is not only the epistemological impulse to know oneself but also the emotional involvement in the enterprise which results from the ontological condition of privation. Wilde, like Narcissus, desires to be a subject because he lacks subjecthood; "if I desire to be (an) I, if I desire myself, it must, following elementary logic, be because I am not it".[22] Narcissus is an allegorical paradigm of the autobiographer who plunges into discourse in quest of an "I"; Art perversely promises the boon of subjecthood but offers him his Other.

What makes Art's lure so appealing is precisely the phantasmal refuge *from* the Other that it seems to provide. In Wilde's autobiographical letter, literature forms a counterbalance to the obtrusive company of Lord Douglas who is "the absolute ruin of [Wilde's] art".[23] Wilde's creativity is paralysed in the presence of his lover whose friendship is "intellectually degrading"[24] to the artist. Douglas represents the worldly element in their relationship and belongs to the order of Society. His role is that of a distraction and a diversion. Art, by way of contrast, functions for Wilde as a solitary retreat; a locus of voluntary confinement. Strikingly enough, when Wilde gets physically – and no doubt involuntarily – behind bars, he is inclined to find his carceral isolation less propitious for artistic manifestations. Confronted with himself, sentenced to his own company, he is finally offered an opportunity to define his own subjectivity, starting from scratch

[19] Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), p. 88.

[20] Mikkel Borch-Jakobsen, "The Freudian Subject, from Politics to Ethics", in *Who Comes After the Subject?* eds. E. Cadava, P. Connor and J. L. Nancy (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 69.

[21] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 129.

[22] Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, "The Freudian Subject, from Politics to Ethics", p. 66.

[23] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 101.

[24] Ibid., p. 100.

"a Vita Nuova",[25] as he poetically describes his new life. But face to face with his 'pure' self, Wilde regresses to his memories instead of renouncing them in an effort to purge himself of the Other. He feels obliged to assert his personal history by claiming that "to regret one's experiences is to arrest one's own development".[26] Hence, his new life is "no new life at all, but simply the continuance, by means of development and evolution, of [his] former life".[27] Even in prison he cannot fail to absorb what Derrida calls "the trace of the Other in us, the Other's irreducible presence".[28] His carceral attempt to become oneself where one can be nobody else proves to be a failure.

One cannot escape sharing the cell with the Other. According to Martin Heidegger's existential analytic in *Sein und Zeit*, coexistence with others, Being-with, as he formulates it, "is an existential characteristic of *Dasein* even when factically no Other is present-at-hand or perceived".[29] *Dasein's* subjectivity cannot be reduced to the singular; it is rather a variant name of a relation which is established between the self and the Other, namely, the relation of subjection;

> *Dasein*, as everyday Being-with-one-another, stands in *subjection* [*Botmässigkeit*] to Others. It itself *is* not; its Being has been taken away by the Others. *Dasein's* everyday possibilities of Being are for the Others to dispose of as they please.[30]

To answer the question about the "who" of these Others Heidegger introduces the term *das Man* (the impersonal "they") which is a primordial phenomenon belonging to *Dasein's* positive constitution. *Das Man* exercises its authority over *Dasein* by means of prescribing opinions and judgements, tastes and impressions, but shrinks from being identified with a particular Other. It is exterior to the self and yet it is constantly being reabsorbed into the unprotected interiority of *Dasein's* identity. *Dasein* is thus deprived of the very possibility of being one-self. Or rather, *Dasein* is always itself but it never exists homogeneously. It is a composite of the elements which, unchecked, penetrate the cellular walls of the self. *Das Man* must be crumbled and dispersed to effect this osmosis; hence its vagueness and insidiousness.

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[25] Ibid., p. 152.

[26] Ibid., p. 156.

[27] Ibid., p. 163.

[28] Jacques Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 29.

[29] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), p. 156; In Heidegger's analytic, *Dasein is* obviously not tantamount to the notion of the subject but it comes to occupy the same place and retains its essential traits. Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Eating Well, or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida", in E. Cadava, P. Connor and J. L. Nancy, eds., *Who Comes After the Subject?*, p. 98.

[30] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 164.

Heidegger's spectacular declaration: "Everyone is the other, and no one is himself",[31] apart from anything else, points to the interchangeability of the respective positions of *Dasein* and the Other, which makes *das Man's* "dictatorship" even more effective. The very word "dictatorship" brings to mind a political context of *Dasein's* predicament. *Das Man*, as a phenomenon characteristic of Being-with-one-another, is responsible for constituting what Heidegger calls "publicness".[32] Its function is parallel to that of the Law; it "proximally controls every way in which the world and *Dasein* get interpreted, ... it is insensitive to every difference of level and genuineness".[33] Thus *das Man* relies on "averageness"; it operates in the name of a unified and generally accepted standard and suppresses any manifestations of individuality which, by defining an individual in opposition to that standard, introduces the element of transgression. *Das Man* is invested with the capacity of a police agent whose task is to discipline the deliquent and reclaim him for the community. It functions as the principle of the unwritten law keeping watch over any symptom of transgression. Needless to say, once a transgression is committed, the transgressor is bound to be incarcerated.

The ideology of the prison has been inseparably associated with its reformatory function. The transformation of the individual by means of labour and coercion is justified by its 'therapeutic' objective. The jargon of the founding fathers of the prison is borrowed from the medical lexicon, including such words and phrases as "a therapy", "to cure" or "to diagnose".[34] The application of the same type of discourse runs parallel with the deployment of similar disciplinary mechanisms in relation to prisoners and patients, especially those suffering from contagious diseases. Bentham's Panopticon, as a prototype of the modern house of correction, allows, in Foucault's view, for a multiplicity of functions, which makes it "a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use".[35] By employing power over pathology – be it medical or social – the Law aims at the recuperation of the individual. The isolation he must suffer is prescribed as a remedy. But in the carceral cell, it is ultimately the prisoner himself who is left in charge of the treatment.

The avowed aim of the penal system, however, may be challenged by the progress of a malady which develops *within* the self and comes to verge on madness. For Wilde, confinement and isolation epitomise the pathological state of separation from the Other. His imprisonment is prefigured in his Brighton experience when he falls ill and is confined to bed for a couple of days. Douglas, who stays with him in the same hotel, shuns his company, which makes Wilde

[31] Ibid., p. 165.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Cf. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 227 and *passim*.
[35] Ibid., p. 205.

feel "unattended" and deprived of "mere necessaries".[36] Douglas's absence is for him a symptom of the painful and drastic rift between himself and the Other, and so is his subsequent solitude behind bars. In prison, when he is confronted with his sterile self, forcefully severed from his Other, Wilde is consumed by "sexual madness", as he acknowledges in his plea for release.[37] It is not by accident, then, that madness is supposed to pertain to man's perception of himself, to his "delusive attachment to himself",[38] rather than to his relation to the external world.

The erotic undertones of this malady are strikingly inconspicuous in Wilde's letter. He never mentions, nor even alludes to, the sexual context of his relationship with Douglas. As if to defy the precepts of the confessional discourse which compel him to unburden himself of his most grievous transgressions in order to achieve absolution and begin a new life (and this is what Wilde claims for himself in *De Profundis*), he produces a balance sheet of his expenditure on Douglas. His lover becomes an object of a financial settlement rather than an addressee of amorous discourse. Wilde disguises his desire for the Other behind the economic jargon taking advantage of "a very pronounced ambiguity between the sexual meaning and the economic meaning of certain terms"[39] which exists in Greek as well as in many other languages. Thus the word *soma* may designate both the body and possessions; *ousia* means fortune but also sperm and the loss of the latter might signify the expenditure of the former.[40]

Wilde's relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas is blatantly irregular not just because at the end of the nineteenth century homosexuality connotes a subversive and disruptive social pattern. Their affair engages them in a structure of exploitation and financial abuse in which Douglas confines his involvement to the demands and reception of benefits whereas Wilde is obliged to supply the required commodities.[41] The *status quo* cannot satisfy Wilde who delivers a list of monetary grievances trying to limit his excessive outflow. The frivolous extravagance entails the investment in the Other of his physical and emotional assets. In addition, it presupposes a degree of intimacy making this exchange possible. What Wilde's liason with Douglas cannot veil is his tendency to obscure the boundaries of his self. It is additionally emphasised by the asymmetrical quality of their partnership. Wilde complains that his "substance" is taken over by his lover; "Having made your most of my genius, my will power, my fortune, you required, in the

[36] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 116.

[37] Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, p. 471.

[38] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: Routledge, 1971), p. 27.

[39] Michel Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, p. 27.

[40] Cf. ibid., p. 27.

[41] Cf. Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, pp. 102, 123–4.

blindness of an inexhaustible greed, my entire existence".[42] Thus Wilde is rendered void by the Other. By becoming subjected to Douglas he is made *subjectless*, that is, deprived of his own subjecthood.

The continual fluctuation of subject-object positions demonstrates the ontological potential at Wilde's disposal. At the same time, his status is connected with the ethical stance that he tends to assume in relation to Lord Alfred Douglas. The latent possibilities of misinterpretation and abuse of his discourse are also due to the ambiguity of his letter. In point of fact, the "straighter" it is the more subversive potential it accumulates. *De Profundis*, as a text, allows for both literal friendship and allegorical homosexual relationship and thus reverses the actual circumstances of Wilde and Douglas's affair. By intimating sexual undertones of his text Wilde stimulates "a liberation of symbolic energy", to borrow Barthes's expression.[43] It is let loose and allowed to proliferate at large, even at the risk of running wild.

Paradoxically enough, to tame what Wilde allegorically describes in his letter, the Law has to rely on a discourse which is hardly less equivocal. The sentence that Mr Justice Wills meted out to Wilde was based on The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 which was supposed to designate, in legal terms, the nature of his offence. It reads as follows:

> Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of misdemaneur, and, being convicted thereof, shall be liable, at the discretion of the Court, to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years with or without hard labour.[44]

Apparently, the judge had no doubts about the necessity of passing the severest possible verdict[45] though the formulation "any act of gross indecency" leaves much scope for interpretation. It must function in a specific cultural and ethical context, otherwise it becomes vague and, instead of stigmatising a transgression, it raises questions about the varying social attitudes towards morality. In a sense, Wilde's transgressive potential is opposed by the exercise of legal power resorting to a very similar discursive quality.

There is much more to Wilde's legal and social position than just his ethical transgression. His sexuality is interwoven with other aspects of his existence. Just like at the end of the nineteenth century aestheticism became synonymous with homosexuality, the former being a euphemism for the latter,[46] the term "homosexual" was supposed to define an individual to the extent that, according to Jonathan Dollimore, "by the time of Wilde, homosexuality could be regarded as

[42] Ibid., p. 104.
[43] Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 158.
[44] Quoted in Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, p. 386.
[45] Cf. ibid., pp. 448–9.
[46] Cf. ibid., p. 80.

rooted in a person's identity and as pathologically pervading all aspects of his being".[47] Therefore from numerous facets of Wilde's biography, his sexual orientation comes to the fore and becomes constitutive of his subjecthood, at least in the view of his prosecutors. Society concentrates its legal, canonical and even medical resources to identify the perpetrator of sodomy with his transgression;

> The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away. It was consubstantial with him, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature.[48]

Wilde's homosexuality appears, thus, to be hardly "a temporary aberration"; it is rather a symptom of what Michel Foucault describes as "a hermaphrodism of the soul".[49] For his judges, Wilde ceases to be an artist, a personality or a member of society. For them, he is *exclusively* a homosexual.

It is not surprising, then, that sexuality is the only formative element of his identity ostensibly, or even ostentatiously, left out of Wilde's epistolary autobiography. In fact, his attachment to his lover probably does not consist in merely sexual attraction. But Wilde's letter must counterbalance the prejudice of the public, hence the necessity to disguise the virtual character of their friendship. However, though Wilde pretends to settle his affairs with his lover, he actually indulges in the allegorical overview of his affection for Douglas, just as *De Profundis* purports to lay the foundations of Wilde's new subjectivity but in the guise of the discourse of the self it manifests a longing for the Other. That Wilde invests too much in Douglas gives indications of the excessive nature of their relationship culminating in Wilde's confinement. Evidently, one should not yield entirely to the Other.

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[47] Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 67.

[48] Michel Foucault, *An Introduction*, Vol. I of *The History of Sexuality* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 43.

[49] Ibid.

AGNIESZKA PANTUCHOWICZ

Mullein

Botany handbooks tell us that she cannot grow in closed spaces. She never grows in groups and has to have a space of her own. She grows in quiet, sunny places, on poor and permeable soil. It is proverbial that "where mullein should grow, dowerless maidens go" ["gdzie rośnie dziewanna, tam bez posagu panna"]. Mullein is a weed running on meadows, barrens, sands, and hills. It is a plant with a long, strong, green stem, covered with grayish down. Her rosette leaves narrow towards the top, and her closely clustered, bright yellow flowers make up the slim and tall figure (she can be two meters tall) which overlooks the meadows. This sumptuous plant is also known as "queen's candle" or "sword". She has a number of names whose translation into English would be, I suppose, futile: *królewska świeca*, *szabla*, *gorzygrot*, *dziewizna*, *krotnica leśna*, *kędzierzawica leśna*, *kędzierzawica polna*. Phonetically, the name *dziewanna* might be associated with *dziewica* – virgin, *dziewka* – maid, *dziwka* – whore, which, I think, justifies my use of the pronoun "she" above. From practical perspective mullein is a herb which has therapeutic and also magical property perhaps known already in Homer's time.[1]

Jan Długosz in his *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae* (written in the second half of the sixteenth century), which was the first and for over a hundred years the only attempt at creating a synthetic history of Poland,[2] mentions mullein

[1] See Józef Dunin Borkowski, *Pisma* [*Works*] (Lwów, 1857); L. Bremness, *Wielka księga ziół* [*The Great Book of Herbs*] (Warszawa, 1991); Aleksander Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian* [*Slavs' Mythology*] (Warszawa, 1982); Al. Lubicz L..., *Mitologia słowiańska podług Naruszewicza, Lelewela, Bogusławskiego, Brücknera i Gruszewskiego* [*Slavonic Mythology According to Naruszewicz, Lelewel, Bogusławski, Brückner and Gruszewski*] (Warszawa, 1911).

[2] Jan Długosz, *Roczniki, czyli kroniki sławnego Królestwa Polskiego* [*Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*] (Warszawa, 1961–1985).

as the Slavic equivalent of Diana; the goddess who reigns over the forest. She was believed to be a virgin and a mother at the same time. Her *alter ego* was *Marzanna* ("madder", another wild flower with therapeutic properties) – like Ceres, she was the goddess of grain, harvest, of fertility of the earth. In *Annales*, in the entry for the year 965, Długosz describes the custom of drowning *Marzanna* and *Dziewanna* together at the end of winter. He sees them both as feminine figures. In the *Polish Chronicle* [*Kronika polska*] from the end of the fifteenth century (1597) Joachim Bielski, describing the same custom of drowning straw figures of *Marzanna* (madder) and *Dziewanna* (mullein) identifies the latter plant (he spelt it *Ziewanna*) with Diana simultaneously associating *Marzanna* with the Roman god Mars.[3] This custom is still practiced in Poland, but, surprisingly, nowadays it is only *Marzanna* (madder) that is drowned – the masculine counterpart of *Dziewanna*.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Aleksander Brückner in his *Etymological Dictionary of the Polish Language* [*Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*, 1927] notices this close connection between *Dziewanna* and *Marzanna* adding, however, that both plants should belong to the sphere of interest of botany.[4] By saying this he, in a sense, expresses the spirit of his time. As Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska notices towards the end of the *inter-bellum* period in Poland in her *Poetical Sketch-Book* [*Szkicownik poetycki*, 1939]:

> A contemporary writer never mentions flowers. More choosy poets avoid this meek ornamentation ascribing it to boarding schools poetesses or to idiots in love for whom "the language of flowers" was offered long ago, more naive than barbarian dialects.[5]

We could even take these words as a sign of the poet's disappointment with herself. Her own poetic language was never distant from what she herself calls "meek ornamentation". In her poetry we find a plenitude of flowers conventionally associated with feminine writing, either common or exotic ones, so typical for the Young Poland poetic vocabulary. However, the powerful and ambiguous images of wild flowers, like mullein, are hard to be found there.

The Young Poland period in the history of Polish literature (1890–1918) seems to be the time when the figure of mullein most frequently appeared in literary texts.[6] She attracted poets' imagination particularly for two reasons: her size and her colour. This huge plant is in fact very delicate and subtle.

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[3] Joachim Bielski, *Kronika polska* [*Polish Chronicle*] (Warszawa, 1851).

[4] Aleksander Brückner, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* [*Etymological Dictionary of the Polish Language*] (Kraków, 1927).

[5] Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, *Szkicownik poetycki* [*Poetical Sketch-Book*] (Warszawa, 1939).

[6] J. Sikora, *Przyroda i wyobraźnia. O symbolice roślinnej w poezji Młodej Polski* [*Nature and Imagination. On Plant Symbolism in the Young Poland Poetry*] (Wrocław, 1992).

Wiotkie, strzeliste dziewanny fletów
[Supple, spiry mulleins of flutes]
(Jan Sokolicz-Wroczyński)

Pamiętam te piaski nad wodą
Gromnicze pamiętam dziewanny
[I remember the sands by the water / I remember mulleins like Candlemas candles]
(Jan Kasprowicz)

Nad wysoką dziewanną,
Drga skrzydełkami ważka
[Above the tall mullein / A dragonfly trembles its wings]
(Antoni Lange)

I melodię senną marzę,
Strzelistszą niż dziewanna
[And the dreamy melody I dream / Slenderer than mullein]
(Maciej Szukiewicz)

The other intriguing feature is her bright-yellow colour gleaming in the sun:

Dziewanna ognia pochodnie kołysze
[Mullein dandles the torches of fire]
(Zofia Mrozowicka)

W pośrodku polana,
Na niej złote dziewanny zakwitają świetnie
[In the middle a clearing / Where golden mulleins blossom well]
(Lucjan Rydel)

Gdzie kołysane snem dziewanny
Złotawym gwiazdom patrzą w oczy
[Where the mulleins rocked by a dream / Look into the eyes of goldish stars]
(Zygmunt Różycki)

Probably it was due to these features of material appearance that mullein was associated with the primary cult of the sun and the celebration of fire *(Sobótka)*. A particularly interesting figure of this plant can be found in Bronisława Ostrowska's poetry[7]:

Dziewanna

Południe idzie upalne przez wrzosowiska:
Wyschłego ziela oddechy płyną upojne,
Czasami szklarka przelotna pod słońce błyska
Albo motyle na kwiatach i pszczoły rojne;
Z gęstwiny kwietnej dziewanna dumnie wytryska.

[7] Bronisława Ostrowska, *Aniołom dźwięku. Wybór poezji* [*To the Angels of Sound. Selected Poems*] (Warszawa, 1913); Eadem, *Wiersze wybrane* [*Selected Poems*] (Warszawa, 1985).

Powietrze żarem drgającym skroś się przesyca,
Jakby nim chwiała koników harmonia szklana...
Z sosnowych pni gorejących kapie żywica,
A wśród spiekoty słonecznej złota dziewanna
Stoi przegięta, miłosna – jak południca.

Noon comes hot across the heaths/ Entrancing breaths of dry herb are flowing/ Sometimes a passing dragonfly glares against the sun/ Or butterflies on flowers and swarming bees;/ From the flowery thicket mullein proudly comes. // The air with shivering heat gets oversatiated,/ As if tossed by the glass harmony of grasshoppers.../ Sap is dripping from the fiery pine trunks,/ And among the sun heat golden mullein/ Stands leaning, lovingly – like a noonmaid (*południca*).

(Bronisława Ostrowska, *Poezje*)

Mullein is shown here in the heat of noon. The image is erotically marked and the masculine attributes are underlined ("dumnie wytryska" – proudly ejaculates). The whole poem constitutes an elaborate comparison; the compositional parallel suggests identification of mullein (*dziewanna*) with the mysterious figure of *południca* and thus with the sun at noon (*południe*). *The Dictionary of the Polish Language* gives the following definition of *Południca*: "A demonic creature which appears in the fields on hot days at high noon as a woman in white cloth. She can harm people and destroy crops".[8] In another poem written in the tone of incantation and prayer a woman expresses her desire[9]:

Bogdajem...

Bogdajem rosła jako krzaki głogu
W słonecznym złocie
Albo wykwitła wśród pustych rozłogów
Jako stokrocie.

Bogdajem była jako brzoza biała
Liście rozwiała
Lub pokraśniała wśród leśnej gęstwiny
Jako kaliny.

Bogdajem była dziewanną tą złotą,
Słońca pieszczotą
Albo wyrosła jak kwiecie kąkolu
We szczerym polu.

[8] *Słownik języka polskiego* [*The Dictionary of the Polish Language*], ed. Mieczysław Szymczak (Warszawa, 1979).

[9] Bronisława Ostrowska, *Aniołom dźwięku* [*To the Angels of Sound*]; Eadem, *Wiersze wybrane* [*Selected Poems*].

I wish...

I wish I grew like hawthorn bushes / In the sunny gold/ Or blossomed among barren meadows / Like daisies. // I wish I were like the white birch tree/ Budding my leaves/ Or reddened among the forest thicket / Like cranberries. // I wish I were a golden mullein/ The sun's caress/ Or grew in the corn cockle flower / In the open country.

(Bronisława Ostrowska, *Opale*)

From among a number of plants recalled by the protagonist, mullein is the only one which she wants to identify herself with. Hawthorn, daisies, birch, cranberry tree, corn cockle are only elements of similes.

Simile was one of the most important tropes in the Young Poland poetics. By means of equivalence, forms of analogy and comparison maximum closeness of sign and its designate was to be achieved. However, the most highly ranked figure of poetic imagery was symbol. One of the trends of development which can be observed in the poetry of Young Poland was passage from symbolic comparison to symbol, where symbol is to be understood as sensual equivalent of idea which should emerge spontaneously and unexpectedly. The poets of Young Poland, like their French masters (Baudelaire spoke of "enlightening moments" in which masterpieces are created), wanted the association of images in poetry to result from "a single flash of seeing their unity", as Edward Leszczyński puts it. Modernist symbol, according to Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, can be defined as "individual and unconventional, having no didactic or ornamental function, ambiguous and imprecise. It is an equivalent of such qualities that, as not clearly crystallized, do not possess adequate terms in the system of language. Such a symbol extended upon a series of images and analogues, sometimes upon the whole work can become, as a result of complete fusion of the layers of the signifiers and meanings, an autonomous being untranslatable into any discursive language".[10]

Ostrowska's mullein becomes a symbol, or, more precisely, a symbol-myth. Her poetic practice of melting together all elements into a new whole (appearance of the plant, Slavic mythology, accentuation of the active, "masculine" attributes of the representation, solar landscapes – according to traditional symbolism the sun can be identified with the masculine principle of expansive activity). The task of this procedure is to demarcate identification and it is clearly linked with religious magic, with the magic realism of the Romantics as well as with the Modernist pantheism.

Ostrowska's mullein is an emotional symbol which is surrounded by a suggestive aura of significance. As some critics have already noticed, in the period of Young Poland women "create spontaneous, expansive poetry; poetry full of passion and desire" – as if against the grain of the misogynist ideas so

[10] Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Symbolizm i symbolika w poezji Młodej Polski* [*Symbolism and Symbols in the Young Poland Poetry*] (Kraków, 1994).

widespread at that time. Ostrowska's mullein is a mood/feeling equivalent of living in the full light, of active presence and also, in a sense, of being, or standing, "above". What is at work in the wording of this attitude is the principle of "indirect expression".

Polish Modernist women poets, like their continuators from among the contemporary poets – for instance Halina Poświatowska describing mullein as "yellow and savage" in her *In the Noon Sunshine* or *I Wish I Could Draw a Mullein's Likeness in Profile*,[11] or Małgorzata Hillar calling mullein "the queen of the meadow" in *A Ballad of Mullein*[12] and thus evidently suggesting Virgin Mary who is frequently addressed as the Queen of Poland – created, by restituting the old Slavic goddess from the mythical pantheon, a pagan, wild archetype which, as an alternative to the Christian tradition (the stereotype of Polish Mother – *Matka Polka*), was constitutive of feminine identity.

[11] Halina Poświatowska, *Poezje zebrane* [*Collected Poems*] (Toruń, 1994).
[12] Małgorzata Hillar, *Źródło* [*Source*] (Szczecin, 1985).

KRZYSZTOF KNAUER

Playing in the Wild: Toni Morrison's Play on Wild Guesses, Their Authors and the Wildness of Being in Her Novel *Jazz*, and Its Analogies in Non-fictional Real

"Wildness" is the quality and a meaning institutionally ascribed in the West to non-European presences and cultures, and its representations are constant in European politics, art, thought, and media. In the traditional Western mind "wildness" denotes the European Other just as well as the Other denotes "wildness". This conceptual union having no other boundaries than the borders of Western civilization beyond which it was situated was made into a playground for erratic white imagination while its non-fictional real simmultaneously became a battleground of colonial power struggle. The task to extricate the Other from deployed representations accompanied therefore independence struggles and civil rights movements and made the core of post-colonial creativity, theory, and education. However, recent critical scholarship has shifted its interests "from the racial object to the racial subject", as Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark* explaines "from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers; from the serving to the served".[1]

[1] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992), p. 90.

In the novel that Toni Morrison publishes a year later, that is *Jazz*,[2] in compliance with her own instructions she employs a double focus as she moves it away from the story and its characters to the storyteller. The story is complicated, we could even say "wild", its main characters, a married couple Joe and Violet, leave the South in search for a better living and migrate to New York City, where in 1920s with the background of jazz, riots, and the life of Black community their tragedy takes place. Joe kills his young lover Dorcas and Violet attacks Dorcas' dead body with a knife at the funeral ceremony. Both are believed to have gone mad, and the story unravels as they both continue overshadowed by Dorcas' picture looking back at them from a mantelpiece where Violet placed it. For the most part the storyteller stays invisible and withdrawn, the reader doesn't get any information about her except for her brilliantly sympathetic but calm and convincing voice of her narration. She seems to "know it all" as if she was a part of the city, or a voice of the community, and the reader impressed by her distinct analytical skills, by her compassion is likely to acknowledge her authority over the represented.

It is not until we witness her first fumble when her grip on the story relaxes that we start to doubt her and consider a possibility of siding with the described. The object of the narrator's lapse is Golden Gray – a very light-skinned youth raised by his white mother, but now searching for his black father down south. The difficulty in guessing the motives of and interpreting his actions ignite her confession:

> What was I thinking of? How could I have imagined him so poorly? Not noticed the hurt that was not linked to the color of his skin, or the blood that beat beneath it. But to some other thing that longed for authenticity, for a right to be in this place, effortlessly without needing to acquire a false face, a laughless grin, a talking posture. I have been careless and stupid and it infuriates me to discover (again) how unreliable I am. ... Now I have to think this through, carefully, even though may be doomed to another *misunderstanding*. (p. 160)

The author who later wins a Nobel Prize for her literary work makes her narrator admit a failure of misreading and therefore misrepresenting one of the supporting characters of the novel. A quite unusual device, for the author enjoys a privilege of the unquestioned right to subjective interpretation and representation of the tale s/he chooses to tell. Admitting a mistake, or interweaving it within the main body of narration, is a sabotage gesture to the genre of fiction, or to its liberal image. For the essence of fiction is not to represent reality as it is, but to represent its own accountability. If a part of fiction can be constituted by its own misinterpretation (through which fiction becomes its own fiction), its accountability and reliability may be impaired. Together with accountability and reliability of fiction we can question accountability and reliability of narration and representations, that both create and use, as a possibility of an error is inscribed in them. Then, we

[2] T. Morrison, *Jazz* (London, 1993).

have to agree that narration, fiction, and representation may originate in fallacious assumptions, and that any representation as it is always happening through narration is likely to be erroneous. In that way the narrator's confession of the failure disrupts the reader's ability or readiness to believe that what s/he is being told is a "true" and coherent representation of (fictional) events. And that brings us back to Toni Morrison's change of focus.

Although in *Playing in the Dark* she endorses the thesis that we cannot hold the author accountable for the characters of his/her fiction (of which the narrator may be one), and does not encourage evaluation of "the quality of a work based on the attitudes of an author or whatever representations are made of some group",[3] but since texts cannot be accountable for themselves and do not exist in a historical vacuum she does not negate the nexus. On the contrary, she elaborates on how the freedom to narrate the world and to institutionalize its fictionalized wild guesses and its abrasive representations serves non-literary purposes. Which underscores the necessity to incorporate those issues into literary criticism inasmuch as waiving them would mean lobotomizing critical studies and "immobilizing [texts'] complexities and power and luminations just below its tight, reflecting surface".[4]

Toni Morrison's averted gaze resurrects the author and the critic's interest in the author's interests and historical background. Her gesture enlightens postcolonial endeavors to enfranchise the (mis)represented from (mis)representations. And to do so effectively the critic has to channel description through the describer away from the described, which should give us an insight into controversies surrounding colonial texts with *Heart of Darkness* standing out.

The confession opens new spaces for the reader's own interpretation and coaxes him/her to question the narrator's authority. It may well function as an invitation of sorts to, if not share responsibility for the story then to subvert the power of the written word which shapes ever so strongly our (mis)conceptions of others in the world. Morrison challenges the trust in learning from reading – an activity commonly free of any suspicion – by revealing challenges and traps of writing or story telling insofar as she records guessing at fictitious characters' motives encouraging guessing at the guessing, endless attempts to decipher not only the written word and its meaning or reference, but also the connection between perception and its printed linear representation.

Towards the end of the novel the author gives the reader yet another incentive for assuming a critical distance towards any narration or analysis while she unveils the narrator's peculiar predilection for pain and inflicting it on the created:

[3] T. Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, p. 90.
[4] Ibid., p. 91.

> I was so sure one would kill the other. I waited for it so I could describe it. (p. 220) Pain. I seem to have an affection, a kind of sweettooth for it. Bolts of lightning, little rivulets of thunder. And I the eye of the storm. Mourning the split trees, hens starving on rooftops. Figuring out what can be done to save them since they cannot save themselves without me because – well, it's my storm, isn't it? I break lives to prove I can mend them back again. And although the pain is theirs, I share it, don't I. Of course. Of course. I wouldn't have it any other way. But it is another way. I am uneasy now. Feeling a bit false. What, I wonder, would I be without a few brilliant spots of blood to ponder? Without aching words that set, then miss, the mark? (p. 219)

The narrator shows herself as a deviant oppressor thriving on her experiments to break and mend lives, who will do anything to gain objects to ponder; the contention, which may be equally seen as playful and fictional as it may be laden with feasible concern. For fictions have been constructed not only for fictional and literary use, but a lot of it has been aimed to meander into sciences or humanities and their use having been more literal than literary. Although an unequivocal pattern of relation between fictional representation and experienced reality could not possibly be discerned as their reciprocal impact is highly nuanced, it cannot be disputed that cultural images create reality that exceeds texts, art, or life of media. There has probably never been an instance of organized oppression that would not be fed by dehumanizing images of objects of that oppression. Regardless of whether we are going to refer to colonial and Nazi discourses or bourgeois and communist aesthetics we are bound to see enormity of historical consequences they bear. An error may be inherently inscribed in any representation, but there are errors that are being inscribed in them to perpetuate cultural, political, and economic domination. The contention is shared by Toni Morrison who, in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination*, examines American literary classics to observe how a non-white character's presence was constructed in "imaginative ways" to serve racial politics and social and economic division.[5] Fiction, then, can provide for a variety of purposes and permeates many aspects of social, academic, and political life. Therefore, the narrator's unreliability to which Morrison alludes at the end of the novel favors a broader perspective on the author–text–reader relation than R. Barthes suggested in *The Death of the Author*,[6] to which I will come back.

Let us have a look at the further flow of the narrator's confession:

> I ought to get out of this place. Avoid the window; leave the hole I cut through the door to get in lives instead having one of my own. It was loving the City that distracted me and gave me ideas. Made me think I could speak its loud voice and make that sound sound human. I missed the people altogether.

[5] Ibid., p. 64.

[6] R. Barthes, "The Death of the Author", in *The Anthology of Literary Criticism*, pp. 167–72.

> I thought I knew them and wasn't worried that they didn't know about me. Now it's clear why they contradicted me at every turn: they knew me all along. Out of the corners of their eyes they watched me. And when I was feeling most invisible, being tight-lipped, silent and unobservable, they were whispering about me to each other. They knew how little I could be counted on; how poorly my know–it–all self covered helplessness. That when I invented stories about them – and doing it seemed to me so fine – I was completely in their hands, managed without mercy. ...
> So I missed it altogether. (p. 220)

The narrator pictures herself as a know–it–all self, who hoped for invisibility and for capturing the essences of the City; however, being aware of her failure in endowing the city with a human voice, as well as in becoming an unseen pair of objective and dispassionate eyes she surrenders her work to the objects or rather subjects (now) of her fiction who might become readers of the novel. On this account we would agree with Barthes that the author is not the father, mother, or the only clue to understand or explain the story. On the other hand, though, the author of the story is not equipped with the performative power of her words – that is why she revalorizes them at the end. Her power is that of guessing rather, and of managing to look on while being looked on back. She is more than Barthes' "instance writing" and *is*, in fact, "equipped with a being preceding and exceeding her writing''.[7] She is known to be unreliable, her words are being contradicted, her "passions, humors, feelings, impressions" show on every page; the story bears the narrator's raptures and ruptures as well as her biases. Apart from the "immense dictionary" from which she draws, as Barthes put it, she is a historical being. And apart from the historical function she – as the author of the story – performs, as Foucault insisted to see (criticizing Barthes for overlooking historicity[8]), the narrator is a character in the fiction she presents and a character in the fiction that surrounds her, prone like any character, author, or critic to misrepresent or to be misrepresented. Her reconciliatory confession may be seen as a decolonizing gesture for she withdraws from the initial snooty poise she showed, collapsing herself onto the same level with the objects of her description. In this manner she renounces the authority over them that she imagined to enjoy, admitting:

> [I was] confused in my solitude into arrogance, thinking my space, my view was the only one that was or mattered. (p. 221)

Unlike academicians who value their obligation to analytical work and their insistence on consistency of a text, the story teller chose not to preserve her assertions throughout the whole text – taking advantage of postmodern experimental standards she breaks the coherence of the text where her know–it–all attitude gives

[7] Cf. ibid., p. 170.
[8] M. Foucault, "What is an Author", in ibid., pp. 197–210

way to a sense of estrangement in relation to her work and her analytical skills. She withdraws into the end distrusting the analytical but having reached the reader in the privacy of his/her reading ("Look where your hands are. Now" is the closing sentence). Nonetheless, she engages the reader in another play of parallels beforehand, still confessing:

> I saw the three of them, Felice, Joe and Violet. I believed I saw everything important they did, and based on what I saw I could imagine what I didn't: how exotic they were, how driven. Like dangerous children. That's what I wanted to believe. It never occurred to me that they were thinking other thoughts, feeling other feelings, putting their lives together in ways I never dreamed of. Like Joe. To this moment I'm not sure what his tears were really for, but I do know they were for more than Dorcas. All the while he was running through the streets in bad weather I thought he was looking for her, not Wild's [this is what Joe's mother, who lived in the forest, was called] chamber of gold. ...
>
> I'd love to close myself in the peace left by the woman who lived there and scared everybody. Unseen because she knows better than to be seen. After all, who would see her, a playful woman who lived in a rock? Who could without fright? Of her looking eyes looking back? I wouldn't mind. Why should I? She has seen me and is not afraid of me. She hugs me. Understands me. Has given me her hand. I am touched by her. Released in secret. (p. 221)

The narrator finally gives us the nature of her missed speculations, and she does it by employing herself and her characters in a play of appearances – reminding one of hide–and–seek or still better: hide–and–seek–and–analyze game. She mentions another woman, a wild one, who lived in a rock, scared people, was pitied by them, and made herself unseen; although watched out for she was looking back from behind the bushes. Wild is the terrifying other for the inhabitants of close-by areas. She is the unknown and feared being of whom gossips are the only representations. She is said to be crazy. She has got no say and no voice. What we learn from the story for a fact is that she bit the cheek of one of the characters who helped her when she was delivering a child (Joe). Her son and his wife are believed to be crazy, they do the "wild" things. And there is a sense in which the "wild", jazz permeated atmosphere of the neighborhood makes them do so. Every person in the book speaks with a borrowed voice or with the one that is imposed on them by the narrator. They are subject to narrator's representations, gossip about "how exotic they were, how driven", how wild.

However, the story teller herself is being observed and pitied by the people she is describing. Like Wild she is watched from "the corners of their eyes", she is an object of whispers: a lonely, helpless individual trying to find cover. Absence of dialog or information stimulates fabricating data about the other in every case, while the objects of fictions that come into play are ceaselessly contradicting them whenever they leave their hiding places. Still, every party is labeled "wild" by others. Even the story teller says she is touched by Wild. In fact, she is the

wildest one; her imagination has gone wild, filled her with eagerness; her speculations are running wild, as they like, as she likes. Therefore she has made mistakes, her story is based on wild guesses.

As it has been already mentioned the use of fiction is not restricted to literature, for fiction takes up substantial spaces in social life and in our knowledge feeding realities of make-believe and stereotypes as well as substituting for the unknown and indefinable, and marking the territory of the other. And the latter territory is an unmapped area of wildness simply because it is located outside the familiar and the known order. Hence anthropological ventures into that area with the view of gaining knowledge about it (or bringing change or "order") are bound to be based on wild guesses; inasmuch as their very core is constituted by the lack of data what is obtained frequently bears resemblance to a set of tourist photographs of the unknown objects or subjects with which the occasional encounter cannot guarantee the reliability of our opinions regarding their nature and their purpose. Wherefore wild areas of our knowledge, otherness, are filled with fiction, which makes representations of those areas or of those others look still wilder. The correlation between the other, representation, and wildness is then a tight one. So is the correlation between the author and wildness, because the author's work of producing speculations is wild in its outcome of wild guesses. And this being so, we may argue that the author is not dead, but is indeed wild and trying to find cover under his/her fictions which s/he draws from "the immense dictionary" filtered through his/her personal and cultural abilities and biases.

The category of "wildness" seems to strictly depend on a vantage point. It is not univocal and is not reserved for specific features that put together would make anyone "wild", it is rather the other way around. Certain features come with it to describe somebody labeled "wild" beforehand, for the lack of any data to attach to them instead. Thus "wildness" is a very political category measuring and building up social distance; while representing "wildness" is another way to manipulate with the other's qualities.

Longman's dictionary confirms that assumption: its first entry defines wild as: "living or growing in natural conditions and having natural qualities", while the second one: "violent or uncontrollable in behavior", or the sixth one reads: "extremely eager for or excited about to an unreasonable degree". Then, "wildness" may be either natural or extremely unreasonable – so unnatural. The category and its representations may be created spontaneously: "showing lack of thought, order or direction" (5th entry), or violently, uncontrollably, and passionately, or according to a laid out syllabus inasmuch as "taming, cultivating, breeding, or producing" are planned activities.

The category displays itself in such a large selection and so is easily open to strategic shifts that one may wonder what is not wild? or what cannot be represented as wild?

Within the eurocentric tradition of rational thought the answer we will get is civilization – the cultivated, the tamed, the bred, the produced, the reasonable – everything that comes from within rationalism-related ideologies; while its multiple others will be located on the other side of the boundary, as it is exemplified by colonial discourses, and which is thoroughly examined by Edward Said in his *Orientalism* for one. However, what if even that order can be reversed? Zygmunt Bauman argues that rational vision of perfection and uniformity of meanings was the most passionate desire of the modern mind.[9] The incentive for rationalism was an uncontrollable eagerness then, and its practice violent in that its modern version created social engineering and eugenics (the art and science of genetics and human breeding), and consequently introduced sterilization laws in the U.S., inspired fascism and holocaust along with segregational laws. What is not wild then if even the rational mind at large goes wild?

Bauman in *Modernity and Ambivalence* gives us other insights into the nature of systematizing thought, and that is a kind of reversibility of goals, of targets to be overcome and of results. If the modern mind aimed to eradicate "particularity" for the benefit of the project of universality, it quite inversely informs us about particularity. If it designed order, clarity, permanence, and determination – it came up with incertitude, indefiniteness, temporariness, and ambivalence.[10] The wildness not only of cultivated modern gardens but also of being proves regenerating and inalienable, re-locating modern answers and instructions in the sphere of and based on wild guesses; postmodernism only reflecting and not creating this pattern.

It seems that the map of modern knowledge represents vast and endless areas of wildness only dotted with points of wild guesses. Even the natural sciences have their regions of wildness, while having taken attempts to prove the obvious. And the obvious is the only triumphant space in Western Science, according to Master of Ceremony, a character from Ch. H. Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure*.[11] Not disputing the advantages of some of those triumphs, it is clear, nonetheless, that the intention to prove, define, and capture runs wild. Whether it is atomic physics, social engineering, or studying birds, the Western mind represents itself as wild; the opinion being quite widespread among non-conservative or post-colonial intellectuals and writers. *Teachings of My Grandmother*, a poem by Jimmi Durham, a Cherokee Indian writer, illustrates that point masterly:

> In a magazine too expensive to buy I read about
> How with scientific devices of great complexity,
> U.S. scientists have discovered that if a rat
> Is placed in a cage in which it has previously
> Been given an electric shock it starts crying.

[9] Cf. Z. Bauman, *Ambiguity and Modernism*. Polish ed. (Warszawa, 1995), p. 77.
[10] Ibid., pp. 260–1.
[11] Ch. H. Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*. Polish ed. (Warszawa, 1988), p. 88.

I told my grandmother about that and she said,
"We probably knew that would be true."

In another magazine I read about a man who spent
Twenty years of his life studying why birds sing.
He made thousands of tape recordings, mechanical singing
Devices, and artificial birds. He also killed many birds
To study them, and put others in cages so they
Wouldn't fly away during experiments.
In the end he learned that birds sing to communicate
To each other, and that each bird has its own song
Besides the regular communication songs.

I told my grandmother about that and she said,
"Twenty years! How did he support his family then?"
I explained that the government and the university
Paid him to do that.
She said, "We probably knew that would be true."[12]

There are two points made by Durham that make a contribution to my argument. The first one is the realm of intuitive knowledge that among many North American Indian cultures is approved of as another way of knowing and relating to the things in the world[13]; whereas, to the Western mind intuition does not represent anything firm to hold on to, anything that could be located beyond the alternately marginalized and romanticized sphere of the wild, of the mysterious, or of the body.

The other point in the poem is the place of academia in creating areas of wildness or as a designated reservation of wildness. To say that academia creates areas of wildness can be justified in that academia has validated several ideologies in various historical periods and geographical settings, granting them the rank of sciences (on which occasion one should think of how scientists and humanists often collaborate in fabricating data about the oppressed); and, also because of its (wild) excesses performed in a manner described by Durham, or through its active power of passing judgments regarding public norms, social acceptance and cultural or civilizational imperatives. Whereas, it could be argued it is a designated reservation of wildness simultaneously, because it creates a critical view of the society and is preoccupied with the society's image rather than its change. Also because the rights it enjoys are nonetheless reserved to its own territory and one needs to renounce them outside. As a designated area of wildness or of free political choice it may be said to function as the picture of Dorian Gray does – it is necessary to *spectacularize* the "order" (like Dorian's beauty) that comes with the lack of choice, which holds true especially in repressive systems.

[12] J. Durham, *Columbus Day* (Minneapolis, 1983), p. 39.

[13] N. Francisco, P. V. Beck, A. L. Walters, *The Sacred Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life* (Navajo Community College Press, 1990), p. 48.

There are numerous faces of "wildness", and if we were to come back to Toni Morrison's *Jazz* we would discover another aspect of "wildness" signalled by the title. The narrator states that black music of the 20s and 30s, which is called by some godfearing characters "low-down" makes people go or/and dance wild. That perhaps would fit into the "natural wild" or into the "passionate" one. Regardless, we see "wildness'' as an imaginary plateau strictly connected with Western Orientalism or American Africanism or any "research" areas that have been created by the dominant societies' intellectuals, artists, and politicians to preserve social and economic stratification as well as to enhance the difference and to reinforce a "civilized" identity. Black music, like other forms of black culture, is always positioned as "low" in opposition to "high" or "classical" standards. Even if Western "genius" frequently derives its inspiration from African or other non-European cultures the view on the stratification the European mind cherishes seems constant. African masks are seen as "primitive", while their painted representations created by Picasso as "a work of genius". Jazz has accompanied the Harlem Renaissance, and had an uplifting and empowering effect on the African-American population, as it is reflective of black experience of joy and pain. Hence its activating, entertaining, and reflective quality, like "wildness" of being, is regenerating, ineridicable, and inseparable despite any exterior limitations.

SŁAWOMIR MASŁOŃ

Matter of Paradise

"The jungle closed behind them like a tomb, and after hours of increasingly weary but also frenzied rowing through incomprehensibly labyrinthine salt-water channels overtowered by the cathedral-arching trees, Ayooba Shaheed Farooq were hopelessly lost; they turned time and again to the buddha, who pointed, 'That way', and then, 'Down there', but although they rowed feverishly, ignoring fatigue, it seems as if the possibility of ever leaving this place reduced before them like the lantern of a ghost; until at length they rounded on their supposedly unfallible tracker, and perhaps saw some small light of shame or relief glowing in his habitually milky-blue eyes; and now Farooq whispered in the sepulchral greenness of the forest: 'You don't know. You're just saying anything'." (*MC*, 360)[1]

The four characters of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* are swallowed up by the jungle at the moment when the main protagonist Saleem Sinai alias the buddha has absorbed an overdose of history in the shape of the Pakistani civil war. What takes them in are the Sundarbans – the jungle at the mouth of the river Ganges. The forest "which is so thick that history has hardly ever found the way in" (*MC*, 359). The forest – *foris* – the outside.[2] The Sundarbans, the non-place.

Place is a familiar word which makes our life more focused. We carry it with us permanently and make use of it as we go along. With its help we make the world our own. A place is a space perceivable to our senses, it has its specific

[1] Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London: Picador, 1982).

[2] Jean-François Lyotard, "Scapeland", in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. A. Benjamin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 215.

features: the way it looks, feels, smells. It also has some action(s) contained in itself (a church is a place of worship, a meadow is a place for a picnic, etc.) which makes it graspable to the mind. These give the place some relative stability and uniqueness when it comes to differentiation – there are no two places alike. But with the change of scene this meaning of place may waver.

There is a *desert*: a stretch of sand or stones which unwinds indefinitely in all directions. Wherever you go the desert looks (and feels and smells...) the same. A place in the desert is like any other place in the desert. The circumstances inflict on the space the process of homogenization. But difference remains, even if it is only the matter of perspective: "here" and "there" are not just conjecture, they are not only illusory, they are grounded in the experience of seeing.

The reference standard which makes a "desert place" possible is the *horizon*, the background against which the observer can measure himself and the objects of his perceptions. The horizon "rectifies" the desert place, makes it obvious and divisible for the eye, reassures the grasp of spatiality.

Jungle presents itself differently in that respect. It closes upon the intruders. It grows: "The leaves in the heights of the great nipa palms began to spread like immense green cupped hands, swelling in the nocturnal downpour until the entire forest seemed to be thatched" (*MC*, 361). The jungle is the incomprehensible tangle of vegetation where all places look the same and where all standards of measure are irretrievably lost. In its proper sense the jungle is not a place.

What is cut off by the cocoon of the jungle is not only the ruler of the horizon. Two other standards, or rather a double-standard, cease to provide consciousness with data, or at least their influence is vastly limited: neither the sun nor the moon can be counted on to regulate natural life. The measured time flows over its mould making its presence both more and less felt. All the creatures are either transparent or "almost entirely colourless owing to the absence of direct sunlight" (*MC*, 362). And with that, time becomes more monochromatic too, moments that constitute periods of time get dangerously alike and indistinguishable. Time appears to lose its clockwise technological manageability, its density changes, the process of congealing begins: "entire hours or days or weeks" pass "dissolving into each other" (*MC*, 361, 363).

"The jungle ... swallowed them the way a toad gulps down a mosquito"; it "closed behind them like a tomb" (*MC*, 360); the sojourn there is "the time of punishment" (*MC*, 363). The forest is unwelcome. Its unwieldiness estranges. It fills with remorse and apprehension which only deepen the feeling of being out–of–place. It threatens with its monstrosity, its boundlessness. The monstrosity of being completely other.[3] Yet it is also a mirror where "flitting through the night-forest went the wraiths of their hopes" and misdeeds "leading them by the hand

[3] Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, Gesamtausgabe, Band 31 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982), p. 135.

towards a new adulthood" (*MC*, 364) and where their bodies are unnarcisstically reflected in the stuff of the world around them. The monster and the mirror which make us see with both eyes create that way their own perspective. But does it not lead us back to the old Cartesian dychotomy? Not necessarily, the jungle puts forward a certain sleight of hand: we look into the imperfect, tainted mirror. Or even the purposefully curved one. The curved mirror which reflects a thing–as–other distorts the new perspective.[4]

Sight is founded on distance.[5] It works properly only having established a safe space between the watching subject and the watched object, "objectification" of which has the sense of being looked at "disinterestedly". This is the way a Renaissance painter looks at a thing: his disembodied I/eye watches through the window-like easel. The distance abstracts and tames. The curved mirror de-geometrizes space, makes it more tactile and introduces unhygenic proximity in the place of sterile distance: proximity as intimacy with monstrosity. It makes the eye *myopic*. Using Rushdie's own metaphor:

> Suppose yourself in a large cinema, sitting at first in the back row, and gradually moving up, row by row, until your nose is almost pressed against the screen. Gradually the stars' faces dissolve into dancing grain; tiny details assume grotesque proportions; the illusion dissolves – or rather, it becomes clear that the illusion itself *is* reality ... (*MC*, 165–6).

When your nose is pressed against the screen the clear-cut shapes blur and things start to leak into each other. The safety of a perspective is forsaken and what one sees becomes actually *absorbing*:

> as they drank they fell deeper and deeper into the thraldom of that livid green world, the jungle sucked it [them] in, and knew what they were like (*MC*, 362).

Yet its osmotic quality is only one side of a double process because, at the same time, the viewer, to be able to see, must remain separate as well.[6] What makes this double-bind possible is the mind's centrality as far as its world of spacial relations is concerned: space neither "vanishes" nor is it radically "short-circuited". It continues to exert its (however altered) influence but the world "changes it place", it is no longer "out there": the mind immersed in space becomes a starting point, a beginning zero of spatiality of the world

[4] Martin Jay, "Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and the Search for a New Ontology of Sight", in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, ed. M. Levin (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 170.

[5] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: Thinking* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1978), p. 111.

[6] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Eye and the Mind", in *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. J. M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 162–3.

which is all around and not only in front of the viewer. The eye turns its inside out.[7]

The changing status of vision is bound to influence our structures of temporality. The time of numerical consecution, the time of calendar "before" and "after" is the time in which the eye made itself comfortable: the ineluctable spatiality of our everyday experience makes us think of the time in front of us and time behind us.[8] These are the categories of the disinterested eye. But with the collapse of it the mind finds itself resting on the slippery footing of the present surrounded by time and, once again, being its own vantage point: it does not mean that the path leads nowhere, it means that the path is not a path at all. Spatial metaphors become of no use in the jungle: the curved mirror teaches the *ego* the art of surrender – while still being palpable for itself it is overcome by the willingness to let things be. But can such a double gesture be accomplished? And what happens if *over-exposure* takes place?

It is said that looking in a mirror long enough one is faced with the physiognomy of the devil, the negative principle of chaos, the formlessness of the universe. That looking incites the mind and puts its powers on edge. Exposure makes it feverish, overexposure makes it burn. Overexposure to the curved mirror incinerates the mind. The mind burns and in the ashes, the ashes of non-place, a new positive quality can be glimpsed: the *landscape*.[9]

Ever since Aristotle vision has been connected to form.[10] In fact, production of form was considered to be the only task of vision. But there is always something un-formally unsettling in an object appearing this way: it makes itself contingent, there is some kind of opacity ingrained in it. The object cannot lodge itself comfortably in the looking subject. Vision seems to desire reaching beyond form. But what if "form simply *is* that which presents itself to vision, 'allows itself to be seen', how can there be vision which is not, somehow, of form? We seem to be trying to see nothing".[11] Is that *nothing* never to be seen? Does vision have to be blind to its own impossibilities? What is not seen can make its appearance just by being taken into consideration. The inside is always the image of the outside and what we do not see has to be considered just for the reason that it influences our seeing, if for nothing else. Then the nothing is inevitably part of what we see and when the mind burns the only things that are left for us to see are the blind spots around which our vision has to organize itself.[12]

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[7] Ibid., p. 178.

[8] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: Thinking*, pp. 205–6.

[9] Lyotard, "Scapeland", p. 212.

[10] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 7.2.

[11] John McCumber, "Derrida and the Closure of Vision", in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, p. 239.

[12] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 163.

The incinerated mind reveals a landscape: a place with its destiny and destination wiped clean. Forms that make a place consumable and domesticated are destroyed by the heat. What is left over then? (The landscape cannot be just "empty" – it is not a form of negativity.) "That element in the datum which has no destiny": matter.[13] The landscape demonstrates the pure actuality of the world. What gets exposed is "an excess of presence",[14] the basic and evident uncleanliness of the world. A glimpse of untamed matter, landscape de-monstrates the world.

But the mind "never burns enough", being as we are we always owe landscape a debt[15]: de-monstration never reaches the point of assimilation. Materiality of the world can be revealed, but it can never be grasped. The blind spots must remain blind and blind as they are they constitute the very condition of vision: that what consciousness does not see is, in fact, what makes it see.[16] What constitutes the blind spot of consciousness in the presence of the exhuberance of the matter is its own *corporeity*. In the ashes of the mind this is the blind spot that remains, "an absence which stands as a sign of a horrifying presence"[17] that cannot be investigated. Then it is not only in the sense of being without destiny that the landscape blinds the eye; the innocent eye is indeed blind but its blindness has also a further meaning: the eye cannot see itself, it cannot turn upon its own materiality.

The jungle is a place where narratives are unwound: the narratives of the past that "flowed so freely that they seemed to be an aspect of the monsoon" (*MC*, 364). They fill the ears. But how are they possible in the aftermath of the blinded vision? How is a description feasible in the world void of both topography and history? A tale cannot be told without a framework of how, where and when. The problem is that the landscape's power to dissolve seems not to allow a narrative to take place.[18] Yet speaking happens as the afterburn of the landscape experience. The stories are told as if speech was the world's inevitable quality, one of the ways of its being present. As appearing in the world is the compelling need of every creature, human beings seem to have the irresistible urge to speak in order to reveal what would otherwise remain hidden and invisible.[19] What cannot be seen exposes itself to language.

[13] Lyotard, "Scapeland", p. 214.

[14] Ibid., p. 216.

[15] Ibid., p. 214.

[16] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. C. Lefort, trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 248.

[17] Lyotard, "Scapeland", p. 217.

[18] Ibid., p. 216.

[19] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*: *Thinking*, p. 98.

Language endeavours to unveil the area of blindness, to make it present to the ear (then eye) and what cannot be seen finds its way into language. We are able to speak of nothing; the invisibility is penetrated by the gift of language: it is metaphor that reaches forth. Using it with care we can accomplish an impossible translation, a carrying-over between two different existential modes. What cannot be seen can appear to the ear by means of similarity of relations, by means of analogy.[20] The invisible takes hold, however tentatively, of the domain of the senses.

The opposition between the landscape and the narrative is also the opposition between showing and telling. Or not the opposition maybe, but incongruity: showing and telling are two different tenses. But then is not this difference purely formal, operational? After all, it is the narrative that establishes a hold on time: it can make time pass, loop, fold upon itself, catch up with itself or even escape itself.[21] A narrative takes time but what does time matter to the narrative?

Yet, in a sense, it does. No description of landscape can make it present to the eye, language can never achieve a complete translation into vision. In description, language tries to be equal to, make do for the mind's momentary absence. But, for obvious reasons, it is always too late for an accomplishment of this kind. And not only is it a matter of time – the medium itself is "unwieldy": words can never achieve the immobility and plenitude of blinding objects of contemplation. As words are always slippery and awkward, our debt to the landscape is never paid.[22]

[20] Ibid., pp. 104–6.
[21] Lyotard, "Scapeland", p. 216.
[22] Ibid., p. 217.

PAWEŁ FRELIK

Wild(er)ness of Technology

> Become chromium stallions on a sweeping silicone beach as technicians of ecstasy compute great foam flecked purple and green waves...[1]

Man's and the machine's coexistence has been a rather troubled relationship at times. Despite the popular perception, technology has been a subject of philosophical interrogation for more than two thousand years now. Aristotle suggested that the goal of *techne* was to accomplish what nature was unable to accomplish, a statement which set a clear division between nature and technology. In the resultant traditional pattern of wild nature and humane culture technology has always been positioned in the latter's domain and therefore associated with order, progress, and auxiliary function in relation to its creator, man. As early as in 1641 Descartes observed that the human body "be considered as a kind of machine".[2] The same approach has come back in modern times in works of such theorists as Norbert Wiener who considered all living beings particular types of machines equipped with the principle of feedback. Mechanist conceptions emptied the machine of everything that would complicate its image of a collection of parts constructed by man with a definite intention. Vitalist notions, in turn, presented it as striving to assimilate to living beings. Technology is also a major subject of works of such prominent philosophers as Felix Guattari, Giles Deleuze, Paul Virilio, Jean Baudrillard, and many others. Outside strictly academic and philosophical field, there exist two extreme, albeit somehow simplistic, traditions of

[1] Hi-Rez, on-line fanzine, available from stormy@well.sf.ca.us.

[2] Quoted after David Porush, *Soft Machin* (New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 3.

technophilia and technophobia in which one ascribes to technology notions of evolution and enlightenment and the other treats it as a deadly threat to humanity. The two attitudes may be also defined in terms of the debate about the nature of technology *per se*. Technophiles contend that it is neutral as a tool and can be used to both good and bad ends only of man's volition. In contrast, technophobes claim that technology possesses the ability to transcend its original purpose and start controlling its creator. As much as the times of cheerful technophilia have probably passed for good, technophobia seems to persist in a number of refined and multifaceted shapes in the second part of twentieth century. All these theories have quite naturally found their way into literature. In the following paper I would like to examine the technophobic strain in the letters, particularly in the postmodern genre of cyberpunk.

First the dystopian novel, then science fiction in its numerous forms presented futures in which technology ruled its creator, man. As early as in 1818 Mary Shelley's Frankenstein said: "You are my creator, but I am your master – obey."[3] Later in the same century Thoreau recapitulated the same thought in *Walden* stating: "Men have become the tool of their tools." The list of twentieth-century technophobic narratives might include such works as Huxley's *Brave New World*, Zamyatin's *We*, or D.F. Jones's less known *Colossus*, not to mention the whole array of works in the science fiction genre which could be simultaneously labelled as technotopias. The common denominator of such works has been an obsessive fear of dehumanization, automatization of life, and extinction of man's natural evolution, all of which are the direct consequences of the human reliance on the machine. Needless to say, such visions have been counterbalanced by a number of other narratives in which Aristotelian *techne* has been depicted as benevolent and promoting the development of man. Technology of the Golden Age of science fiction, the 1950s, helps man reach outward to the stars, conquer space, carry civilization to less-advanced and communicate with highly-developed alien races. The popular cinematic and literary series of "Star Trek" is a direct, appropriately intellectualized descendant of the latter tradition.

Enter Cyberpunk

Cyberpunk's emergence in the early 1980s as a literary (sub)genre, or a mode within science fiction as some have it, was fostered by the lightening-fast and almost disturbing developments in computing, genetic engineering, and communications as well as by the onset of the alleged post-industrial phase of western

[3] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (New York: Oxford, 1969), p. 167.

societies in which information becomes the key to power, virtual reality often substitutes everyday life, and media overload is a condition everyone faces on a day-to-day basis. Set in the near future and reminiscent of modern societies and their postmodern condition, cyberpunk narratives are invariably dark technotopias. Bodily metamorphosis, escapist sex, techno-angst, conurbanization, religious cults, multinational corporations controlling information, and designer drugs are main reference parameters. Their origin is to be found in apocalyptic technology – any technophile's wet dream and all technophobes' terminal nightmare.

All genre narratives, starting with William Gibson's visionary and groundbreaking *Neuromancer* through Sterling's *Shaper* and *Mechanist* stories to Greg Bear's nanotechnological *Blood Music*, are characteristically informed by the interest not in future, however near it is, but rather in how today is already tomorrow in a world undergoing future shock. Allegedly, the most scary aspect of such techscapes is the fact that they are more real than many readers would like them to be. Cyberpunk's future is hardly ever further away than 20–30 years from now. It never houses invading aliens, neither does it postulate Star Trek-like journeys to far-off galaxies. Essentially it is now and here, present future, and quite imperfect to that. Above all, though, it is about human beings and their technology gone wild.

The wildness of technology is manifested in cyberpunk narratives in a number of ways. First of all, technology attains the state in which it replaces nature, man's original environment. Secondly, it merges with man in an almost uncontrollable fashion. Finally, in a form of artificial intelligences and nanotechnology it completely frees itself from man's involvement and starts its own existence, in some cases conditioned by the extinction of the human race.

Switching the Space

Neuromancer, Gibson's and the genre's first full-length narrative, opens with a sentence which by now has become famous: "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel."[4] The image prefigures the general treatment, the blurring of once clearly defined boundaries between the organic and the artificial, which nature and natural phenomena receive not only in Gibson's prose, but also in the works of many other cyberpunk writers. A few pages later the same sky appears as "poisoned silver" (*NR*, 7) and having "that mean shade of grey" (*NR*, 15). The air in Chiba, one of the book's locations, "seem[s] to have

[4] William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (New York: Ace Books, 1984), p. 3. All subsequent references to the book will be marked parenthetically in the text by the abbreviation *NR* and a page number.

teeth" (*NR*, 15), even though, as it turns out later, the whole megalopolis is covered with huge domes. The complete lack of indication as to what is happening outside the domes underscores the vision of cities as closed environments in which technology not only replaces nature in all respects, but is also a sole provider of conditions necessary to live. The shift from nature to *techne* is marked not only by the latter's overwhelming physical presence, but also by the degree to which computers, prime incarnations of postmodern, and post-industrial technology, control human lives by means of information, data that "has never been intended for human input".[5] Johnny Mnemonic from Gibson's eponymous short story reflects on that

> we're an information economy. They teach you that in school. What they don't tell you is that it's impossible to move, to live, to operate at any level without leaving traces, bits, seemingly meaningless fragments of personal information. Fragments that can be retrieved.[6]

What is more, such fragments are not used by other people. Cyberpunk's powers–that–be are semi-machinic, too. "The real bosses ... are both more and less than *people*" who have undergone "a gradual and willing accommodation of the machine, the system, the parent organism" (*NR*, 203). Instead of political governments, cyberpunk worlds are practically ruled by huge multinational companies called "zaibatsus" whose blood "is information, not people".[7] In a biological world man was a biological creature, in a world dominated by advanced technology he becomes yet another piece of information. Consequently, carefully staged defections of scientists in Gibson's *Count Zero* and "New Rose Hotel" are nothing but information transfers from one system to another. "Men have become the tool of their tools", Thoreau was right, indeed.

Technology dominates and controls not only the physical plane of cyberpunk worlds. It is also responsible for the existence of cyberspace. Appearing under different names, the Grid in Shirley's *Eclipse*, the Net in Sterling's *Islands in the Net*, the Matrix in Gibson's *Neuromancer*, Telespace in Lisa Mason's *Arachne*, or Metaverse in Stephenson's *Snow Crash*, it is

> consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts ... A graphic representation of data abstracted from every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding ... (*NR*, 51).

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[5] William Gibson, *Count Zero* (London: Harper Collins, 1989), p. 145.

[6] William Gibson, "Johnny Mnemonic", in *Burning Chrome* (London: Harper Collins, 1986), p. 30.

[7] William Gibson, "New Rose Hotel", in *Burning Chrome* (London: Harper Collins, 1986), p. 129.

This is where action happens, hackers execute their "runs" on corporate databanks, and people get killed by means of neural overload. However, in a technotopian world cyberspace also comes to signify a place of bliss and order amidst chaos of physicality. For Case, *Neuromancer's* protagonist, entering cyberspace is ecstasy, a feeling which, as the novel opens, he is denied due to the vengeful damage to his nervous system made by the people he trespassed. Not surprisingly, it is a machine, an artificial intelligence that arranges for his treatment and returns him to "his distantless home, his country" (*NR,* 52). The ability to connect, "jack in", grants him a passage from discontinuous experience of the world to the glissades of datascape mastery and perfection. The longing for this perfect, yet utterly cold order makes hackers like Case hate their body, "meat", (*NR*, 9) which bars them from the "bodiless exultation of cyberspace" (*NR,* 6). Case's stripped down scenario is rather gloomy, though: a man, whose nervous system was damaged by people in revenge for mishandling their technology is "repaired" by the machine so that he can access an utterly technological world.

Being a hacker paradise in the cyberpunk technotopia, cyberspace is also the land of the dead, entrance to which is granted after death by flatlining. Dixie Flatline in *Neuromancer* is not a person, but a construct, a mind uploaded as a program and stored in a chip living eternal non-physical life in the vast spaces of cyberspace. His suspended animation is not voluntary, though, but controlled by an artificial intelligence, Wintermute, who/which uses him to his/its own ends. The service is ultimately rewarded with erasure – total death Dixie craves for. Rudy Rucker's "software" and "wetware" in his eponymous novels are nothing more than the brain content of Cobb Anderson, an inventor of intelligent robots who in gratitude offered him immortality through extracting his mind and psyche from his body, storing it as a computer program, and subsequently "uploading" it into a number of mechanical structures. In Lisa Mason's *Arachne* Telespace is posited as a field of collective human unconscious explored only along thin telelinks, connection tunnels carved in the wholeness of the vast space. As much as the brains and the Freudian unconscious may indicate a significant human factor in cyberspace, it is important to remember that this digital world is possible only and exclusively because of technology which actually controls human experience, and that it is available to people only after they renounce the majority of what makes them organic and human.

The notion of cyberspace provides one more important paradigm. In their union with it, cyberpunk characters act exactly the way Marshall McLuhan prophesied it in his 1964 *Understanding Media*. His claim that human central nervous system extended outside the body into an elaborate message-processing system, media, has never been more fully confirmed than in the case of protagonists whose identification with the ultimate and only medium of the cyberpunk technotopia is complete and may continue even after their physical death. McLuhan's idea of media-saturated reality was bad enough, but cyberpunk writers have taken his ideas one step further – medium is not a message, it is reality.

"I Guest It's the Way I'm Wired"

The technotopic world inevitably demands assimilation from its inhabitants. And indeed, cyberpunk is teeming with characters whose bodies have been altered to a greater or lesser degree. The long list of body invasions can be clearly dichotomized on the basis of Bruce Sterling's short stories about Mechanists and Shapers, two rival posthuman species employing different technologies to enhance and transform themselves in order to survive. Mechanists change their bodies through prostheses, implants, and grafts, while Shapers use biotechnology in the form of chemical and genetic engineering, designer drugs, or cloning. Brain McHale suggested that the very notion of body alteration is nothing else but a (post)modern revision and rationalization of classic Gothic-horror stories of bodily invasion and disruption,[8] including Frankenstein. And again, what in such stories appeared as results of some irrational and perverse forces of nature in cyberpunk is engineered by nature's very equivalent – technology. Moreover, in both cases the disruption is usually imposed upon an unwilling person. An apparently voluntary character of technological modifications turns out to be virtually enforced upon subjects in the surroundings which demand them as a condition of functioning fully in a society. Once modified, like vampires they do not either wish to revert to the original state or long for the pre-transformation times.

All cyberspace operators must have head-sockets that allow them to jack in to cyberspace or to change chips and microsofts which grant their wearer knowledge, skills, or oblivion. Sarah and Cowboy in Walter Williams's novel *Hardwired* have hardwired nervous systems and speeded-up reflexes. Molly in "Johnny Mnemonic" and *Neuromancer* has mirrorshade lenses surgically implanted over her eyes as well as a set of moving double-edged scalpels under her nails. Moreover, at one point she reveals to Case that she financed these technological enhancements with money earned as a "meat puppet" – a prostitute whose preprogrammed biochemical procedures allow her to be oblivious of what she does during her "working hours". Jonny in Kadrey's *Metrophage* has tiger eyes implanted in place of the ones he lost in a shoot-out while Cowboy in *Hardwired* contends with metallic eyeballs which also work in the infra-red spectrum. Finally, there is Johnny Mnemonic sporting a data storage processor installed in his brain and Jerome-X in John Shirley's "Wolves of the Plateau", who thinks about having his brain rewired in order to quit smoking.

Biotech strain in body alterations runs along drug-induced states and genetically engineered human types as in Sterling's *Schismatrix* or Shiner's "Till

[8] Brian McHale, "Towards the Poetics of Cyberpunk", in *Constructing Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 257.

Human Voices Wake Us". Telelinkers in Mason's *Arachne* are addicted to cram, a drug which enhances their skills during the connection while protagonists in Williams' *Hardwired* need a shot of endorphins to trigger their hardwired reflexes. One of the more sophisticated cases can be found in Sterling's *Islands in the Net*, in which one of the characters has a strain of bacteria planted in his stomach. Normally dormant, the bacteria react with yoghurt turning their host into an adrenaline-driven war machine.

The influence of mechanical and electronic enhancements spreads not only over bodies, but also over minds and ways of perception. Looking at Molly's bare breasts Case thinks about them in terms of "the functional elegance of a war plane's fusilage" (*NR*, 44), while copulating appears to him as means of "transmission of the old message" (*NR*, 240). Life becomes mechanical and any strange behaviour is acceptably explained by "I guess it's just the way I'm wired" or "That's my program". As a result many narratives present technology as a dark vampiric logic, to use Arthur Kroker's metaphor,[9] which takes possession of the human body as its inhabiting spirit and controls all, including biological, functions. Ambiguities concerning the notion of humanity in the machine-dominated world are also the subject of Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner", a film by many considered to be the essence of cyberpunk and post-industrial aesthetics. With the plot revolving around the chase after 5 rebellious cyborgs called Replicants, "Blade Runner" is really a work which asks very important questions about what exactly defines humanity – a body or a mind?

In *Speed and Politics* as well as in *War and Cinema* Paul Virilio, one of the most significant contemporary theorists of technology, claims that its advances and merger with man lead to the transformation of the body into a war machine. Characteristically enough, many of the cyberpunk enhancements do serve defense and attack and are used to survive in a dark technological present future. The same paradigm of military mechanomorphism recurs in a number of cyborg movies whose protagonists are very often armored and armed constructs acting out good and bad guys' scenarios in the scenes of invariable combat and violence. Popularity of such pictures as both "Terminators" "Robocop" sequels, or the cult status of two "Tetsuo" episodes seems then only to confirm Virilio's thesis, proving that man's morbid fascination with his body turned military is far-reaching indeed.

From I to AI

Leroi-Gourhan emphasized that any technical object was nothing outside of the technical ensemble to which it belonged. The same applies to sophisticated

[9] Arthur Kroker, *Possessed Individual* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 21.

machines such as robots, which will soon be replaced by other, more advanced models. In acquiring more and more life and perfection, machines demand more and more abstract human vitality. In recognition of that fact Guattari claimed that it was impossible to deny the participation of human thought in the essence of mechanism, simultaneously, however, posing a question of up to what point this thought can be still described as human. Certain motifs crucial to cyberpunk literature make such theories no longer valid. As much as human agent can be still assumed to exist in a variety of cyborgs whose human and machine components mix in different proportions, it is impossible to find it in artificial intelligences. AI's are super-advanced computer programs capable of independent thought. In many genre narratives they break away from the human dependance and rebel. In *Neuromancer* the phenomenon is so common that the existence of a special force called Turing Police is necessary. Named after a visionary 1950s computer scientist, the Turing Police guards that no AI should attain independent consciousness and free itself. While tracking down the evidence that Wintermute, an AI in Gibson's masterpiece, has done so, one of the officers calls them "demons" (*NR*, 163) which are particularly dangerous as they "do not know" (*NR*, 206) what they do.

In *Principles of Biological Autonomy* Francisco Varela has distinguished two types of organisms or machines (the latter term understood in the broad Wienerian way): allopoietic and autopoietic. The former produce something other than themselves, the latter engender and specify their own organization and limits. In order to do that "they must undertake an incessant process of the replacement of their components as they must continually compensate for the external perturbations to which they are exposed".[10] Varela reserves the qualification of autopoietic for the biological organisms, which no longer holds true in cyberpunk. It is actually an attempt at a conscious merger of two AI's, Wintermute and titular Neuromancer, that provides momentum for the action in *Neuromancer*. "Our intelligences are mad" (*NR*, 184) their owner Ashpool says of the two, and indeed they both manifest twisted sentience going far beyond the Turing regulations. The planned merger successful, Case reflects at the close of the book on the nature of both AI's:

> Wintermute was hive mind, decision maker, effecting change in the world outside. Neuromancer was personality. Marie-France must have built something into Wintermute, the compulsion that had driven the thing to free itself, to unite with Neuromancer. (*NR*, 269)

Therefore, as with all other machines, the human agent was inherent to the intelligences' creation, but subsequently one of them transcended its allopoietic status and became autopoietic, capable of self-reproduction.

[10] Francisco Varela, *Principles of Biological Autonomy* (New York: North Holland Press, 1979). Quoted after Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1995), p. 39.

To achieve its goals Wintermute uses "real profiles as valves, ... template[s], model[s] of personality" (*NR*, 208). He/It needs people only in order to carry out certain parts of its/his plan involving purely mechanical actions, ones that he/it cannot control through the vast web of electronic net. In all other respects Wintermute is omnipotent, wild, and "insane" (*NR*, 219). The only way for a man to break free from the thrall is to behave in a perverse and unpredictable fashion, the way Peter Riviera does. Paradoxically then, to retain humanity one must act inhumanly and it is only owing to his extreme and cruel behaviour that Riviera is able to escape the bondage by the machine. Everyone else is "the statistical animal" (*NR*, 219) and statistics is what computers have always been good at.

Nan/None Shall Defy

Apart from bodily enhancements and personality uploads, cyberpunk writers have always been interested in genetic engineering. The Shaper way, to use the Sterlingian simile, changes human metabolism, organs, blood. Nevertheless, the wildness of genetics cut loose pales in comparison to nanotechnology. This highly controversial, and actually existing, branch of research deals with micro-cells, nano-cells, which can perform highly specialized tasks such as healing a particular illness or improving levels of medical read-outs. Cyberpunk writers take the motif of nanotechnology far beyond all contemporary imagination and in such books as Greg Bear's *Blood Music* and Kathleen Goonan's recent debut *Queen City Jazz* they present a vision of technology which has completely liberated itself from the control or even influence of man.

In the first of the two noocytes, cells engineered by Virgil Ulam – a young, off-the-wall genetic scientist, break free and dissolving all other organic life literally cover whole continents creating a noosphere, a single organism consisting of myriads of single thinking cells which are still capable of collective action. As much as rampant artificial intelligences at least shared some basic conceptual premises with man, noocytes are as alien to the mankind as ... aliens from the cinematic trilogy. They do not hate humans, nor do they use them as their tools. They are just indifferent. Their wildness is underscored by their mode of existence. One cannot reason with them as one cannot reason with bacteria. Once out of control, they keep on spreading until they change the whole planet's form of existence into their own.

Queen City Jazz is in turn a narrative of a post-nanotechnological period. The remnants of communities live either in big Flower-Cities, metropolises made of nano-material capable of recreating any object or thing by means of rebuilding and imitating its atomic structure, or in isolated semi-sectarian communities who

dread genetic mutations of those who have stayed in the Cities. The latter's fate is worse than death since "nan is evil".[11] Originally designed as sites of scientific wish-fulfillment and enlightened perfection for the mankind, the Cities malfunctioned as a result of the Information Wars when genetic viruses spread across America and contaminated the Cities triggering Nano Conversions and unleashing the uncontrollable powers of the nanotechnology. Resembling bee hives in their organization, disrupted Flower-Cities operate by means of a complex system of pheromones, which like DNA, transmit information. Unlike in *Blood Music* people survive the advent of nan, but these who live within Flower-Cities are mere servants of the nonhuman nano system. They are transfigured by the technology to such an extent that their individual lives loop in bee-like cycles. Technically, it gives them immortality as with each new life they add more pheromone-coded stories to databanks of Flower-Cities, but their physicality is seriously disbalanced. Also, they do not have any power over the mechanism of existence which was corrupted by genetic alterations. Significantly enough, in *Queen City Jazz* super-advanced technology closes an even bigger loop than that of lives people who remain at its service. What has become man's new environment manifests itself in forms inherent to primeval nature – flowers, bees, and the yearly life cycle of winter slumber and spring revival.

Orwellian Twist

In her "Manifesto for Cyborgs" Donna Haraway writes of the postmodern and post-industrial reality in which "late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are frighteningly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert".[12] Maybe more people are aware of that fact after the appropriately Orwellian year of 1984 when millions of people across America opened a certain paperback and read: "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel." The vision persists.

[11] Kathleen Ann Goonan, *Queen City Jazz* (New York: Tor Books, 1994), p. 14.

[12] Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the 1980s", in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 152.

DONATA MINOROWICZ

Among the Zone's Lost

> Out by one rocket site, in the pine woods, Thanatz and Gretel found an old road that no one used any more. Pieces of pavement were visible here and there among the green underbrush. It seemed that if they followed the road they would come to a town, a station or outpost ... it wasn't at all clear what they would find. ... They held hands. ... An old automobile, a Hannomag Storm, hung there, nose-down, one door smashed open. The lavender-gray metal shell had been picked clean as the skeleton of a deer. Somewhere in these woods was the presence that had done this. ... Remains of houses could be glimpsed, back in the trees. There was now a retreat of the light, though it was still before noon, and the forest grew no thicker here. ... At the same instant, she and Thanatz both realized that for hours now they must have been walking through the ruin of a great city, not an ancient ruin, but brought down inside their lifetime. Ahead of them, the path curved, into trees. But something stood now between them and whatever lay around the curve: invisible, impalpable ... some *monitor*. Saying, 'Not one step farther. That's all. Not one. Go back now.'... They turned, feeling it at their backs, and moved away quickly.[1]

One of the problems met by the readers (critics) of Pynchon's prose generally and *Gravity's Rainbow* in particular is that nearly every passage (not to say every sentence) is in some sense revealing. Even those, like the one quoted above, whose link to the major plots of the narrative is so feeble and whose role seem so insignificant that they appear to divert the readers' attention rather than assist them in their way through the labyrinthine world of the novel. Such passages, however, even if they do not offer *the* key allowing us to make sense of the main plot(s), are a rendering of the themes and motifs recurring throughout the novel.

[1]Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (London: Picador, 1975), p. 485. Further references to page numbers are given in the text.

The relevance of this particular rocket site to the central plot of the novel will not be revealed until its final part. What is much more important at this point is its location – the Zone.

The Zone is the special place in Pynchon's geography. It seems a prototype or the most complete manifestation of all the characteristics typical of his settings. From the geographical and historical point of view the Zone is the territory of Germany occupied by the Allies after the Second World War. But neither geography nor history, although both determine its coming into existence, can explain fully the phenomenon of the Zone. The shortest definition one could provide is that the Zone is the kingdom of the War, or rather the manifestation of the War itself. Thus its significance, its status is as much complicated as the status of the War itself.

The War is associated primarily with death, suffering, destruction. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, however, its significance becomes much more complex, much more ambiguous. Although its destructive aspect is never denied; it is always seen primarily as "the enterprise" of "systematic death", (76) the War is also "a lively game", (133) a creative force which " has been reconfiguring time and space into its own image". Slothrop observes that:

> What appears to be destruction is really the shaping of railroad spaces to other purposes, intentions he can only, riding through it for the first time, begin to feel the leading edges of ... (257)

Eventually the War ceases to be merely the historical event. It is a condition: temporal as well as spatial and mental. Pointsman thinks about it as "the state he'd come to feel himself a citizen of". (75) Roger Mexico, who declares himself a child of the War, sees it as an infection one can catch similarly to cold: "You're catching the War. It's infecting you and I don't know how to keep it away." (177) The War may even change into a person:

> At 'White Visitation' there is a long time schiz, you know, who believes that *he* is World War II. He gets no newspapers, refuses to listen to the wireless, but still, the day of the Normandy invasion somehow his temperature shot up to 104°. Now, as the pincers east and west continue their slow reflex contraction, he speaks of darkness invading his mind, of an attrition of self. (131)

It is not at all clear if Greta Erdmann and her husband, Miklos Thanatz really escaped crossing the border. Here, in the Zone, the border is thin, blurred, hardly perceptible. "Forget frontiers now. Forget subdivisions. There aren't any," (294) Slothrop learns almost immediately when he arrives there. And perhaps he is one of many who have crossed the border without even realizing that they were entering an alien territory. Not unlike Dorothy when she suddenly found herself in the land of Oz. Her words: "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas any more..." (279)

are the motto of the Zone part of *Gravity's Rainbow*. Certainly, the Zone is not like Kansas. Neither does it resemble any other known landscape. It is rather like a primeval wilderness with ruins as the only remainders of civilization: "remains of houses" glimpsed by Greta and Thanatz in the woods of Berlin which Slothrop feels: "around him going back roofless, vulnerable, uncentered". (434)

Katje calls the War "the absolute rule of chance". (96) Although she thinks predominantly of the blind fate which makes people aware "of their own pitiable contingency here, in its midst", (96) another sense of chance, equally significant for the novel, is opportunity. The war changes old maps, restructures old orders. In the times of peace it is easier to control the borders. The war weakens this control, makes it easier not only to transgress the borders but even to change and/or (re)move them. Squalidozzi, an Argentine anarchist, explains this phenomenon to Slothrop:

> In ordinary ... times the center always wins. Its power grows with time, and that can't be reversed, not by ordinary means. Decentralizing, back towards anarchism, needs extraordinary times ... this War – this incredible War – just for the moment has wiped out the proliferation of little states that's prevailed in Germany for a thousand years. Wiped it clean. *Opened it.* ... In the openness of the German Zone, our hope is limitless. ... So is our danger. (264–5)

Although at first Slothrop was sceptical, having spent some time in the Zone himself ("What is this place doing to his brain?" he wonders. 333) he begins to share Squalidozzi's hope:

> maybe for a little while all the fences are down, one road as good as another, the whole space of the Zone cleared, depolarized, and somewhere inside the waste of it a single set of coordinates from which to proceed, without elect, without preterite, without even nationality to fuck it up. (556)

The War brings chaos (or so it appears to humans). Thus in the Zone, the land created by the War, the world has been plunged back into chaos. The Zone is a wilderness where the laws of civilization have been suspended. Its openness threatens civilization which is a process towards closure, enclosing. Its changeability goes against the order, stability which is the objective of civilization. But chaos, besides being the destructive force, may also mean a beginning. Or a return to what is natural, primitive – wild. Without the supervision of the humans, of Them – the masters of technology and control – nature is able to repossess what originally belonged to it (just like death is a return to nature):

> at least the physical things They have taken, from Earth and from us, can be dismantled, demolished – returned to where it all came from. (540)

The ruins and wrecks left by the War become incorporated again into the world of nature. The old car in the opening quotation is compared to a skeleton of

a deer, as if its "death" made it equal to a living being. Later we find a description of the violent and triumphant nature, very similar in tone and imaginary:

> Everything's been stripped. The vehicles are back to the hollow design envelopes of their earliest specs, though there's still a faint odor of petrol and grease. Forget-me-nots are growing violent blue violent yellow among the snarls of cables and hoses. Swallows have built a nest inside the control car, and a spider has begun filling the web of the Meillerwagen boom with her own. (560)

The annihilation of the old order, however, is temporary. It is rather *suspended* than entirely rubbed out. The temporality of the Zone is continually stressed. But this impermanence is in some weird way *permanent.* The order, undermined by the War, will be soon imposed again. But the attempts at destroying, changing or transgressing this order will never cease, either, because things inevitably go towards balance. Every action brings its counteraction, every force – its counterforce.

> Just as there are, in the World, machineries committed to injustice as an enterprise, so too there seem to be provisions active for balancing things out once in a while. Not as an enterprise, exactly, but at least in the dance of things. (580)

The process towards enclosing has to be followed by bursting out. Every civilization inevitably creates its own wilderness.

So it is hope, a promise with which the Zone part begins. The Zone welcomes us in full spring, "the spring of peace". (281) "We are safely past the days of the Eis-Heiligen." (281) Neither the pronoun *we*, which is one of the devices Pynchon uses to diminish the distance of the reader to the world of the novel, nor the word *safely* at the beginning of the Zone part are neutral. Despite all the dangers awaiting in the smashed fields and among the ruins of the cities, the Zone is primarily *a shelter.* The only shelter for those who would not be able to find their place "in ordinary times", (264) in a centre-dominated society. The shelter for variety of freaks: anarchists, Rocket maniacs, incurable paranoids and vagabonds. And finally the birthplace of the Counterforce.

The shortest definition of the Counterforce one can provide is the manifestation of "decent impulses to conspire, however marginally, whenever possible, against power and indifference". (209) It consists of children of the War like Mexico, those whom the War forced to realize that they do not belong (any more? at all?) to their tradition, their background like Slothrop, double agents with too many doubts concerning their profession like Katje Borgesius and lifetime vagabonds with no definite place in the society like Seaman Bodine and Pirate Prentice. In short, all those who decided more (Katje) or less (Slothrop) consciously to "say *fuck it* ('It's the only spell Slothrop knows, and a pretty good all purpose one at that'. 203) and quit the game, quit it cold". (107) Their opposition resembles "hollering into silence". (106) It is equally impossible as

necessary, inevitable: "dialectically, sooner or later some counterforce would have had to arise", (536) Katje thinks, when she finds traces of its activity for the first time.

The activities of the Counterforce are disorganized, chaotic. Their aims are ambiguous. Their methods irrational. The characteristic feature of the behaviour of the "members" of the Counterforce is the absolute lack of decorum, the annoying habit of appearing in the least probable situation with the least probable gesture. They act on irrational emotions and this allows them to elude the fatal rationality of Their system. The Counterforce could not possibly be different. Organized it would become predictable. As one more *organization* it would soon become swallowed and digested by Their system, incorporated into Their structures. Only disorganized, unpredictable the Counterforce has a chance to survive on the margins of the world controlled by Them. For this reason the Counterforce must not be mistaken for a revolution. They do not have a strictly defined objective. They do not promise a better world after the victory. They cannot because they cannot win. They are doomed to fail. It seems that for a while they have a chance "to disarm, de-penis and dismantle the Man", but they turn out to be "as schizoid, as double-minded in the massive presence of money, as any of the rest of us". (712) Their failure, however, is never total, never final. The Counterforce will always reappear somewhere behind the official version of reality.

In the Zone, among the Preterite: "the many God passes over when he chooses a few for salvation" (555), "impossible to locate or redeem" (544), among the "Zone's lost" (470) it becomes eventually possible to hide from the control of apparently omnipresent and omniscient Them. Here everything seems possible. Here you can find eventually your real self – maybe among the souls which are

> found quiescent behind the pieces of wall, fast asleep down curled in shell craters, out screwing under the culverts with gray shirttails hoisted, adrift dreaming in the middles of fields. Dreaming of food, oblivion, alternate histories. (336)

But you can as well find somebody else in your place or – as it happened to Slothrop – get completely dispersed, "Scattered all over the Zone. It's doubtful if he can ever be 'found' again, in the conventional sense of 'positively identified and detained'" (712). Slothrop apparently lost himself among the Zonal shapes: "Like signals get out for lost travelers, shapes keep repeating for him, Zonal shapes he will allow to enter but won't interpret, not any more." (567) It is as if giving up interpretation Slothrop becomes too much alike the Zone itself (perhaps it is the danger mentioned by Squalidozzi?). During his wandering, he becomes nearly the human representation of the Zone itself (as the schiz in "The White Visitation" represents World War II). Apparently there is nobody else who could fit less to the ever-changing landscape of the post-war Germany. Slothrop is an American from Massachusetts, a descendant of a Puritan stock, a graduate of Harvard. Harold Bloom, not without right, says that "he lacks all exuberance; he is the

American as conditioned reflex, colorless and hapless".[2] First we meet him in London during the German bomb raids – alone, terrified, helpless in the face of the atrocities of the War. He desperately looks for comfort, at least apparent safety in the arms of accidental girls. But, for some reason, he cannot stay with none of them, as if his destiny was to go away. Already in London and later in the Zone, where he ends up after a number of unfortunate coincidences, he is an exemplary passer-by.

> Sure he'll stay for a while, but eventually he'll go, and for this he is to be counted among the Zone's lost. ... He creates a bureaucracy of departure, inoculations against forgetting, exit visas stamped with love-bites ... but coming back is something he's already forgotten about. (470–1)

He walks away to continue his blind search for the Rocket, for the mysterious *Schwarzgerät* – for the answer to the question of his own identity. But at the same time he is aware that there is no answer or at least the answers he has found do not make much difference: "The Pope's staff is always going to remain barren", (470) he himself is not a knight of the Holy Grail.

This urge to move, impossibility of staying makes Slothrop a legitimate inhabitant of the Zone. In the Zone moving, being on the move is nearly an obligation. The Zone is a land of passers-by. Here everybody seems to be going somewhere – or escaping. In the summer of '45 the Zone witnesses the great trek:

> The nationalities are on the move. It is a great frontierless streaming out here. *Volksdeutsch* from across the Oder, moved out by the Poles and headed for the camp at Rostock, Poles fleeing the Lublin regime, others going back home, (549)

and so on and so forth. And most of them are, equally as Slothrop, aware that there in no way back: neither back home, to the old order, nor back to the wilderness:

> Many of them only want to rest up a while for more DP trains, for more fantasies of what home was like before the destruction and some dream of getting somewhere. They'll move on. (613)

The war changed the landscapes too much for any of them to find their homes any more. The very concept of "home" belongs strictly to the past and it is more and more difficult to remember: "What was it like? Before the war?" (58) Jessica asks and her question could be asked by most of the characters of *Gravity's Rainbow*: "that's too long ago for him [for them] to remember". (623)

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[2] Harold Bloom, "Introduction", in *Modern Critical Interpretations. Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986), p. 3.

After publication of *Gravity's Rainbow* Pynchon remained silent for 17 years (his last novel *Vineland* was published in 1990) as if his intention was to leave his readers with the final Rocket's blast sounding in their ears. But, as some critics observed, it is not exactly the Rocket's explosion which ends the novel. What is shown (if anything can be actually determined as in the last part the narrative becomes fragmented, blurred as an old movie) is only the ascent of the apocalyptic Rocket. Its decent is terminated by the song, the weird hymn of the preterite "They never taught anyone to sing, a hymn by William Slothrop, centuries forgotten and out of print." (760) The last words are an invitation: "Now everybody –" (760) Are we asked, as some critics suggest, to get on board of the Rocket and die? Or perhaps just "to touch a person next to you" (760) and sing along, as, especially in case of very complex novels, the simple (not to say simplistic), superficial interpretations tend to work best.

NIEOKIEŁZNANE I OSWOJONE

Streszczenie

„Dzikość jest kategorią nadmiaru. Podobnie liczba wyrażeń pokrewnych znaczeniowo słowu „dziki" jest, jeśli można tak rzec, nadmierna. Dziki: nieoswojony, zajadły, nieugięty, rdzenny, agrarny, a także nieuprawiony, rosnący w naturalnym środowisku, lękliwy, niecywilizowany, gwałtowny, niekontrolowany, opustoszały, jałowy, nieosiedlony, szalenie entuzjastyczny, nieporządny, nieokiełznany. To, co czyni owo pojęcie atrakcyjnym z kulturoznawczego i literaturoznawczego punktu widzenia, to możliwości jego zastosowania – z szerokiego kręgu perspektyw – do równie szerokiego zakresu dyskursywnych praktyk.

Dzikość to pojęcie bliskie pojęciu Inność. To drugie od dłuższego już czasu znajduje się w sferze postmodernistycznych rozważań nad naszą kondycją. Inność jest jednak pojęciem bardziej ogólnym i pojemnym niż dzikość, bowiem – metafizycznie – zarysowuje obszar różnicy, pomijając środowisko naturalne, które w przypadku pojęcia dzikości jest zawsze wpisane w jego konotatywną sferę. „Dziki" to także „Inny", lecz owa inność jest metonimicznie bliska, bądź bliższa, naturze. Jako że natura również może być dzika, pojęcie „dziki" nieuchronnie zakłóca i podważa naturę jako normę i tym samym desygnuje „normę" jako jeszcze jedno pojęcie nadmiaru.

Tematyka artykułów zebranych w tomie koncentruje się wokół pojęcia dzikości sprecyzowanego wyżej, sytuując je w różnorakich kontekstach ideologicznych, filozoficznych i kulturowych. Dzikość zostaje w ten sposób ujęta w kontekstową siatkę pojęć, które pozwalają odkryć i uwypuklić jej różne znaczenia, często niedostrzegalne w potocznym lub kanonicznym rozumieniu. W kolejnych artykułach z pojęciem dzikości sąsiadują kategorie wolności, topografii kulturowej, szaleństwa, cyberprzestrzeni, kobiecości, sztuczności, porządku społecznego, władzy, nomadyzmu, walki, odmienności seksualnej i uwięzienia. W rezultacie uzyskuje się efekt dwojaki: dzikość zostaje przedstawiona jako kategoria metodologiczna oraz aksjologiczna – kategoria współokreślająca człowieka jako jednostkę i jako istotę społeczną.

Wojciech Kalaga i *Tadeusz Rachwał*

LE DÉBRIDÉ ET L'APPRIVOISÉ

Résumé

„La sauvagerie" est une catégorie de l'excédent. De même, le nombre d'expressions dont le sens est proche du mot „sauvage" est, si l'on peut dire ainsi, excédent. Sauvage: non apprivoisé, acharné, inflexible, autochtone, agraire et aussi inculte, en friche, non labouré, incultivé, poussant dans son milieu naturel, peureux, non civilisé, barbare, violent, incontrôlé, désert arride, inhabité, follement enthousiaste, désordonné, débridé, féroce. Ce qui rend cette notion attrayante du point de vue des études culturelles et littéraires, ce sont les possibilités de son application: d'un large éventail de perspectives aux pratiques discursives d'aussi grande envergure.

L'Altérité est proche de la notion de Sauvagerie. Celle-là depuis assez longtemps a trouvé le droit de cité dans les réflexions postmodernistes sur notre condition. L'altérité est pourtant une notion plus générale et plus vaste que la sauvagerie, car – métaphysiquement – elle marque le territoire de la différence en omettant le milieu naturel lequel, dans le cas de la notion de sauvagerie, est toujours inscrit dans sa zone de connotations. „(Le) Sauvage" c'est également „(L')Autre", mais cette altérité est métonymiquement soit proche, soit plus proche de la nature. Vu que la nature peut aussi être sauvage, la notion „sauvage" perturbe et met en doute la nature en tant que norme et par là même désigne „la norme" comme étant également une notion relative à l'excédent.

La thématique des articles recueillis dans ce volume se concentre autour de la notion de sauvagerie précisée ci-dessus en la situant dans de divers contextes idéologiques, philosophiques et culturels. La sauvagerie est ainsi étudiée dans la grille contextuelle de notions qui permettent de découvrir et mettre en relief ses différentes significations, parfois imperceptibles dans ses acceptions courantes ou canoniques. Dans les articles suivants, la notion de sauvagerie voisine avec celles de liberté, de topographie culturelle, de folie, d'espace cybernétique, de féminité, d'artificialité, d'ordre social, de pouvoir, de nomadisme, de lutte, de différence sexuelle et de réclusion. Il en résulte un double effet: la sauvagerie est présentée comme une catégorie méthodologique et axiologique – catégorie contribuant à définir l'homme en tant qu'individu et en tant qu'être social.

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