Fearful Symmetries

Representations of Anxiety in Cultural, Literary and Political Discourses

Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego
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Fearful Symmetries:

Representations of Anxiety in Cultural, Literary and Political Discourses

Edited by
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Introduction

This book has grown out of a project called "Civilisation and Fear," which culminated in an international conference – held by the Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, University of Silesia, in 2010 – that addressed manifestations of anxiety in culture. *Fearful Symmetries* is mostly about how fears, apprehensions and phobias find their representation in writing. Consequently, these essays are not psychological, philosophical or sociological studies of anxiety. That is to say, we are not concerned here with fear in the abstract: the individual contributions focus on texts in which anxiety has appeared in discourse, thus as a contextualized and historicized presence. The readers who expect clear-cut answers to such fundamental questions as "What is fear?" may be disappointed. However, those who expect inspiring insights into textual manifestations of anxiety are likely to find these essays of interest. We do believe that the value of this book lies in the viable, not infrequently fresh approaches to some of the most problematic and complicated junctions between fear and civilisation. The overarching assumption which underlies most of the essays is that fear feeds on the individual psyche, and certainly cannot exist in a social vacuum; discourse, as an element of culture, seems to be its natural habitat.

Such ideas as anxiety and fear may be used to reduce the multiple matrices of civilisation, and the many discourses which represent them, to a common denominator. Still, in this book, we aim to recognise the potential for differentiation at the heart of civilisation. Inevitably, the essays vary in scope, historical context, angle of vision and interpretive method. We see such differences as an asset, rather than a threat. Divergent, perhaps deviating, approaches and methodologies should not multiply anxieties; instead, they may increase the chances of containment and dissipation. As a result, a book like this may be useful in coming to terms with those fears which thrive on the

unknown and the (yet) unnamed. Diversified treatment, in the scholarly sense, may, in the long run, translate into treatment in another, therapeutic, sense. Once articulated and exposed to the analytical light of academic discourse, the fears and anxieties which our civilisation has foisted upon us are likely to look less manacing.

As editors obliged to produce an introduction to a volume of essays by other authors we want to be clear about our role in prefacing this publication. In order to give our readers a lucid picture of what those essays are concerned with, we are bound to introduce them by the usual means of summary and paraphrase. Still, the authors themselves might be anxious that we misrepresent their ideas by selecting and highlighting what we consider crucial about their contributions. That is why henceforth we let the authors speak on their own behalf by almost literally quoting their abstracts, which – sometimes minimally edited – shall serve as vignettes of their own writing. In what follows, you will find brief descriptions of the themes raised in each essay and the claims that the authors make.

Anna Antonowicz, **"Indian Zigzags – the Industrial Monster."**
The governmental reform of decorative art undertaken in the mid-Victorian period aimed to imbue low-quality British artefacts with the principles of Indian art. It provoked the war of values in the period of great anxiety over the influence of technological advancement upon aesthetics and taste. This essay analyses the negative views of John Ruskin upon the reform and confronts them with those of Owen Jones.

Dorota Babilas, **"The Victorian Culture and the Fear of the Talented Woman in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*."**
Victorian culture, with its preoccupation with social order and clearly defined gender roles, was both titillated and alarmed by the possibility of the feminine talent. This essay explores a selection of examples dealing with the themes of the musical talent displayed by the heroines of George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876). The visions of an angelic creature, a dangerous siren, and an un-sexed monster are all variations on the theme of musically gifted women.

Katarzyna Blacharska, **"The Renaissance *Plus ultra* and the Recurrence of *Non plus ultra* as Reflected in the Poetry of John Donne and John Milton's Epic *Paradise Lost*."**
The *mappae mundi*, characteristic medieval world maps which are a reflection of a ubiquitous anxiety that permeated the period, provide partly allegorical image of the world, but also communicate certain ideas, most notably the notion of *Non plus ultra*, which marked the Pillars of Hercules as the ulti-

mate border of the world, beyond which there was nothing. This medieval notion continues to be relevant through the Renaissance, in the poetry of John Donne and John Milton.

Katarzyna Chruszczewska, **"'To Be Saved by Chaos': 'Emancipation' of Self by Mutilation and Perversion. Chuck Palahniuk's *Invisible Monsters* and *Choke*."**
In Palahniuk's fiction, the struggle for a true identity explodes in a total rebellion against the cultural regime, manifested through different forms of sexual perversion or through the intentional mutilation of one's body. The necessity to hybridize one's identity entails the destruction of the main structures of the self. Palahniuk's characters aim for indefinability of the self by disputing sexuality and questioning the body.

Joanna Jodłowska, **"Who's Afraid of the Supermarket: A Study of Andrzej Wójcik's and Ewan Jones-Morris's Semi-documentary *Brand New World*."**
"Who's Afraid of the Supermarket…" offers a comparison of the kinds of dystopian fear embodied by the experimental semi-documentary *Brand New World* (2005) directed by Andrzej Wójcik and Ewan Jones-Morris in comparison with Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel *Brave New World*, and expressed in the way these two works handle the themes they have in common: consumerism, marketing, the functioning of the mass-media, and rebellion against modern society.

Paulina Kamińska, **"Civilisation, Fear and Trauma in Doris Lessing's Writing."**
By analysing the representations of civilisation in Doris Lessing's writing, one can discern imaginary societies at different stages of their development: from their beginnings, through the breakdown, to attempts at the rebuilding of social structures. Fear and threat of death are imminent within all these transformations. Such features of trauma narratives as the breakdown of chronology, multiple narrators, the impossibility of a faithful account surface in Doris Lessing's novels, and enhance her depictions of civilisation.

Robert Kielawski, **"Masochism and Its (Dis)contents: The Politics of In-Yer-Face Theatre and Mark Ravenhill's Bodies in Crisis."**
The article tries to account for the politics of masochism in *Faust is Dead* and *The Cut* by Mark Ravenhill by making links between in-yer-face aesthetics and anti-humanist tradition of Antonin Artaud and Sigmund Freud. The oppositional energy of the analysed plays is identified with the way the characters' political agency is restricted to masochistic acts. In phenomenological terms, the body in pain becomes a site of political intervention.

Sławomir Konkol, **"What Else is Civilisation For? Narration Overcoming Fear and Trauma in Graham Swift."**
Fragmented and repetitive, the structure of most of Graham Swift's narratives represents the characters' sense of being separated from the world and trapped in traumatic temporality which refuses linear development. While mourning the impossibility of retrieving original wholeness, Swift's novels celebrate the contingency of the human condition since the protagonists' efforts at overcoming fear can only be temporary and tentative. At the same time, the status of the narrative is questioned as morally ambiguous, potentially violent and responsible for the irreversible involvement of the subject in temporality.

Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska, **"'Seek and Ye Shall Mind' – Conspiracy Theories and the Mechanisms of Online Exposure."**
Fuelled by fears related to terrorism, surveillance, and signs of collapse of the global financial system, the conspiracist and/or synchrony-seeking webpages have shown remarkably similar, suspicious/hostile attitudes towards a variety of issues, e.g. global warming research, government-imposed vaccination programs, alleged diabolical pacts made by global elites concerning mind and population control, the influence of the Illuminati and all things occult, etc. But the fear of enslavement and subordination they so often express proves to be a double-edged weapon manipulating the readers' sound judgment even further.

Sławomir Kuźnicki, **"Civilisation Renewal Project – the Ultimate Solution of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*."**
By focusing on biotechnology and the commercialisation of life, Margaret Atwood, in her dystopia *Oryx and Crake* (2003), questions the morality of genetic engineering procedures. As a result, she proposes a revolutionary shift, an apocalypse, after which the old order ceases to exist and is apparently succeeded by a heaven on earth. This article is concerned with Atwood's reasons for annihilating our present civilisation, but it also points out why the new version of the world, although preconceived and logically manufactured, has no real chances of succeeding.

Tadeusz Lewandowski, **"Indulging a Terrorist's Fears: A Critical Evaluation of Theodore Kaczynski's *Industrial Society and Its Future*."**
In mid-September of 1995 the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* published Theodore Kaczynski's *Industrial Society and Its Future*, a 35,000-word essay that decried the effects of technology on mankind and the natural world. When made public, the manifesto garnered a surprisingly positive reception in the American media. Though *Industrial Society and Its Future* certainly expresses some rational fears, this essay argues that its importance as an ideological tract has been overestimated by readers drawn to Kaczynski's bizarre

charisma, strong pro-environmentalist stances, and an ability to tap into the frustration of those disenchanted with modernity.

Tomasz Markiewka, **"'The Gently Budding Rose': Greeks and Fear in Teodor Parnicki's Historical Novel *The End of 'The Concord of Nations'*."**
The End of "The Concord of Nations" (*Koniec „Zgody Narodów,"* Paris 1955) marks a turning point in the development of Teodor Parnicki's oeuvre. In a world of constant and profound fear, the protagonist, a half-Greek and half-Jewish adolescent by the name of Leptines, is caught in the network of secret services and, being constantly interrogated, starts a quest for self-identity. The essay examines the clash of civilisations and cultures, which is dramatized and internalized in Leptines, who embodies the situation in which the borderline between "I" (Greek) and "the Other(s)" falls within the protagonist's self.

Gabriela Marszołek, **"'Fetch Me My Feathers and Amber': Gary Snyder on Civilisation and the Primitive."**
In "Poetry and the Primitive," Gary Snyder says that part of our being modern means to be "contemporary with all periods"; it is to be one with our own beginnings, since civilisations do not "rise and fall," but absorb, bloom, burst, and scatter their seed. This essay presents Snyder's standpoint on the notion of civilisation in regard to the native American theme of hunting magic. Gary Snyder, influenced by such anthropologists as Stanley Diamond and Claude Lévi-Strauss, depicts the modern man as the one who has failed to understand the richness and complexity of ancient cultures.

Przemysław Michalski, **"Original Sin, Fear and Metaphysical Poetry."**
This essay sets out to discuss the problem of the relationship between the original sin and fear in metaphysical poetry. One of the key questions it grapples with is to what extent the legacy of the doctrine of the original sin informed the poetry of John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan and Thomas Traherne, and how far it shaped their general *Weltanschauung*.

Dominika Oramus, **"Gods for the Final Days: Selected Religious Systems Devised by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Philip K. Dick."**
In the mid-twentieth century in the West, the political atmosphere of insecurity spawned religious radicalism and made more and more people pay heed to preachers announcing the approaching doom. L. Ron Hubbard devised and marketed a new religion, the Church of Scientology; Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s post-modernist novels *Sirens of Titan*, *Cat's Cradle* and *Slapstick* also describe new religious systems. Philip K. Dick, in turn, presented religions of his own making, Mercerism, and belief in the Four Manifestations of God, in the short story "The Little Black Box" and novels *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and *A*

Maze of Death. This essay compares these religions in order to show how they take advantage of human fear and anxiety and what they offer to their followers.

Kamilla Pawlikowska, **"Fear of the Inside: Neurology as a Science of Sensation in Victorian literature."**
Despite the attempts undertaken by nineteenth-century psychologists, philosophers and physiologists to define "sensation," the latter remained a conspicuously fluid notion. This indefiniteness provided a vast hermeneutic space for writers seeking new rhetorical devices to convey the complexity of human nature. This essay examines a variety of diverse accounts of "sensation" in Victorian fiction, discusses their functions and approaches to the mind-body relationship.

Izabella Penier, **"The Black Atlantic Zombie: National Schisms and Utopian Diasporas in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*."**
This essay discusses Edwidge Danticat's collection of short stories *The Dew Breaker*, which is about the terror and trauma caused by the horrifying system of repression brought by the Duvalier regime. It deals with the theme of the subjection and dehumanization of Haitians, expressed through a new Haitian aesthetics of degradation, whose most salient trope is zombification. Zombification is a mechanism of terror and debasement that turns Danticat's protagonists, both torturers and their victims, into the living dead, deprived of the self, human dignity and freedom.

Maciej Piątek, **"Fears and Fictions of Samuel Beckett."**
This essay is an interpretation of Samuel Beckett's short stories ("The Calmative," "The Expelled") and dramaticules ("That Time," "Footfalls") as literary expressions arising from the overwhelming feeling of fear. Beckett's writings show that creating fictions to repress fear is on the one hand necessary, but on the other, this process is bound to fail in the postmodern age. His texts do not speak about this failure in a descriptive mode – they actually stage this failure by their own structure and meaning, which remain always on the verge of collapsing.

Brian Reis, **"Deeper Darkness: Fear of the Dionysian Ultimate in H.P. Lovecraft."**
H.P. Lovecraft's tales of terror strike at key questions of human existence – specifically, the origins of fear. Creating narratives that invoke and capitalize on Nietzsche's fear of the advent of nihilism, Lovecraft drafted a world that was alternately mysterious and terrifying, and also coldly rooted in the scientific determinism that was at the core of his materialist atheism. In doing so, he uproots Nietzsche's hope for man to transcend beyond the "death of God" and the subsequent nihilistic retreat into outmoded religious ideas.

John Eric Starnes, **"Mr. Turner's Fears and Fantasies: *The Turner Diaries* and White Fear in America."**
This essay explores the White Nationalist novel *The Turner Diaries* and analyses the themes that are prevalent within the novel. By analysing these themes and by placing them in their historical context, it is hoped that a clearer picture will emerge of the fears and trepidation expressed by certain sectors of white America. These fears include attempts at subverting white power by the manipulation of "aliens," blacks, and other minorities.

Nurseli Yeşim Sünbüloğlu, **"Gender Implications of Literary Representations of Anxieties about Modernisation in Turkey: *Aganta, Burina, Burinata* (1945)."**
The years 1940–1950 was a period in which Turkey went through profound social, political, and economic changes. The reactions towards these changes can be regarded as an intersection of discontent, fears, and anxieties on various levels. Through an analysis of a novel (*Aganta*, *Burina*, *Burinata*) written in 1945, this essay examines the literary representations of those concerns. The response of the novel's author to these anxieties was to reconceptualise nature as an alternative space – pure, harmonious, and homogeneous – where a much needed reconstruction of modern masculine identity would take place.

By way of concluding this introduction, we would like to indulge in an observation which led to the choice of the main title for this collection of essays. Our reference to William Blake's "Tyger" and its enigmatic phrase bespeaks an ambivalent attitude to whatever is capable of inspiring fear, anxiety, and awe. The authors of the following essays are singularly attracted to those works and phenomena which are surrounded by an aura of anxiety. Thereby the contradictory energies of attraction and repulsion – fascination and fear – are responsible for the thematic paradox of this volume: despite the fearsome and portentous nature of many aspects of contemporary civilisation, we continue dissecting them, even at the cost of exposing our own fears and anxieties in the process. We are preoccupied by what we should, by definition, keep at a distance – does that mean that we are poised to overcome those fears or, on the contrary, that we have developed a morbid taste for wallowing in them?

Leszek Drong and *Jacek Mydla*

Anna Antonowicz
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Indian Zigzags – the Industrial Monster

This essay concerns Victorian industrial civilisation and the fear it provoked for the future of British art. In particular, I focus on the crucial mid-Victorian cultural event known as the "battle of styles," or the "decoration debate," whose two main concerns were how to preserve beauty amidst the ugliness of scientific and industrial progress, and how to express this modern, positivist, industrial world in an adequately modern artistic way. Central to the debate was Indian design. Widely considered the quintessence of modern industrial beauty, and whose principles constituted the foundation of mid-Victorian British art reform, Indian decorative art yet had its critics, one of the most severe of whom was John Ruskin. This art reformer and theorist, and founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, was the main precursor of the anti-industrial, anti-modernist and anti-urban mid-Victorian artistic atavism. Therefore, I discuss Indian decorative art and John Ruskin in the context of modernity and reactions to it; in particular I consider the perceived disruption of Victorian culture by positivism and industrialism, which, by undermining realism, was seen to render traditional illusionist symbolism invalid. Finally, I analyse Ruskin's attitude towards Indian ornament – and generally his theory of a suitable nineteenth-century ornament – in terms of two contrasting ideological positions, viz. the well-known opposition between "natural" and "conventional" ornamentation exemplified by the intellectual duel between John Ruskin and Owen Jones. The essay is interpretative. It explores why there should have been a debate about the decorative arts, and what consequences the respective speakers hoped to see from the promotion or rejection of Indian ornamental style. Finally, it seeks to trace the historical background to the ambivalent character of abstract, geometric ornament today.

The notions of the beauty and usefulness of Indian design took shape around 1850s, yet the mid-Victorian demand for Indian aesthetics was con-

ditioned by an awareness, steadily growing since the 1830s, about how the Industrial Revolution and the on-going modernising processes had influenced British society and culture. In the nineteenth century as much as today, scientific and industrial progress inspired anxiety as well as fascination. One acute anxiety concerned crisis in British design, reflected in the low quality of machine-made and mass-produced art objects. According to nineteenth-century art theorists like A.W.N. Pugin, John Ruskin, William Morris and Owen Jones, the crisis in design was caused by a lack of integrity between decorative style and contemporary culture. Under the leadership of Henry Cole, Benthamite civil service official and member of John Stuart Mill's group of philosophical radicals, a band of educators, architects, designers and radical MPs took up the question of design crisis under the banner of the design reform movement.[1]

The movement was fundamentally concerned with bridging the perceived divide between style and culture in Victorian society. The reformers believed that the decorative crisis was primarily caused by a lack of recognition that science and industry had taken the place of organised religion as the overriding spirit of nineteenth-century British culture. Equally, they attributed the stylist decline to an inadequate, illusionist connection to nature. The development of contemporary scientific investigations of botanical anatomy, which required the abandonment of tonally-rendered illustrative drawing and its replacement by diagrammatical conventions, became particularly inspiring in setting the ground for reform. The emphasis on detached observation of botanical specimens was in keeping with the ideals of nineteenth-century scientific empiricism, which demanded that a disinterested observer arrive at universal truths.[2] Art botany then taught an analytic and cognitive drawing, which was necessary to express the ideal forms and principles of vegetation, rather than its natural state, and which helped to understand the way principles of design must change in order to suit contemporary culture:

> What must find utterance in a national system of decoration, is our secular knowledge – our knowledge of nature, as revealed to us through the sciences, and of refinement. [...] Art has to seek from the knowledge of laws and must, at least as a preliminary step, arrange the multitude of appearances under primary point of view, [...] and so gradually approach nearer to the discover the actual laws of Nature.[3]

[1] Anthony Burton, *Vision and Accident. The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1999), pp. 3–13.

[2] Stacey Sloboda, "The Grammar of Ornament: Cosmopolitanism and Reform in British Design," *Journal of Design History*, vol. 21, no. 3 (August 2008), pp. 226–228.

[3] Christopher Dresser, "The Art of Decorative Design," *The Builder* (15 March 1862), p. 185.

Accordingly, the reformers viewed industrial materials and positivist designs suited specifically for the machine as the salvation of modern style, and believed that what Britain needed was an exemplary art that reflected, or could be adapted to, the new demands and technologies of the industrial and positivist world.

This interest in allying industrial and aesthetic sensibilities was of significant political interest at a time when Britain faced increased industrial competition at home and abroad. A critical moment was that of the Great Exhibition in 1851, when British designers were rendered mute in the face of overwhelming evidence that nearly every country in the world had a more coherent and culturally-integrated style of design than did Victorian Britain. British artefacts showed a struggle for effect, they were tastelessly eclectic, old-fashioned, and excessively naturalistic. For reformers, the problem was one of style: the illusionist, figural and fanciful designs that ornamented British decorative arts were ill-suited to contemporary means of production which called for abstract, geometric decoration.[4] British style meant bad style, and it was declared a false style in decoration. Moreover, bad style was proof of a major aesthetic crisis, and the resulting spread of ugliness was believed to be an important cause of the moral, and ultimately political, decay of the British nation. This philosophy is well reflected in the words of William Blake: "The Foundation of Empire is Art and Science. Remove them or Degrade them and the Empire is No more. Empire follows Art and not vice versa as Englishmen suppose."[5]

For some reformers, the 1851 Exhibition offered both the evidence of a crisis in British and European design and its salvation in the arts of pre-industrial Oriental cultures. The displays of objects from India were particularly suggestive, and they inspired the necessary impulse towards the change of British style in design. The most important result of this effort was the publication of *The Grammar of Ornament* by Owen Jones, the Welsh orientalist scholar and architect. The *Grammar* was both a lexicon for a new industrial culture in search of a suitably modern style and a precursor to modernist formalism in decorative art. To be more precise, *the Grammar* attempted to synthesize the industrial ethos of the period and correct beautiful art in order to offer a model for a new style of British design that would be at once radical, modern and cosmopolitan. It identified Indian art as a crucial ingredient of the pedagogical and civilising mission to modernise, correct and beautify British art, taste and morals.[6]

[4] Richard Redgrave, *Report on design: prepared as a supplement to the Report of the Jury of Class XXX. Of the Exhibition of 1851, at the desire of Her Majesty's Commissioners* (London: Clowes, 1851), pp. 3–6.

[5] Annotation to Joshua Reynold's *Discourses on Art*, in William Blake, *Selected Poetry and Prose of Blake*, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 447. Quoted after Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), pp. 12–13.

[6] Sloboda, "*Grammar of Ornament*," pp. 223–225.

To Jones, Indian things were not just beautiful, enchanting or romantic; Indian design fitted the modern world of machines because of its elegant simplicity, escape from perspective and realism in art, and "rational, geometrical ordering of flat surfaces."[7] This geometrical foundation, exemplifying a rational law, produced a scientific, mathematical beauty based on rhythm, symmetry and repetition, which enhanced the refinement, delicacy and good taste of Indian art objects.[8] An Indian aesthetic was, thus, what Britain needed to reconcile industry and beauty, to transcend the opposition between the industrial arts and the fine arts, and finally to form the principles of a modern British style of design. Indian decorative ornament became the basis of thirty-seven propositions in the *Grammar*, dealing with form and colour, which in turn became the foundation for Jones's theory of conventionalisation. The most important of these propositions dealt with geometry: "all ornament should be based on upon geometrical construction [Proposition 8]," and nature: "Flowers or other natural objects should not be used as ornaments, but conventional representations founded upon them sufficiently suggestive to convey the intended image to the mind [Proposition 13]."[9]

Indian abstractive stylization of the flower or leaf, suggesting their origin in nature while avoiding realist, imitative representation, became the hallmark of mid-Victorian design and the foundation of a new aesthetic orthodoxy that later came to be known as the "South Kensington System."[10] Richard Redgrave, an early apologist for the system, described it as a "method wholly new," based on ornament "not as viewed perspectively, but diagrammatically flat to the eye." This "flat display," he said, "was specifically suited to the requirements of the manufacturer, to reproduction by painting, weaving, stamping, etc., to which naturalist renderings do not readily lend themselves."[11] In order to assimilate Indian design into British aesthetics, the Museum of Ornamental Art[12] was founded in 1852 with the specific task of spreading Owen Jones's teaching and exhibiting good art specimens to inform and instruct British designers, workers and the general public so that they might regain their supremacy in manufacturing and morals.

When the Museum moved to a new building in South Kensington in 1857, John Ruskin was asked to make an inaugural speech, and what Ruskin said

[7] Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day & Sons, 1856), p. 72.

[8] Kresten Jespersen, "Form and Meaning: The Conventionalization of the Leaf Ornament," *Perspecta* 23 (1987), pp. 148–150.

[9] Jones, *Grammar*, pp. 5, 6.

[10] David Brett, "The Interpretation of Ornament," *Journal of Design History* 1/2 (1988), p. 103.

[11] Richard Redgrave, *A Century of Painters of the English School* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1866), pp. 564–565.

[12] In 1857, the Museum changed its name to the South Kensington Museum, and in 1901 to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

must have come as a big surprise to the Museum authorities. Ruskin believed machines could make everything except works of art, and the mechanical appearance of Indian art proved the monstrosity of its beauty – the beauty we should fear. The reformers' ideas considered above are the exact anti-theses of Ruskin's "moral aesthetic of the natural world," and some of his writings appear to be aimed exactly at the very ideas and passages I have quoted.

There is no doubt that Ruskin admired Indian art, and he was always fully prepared to acknowledge that its combination of form and colour was the most successful and beautiful. At the same time, however, he also believed that the chief error of Indian ornament arose from its conventionalisation and its avoidance of the human figure and nature:

> It is quite true that the art of India is delicate and refined. But it has one curious character distinguishing it from all other art of equal merit in design – it never represents a natural fact. […] [It] forms its compositions out of meaningless fragments of colour and flowings of hue […]. To all the facts and forms of nature it wilfully and resolutely opposes itself; it will not draw a flower, but only a spiral or a zig-zag.[13]

Ruskin's criticism of abstract and geometrical art was not that it is not beautiful, but that beauty itself is not enough to make an object a work of good art.[14] To him, great art demanded of both the artist and the beholder the response of the whole human personality: body, soul, and intellect. It must "delight the senses, while it speaks to the intellect."[15] A beautiful object, on the other hand, was one that pleased "without any direct and definite exertion of the intellect."[16] In other words, it satisfied the senses but it did not satisfy the intellect, because the intellect demands the truth. While the reformers stressed truth to principles, flatness and materials, for Ruskin truth meant simply the accurate representation of something outside the frame of the picture: "the word Truth, as applied to art, signifies the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of nature."[17] Accordingly, Indian art that had no reference to anything concrete outside itself might indeed be beautiful and pleasant, but it was less than great, correct and meaningful art because it did not engage the human personality *in toto*, and in particular the intellect:

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[13] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, p. 13.

[14] Charles Dougherty, "Ruskin's Views on Non-Representational Art," *College Art Journal* 15/2 (Winter, 1955), pp. 113–114.

[15] John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 3 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn (London: Cook and Wedderburn, 1903–1912), p. 101.

[16] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 1, p. 109.

[17] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 3, p. 104.

> These abstract relations and inherent pleasantnesses [...], whether of colour or sounds, form what we may properly term the musical or harmonic element in every art; and the study of them is an entirely separate science. It is the branch of art-philosophy to which the word "aesthetics" should be strictly limited, being the enquiry into the nature of things that in themselves are pleasant to the human senses or instincts, though they represent nothing, and serve for nothing, their only service being their pleasantness.[18]

Under the twin influence of his evangelical upbringing and the Romantics, Ruskin had exceptional regard for nature and truth. His conviction that truthfulness in art could be ascertained only in connection with nature had religious grounds. He believed that the external world, as God's inspiration, was the only source of true beauty and inspiration, and that one should represent nature truthfully, through the arts especially, to bring man closer to the truth of God: "Truthful observation allows sensual pleasure of the eye to lead to the truth of God; to try and do any more than SEE truly, either by theoretical analysis or emotional self-identification, is mere egoism."[19] And therefore, "[w]e shall [...] find that no artist can be graceful, imaginative, or original, unless he be truthful; and that the pursuit of beauty, instead of leading us away from truth, increases the desire for it and the necessity for it tenfold."[20]

Through the honesty of nature's representation, Ruskin tried to restore morality to art. Just as for the reformers, for him too there was a direct cause and effect between a nation's art and its current morality, and the way to improve society was to reform its art. For Ruskin, however, modernist beauty was not enough to refine the nation; only good, moral art would eventuate sound morals. For him, love of nature and accurate depiction of natural phenomena were fundamentally ethical; accordingly, losing touch with nature meant losing touch with morality, and twisting the natural beauty of a plant or animal was tantamount to excluding God from His own creation. According to Ruskin, all spheres of human life and activity, from drawing, art-criticism and architecture to economics and the good life, equally required care for, and understanding of, nature; for without fidelity to nature, Ruskin claimed, people are given to exaggerations and monstrosities that can be only a mark of ugly, inhuman, and morbid art.[21] Art based on nature gained

[18] Ruskin, *Aratra Pentelici*, vol. 20 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, p. 207.

[19] John Ruskin, *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: Cassell, 1849), p. 94.

[20] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 3, p. 138.

[21] Bertam Morris, "Ruskin on the Pathetic Fallacy, or on How a Moral Theory of Art May Fail," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 14, no. 2, second special issue on Baroque Style in various Arts (December 1955), pp. 251–253.

vitality, dignity, nobility and moral character, but when art, like Indian art, represented nature only "under some distorted or monstrous form" and made its compositions out of meaningless fragments of colour and the flowing of disassociated lines, it issued in the "destruction of both intellectual power and moral principle."[22] To Ruskin, falsehood occurred when nature was distorted; and maligned nature destroyed the morality of art.

For Ruskin, then, conventionalisation was a degradation of nature and morality, rather than an expression of nature's essential truth and a way to heal British taste. His views, however, were far from politically neutral. The Indian inability to represent nature properly in art reflected not just an immoral aesthetics but the moral shortcomings of an entire society. Framing his discussion within the context of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, Ruskin needed Indian art to display its fundamental duplicity and degradation in order to assert British colonial authority over nature and its correct representation in art. What Ruskin proposed was a psychological equation between the abstract quality of Indian ornamental design and the alienated and savage mentality of its makers:

> You will find that the art whose end is pleasure only is pre-eminently the gift of cruel and savage nations, cruel in temper, savage in habits and conception; but that the art which is especially dedicated to natural fact always indicated a peculiar gentleness and tenderness of mind [...], the production of thoughtful, sensitive, earnest, kind men, large in their views of life and full of various intellectual powers.[23]

The rhetorical pathos of Ruskin's claims about the unnatural and deteriorative art of India and the immoral and cruel Indian character hinged upon the British public's reaction to the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Ruskin described the revolt hyperbolically, in accord with British racist sentiment aroused at the time. "Since the race of man began its course of sin on this earth," Ruskin declared, "nothing has ever been done by it so significative of all bestial, and lower than bestial degradation, as the act [of] the Indian race in the year that has just passed by."[24] The acts of the Indian mutineers equalled "cruelty stretched to its fiercest against the gentle and unoffending, and corruption festered to its loathsomest."[25]

What interested Ruskin particularly was the question how people who love art so much could behave so basely, and he based the explanation on his juxtaposition of the Scottish against the Indian:

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[22] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, pp. 265, 268.
[23] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, p. 76.
[24] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, p. 11.
[25] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, p. 12.

> [I]n these great populations, Indian and Highland – in the races of the jungle and of the moor – two national capacities distinctly and accurately opposed. On the one side we have a race rejoicing in art, and eminently and universally endowed with the gift of it; on the other you have a people careless of art, and apparently incapable of it, their utmost effort hitherto reaching no further than to the variation of the positions of bars of colour in square chequers. […] Out of the peat cottage come faith, courage, self-sacrifice, purity, and piety, and whatever else is fruitful in the work of Heaven; out of the ivory palace come treachery, cruelty, cowardice, idolatry, bestiality, – whatever is fruitful in the work of Hell.[26]

The paradox was then that Indians, who were lovers of art, produced seemingly subtle and beautiful art that was in fact degraded and unnatural. In contrast, the Scots, whose only art was their tartan kilts, were too puritanically virtuous to produce any significant art. This paradox was, however, consistent with Ruskin's belief that the work of an artist is conditioned by the kind of national life which surrounds him: "the art of any country is the exponent of its social and political virtues."[27] The way in which a people constructs its buildings or paints its pictures is a function of its ethical life, its earnestness, its faithfulness, its industry, "for all good art is the natural utterance of its own people in its own day."[28] In other words, the virtues of a national life set limits to the virtues of art: "when national life is vibrant and moral, art is too; when national life is degraded, so is art. Art's virtues can only be great as its people are great; otherwise it suffers in buildings, painting and literature from prevailing vices. The foolish build foolishly, the vicious, basely; the wise, sensibly; and the virtuous, beautifully."[29] Ruskin, then, rhetorically entrapped himself by simultaneously valorising British civilisation and nostalgically identifying art and beauty with barbarism and the diabolical race of Indians. In damning Indians because of the Mutiny, Ruskin sided with the industrial, imperial civilisation that he often elsewhere damned as barbaric, deceitful, exploitative, and unremittingly ugly.

Interestingly, as much as the notions of cruelty, primitivism and barbarism associated with abstract, geometrical art and its producers caused Ruskin to contradict his anti-industrial statements, they were very much in concord with a number of aesthetic attitudes in British history. The most telling examples are the attitude of the Romans towards Celtic art between the first and fifth centuries B.C. and the eighteenth-century British attitude towards the French-

[26] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, pp. 11–12.
[27] Ruskin, *Lectures on Art*, vol. 8 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, p. 39.
[28] Ruskin, *Lectures on Art*, p. 39.
[29] Ruskin, *Queen of the Air*, vol. 19 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, p. 418.

style garden. A short consideration of these examples will demonstrate how Ruskin's position is in keeping with a historically recurring attitude of aesthetic criticism, and in particular a politically-motivated rejection of various kinds of abstraction.

Most early Celtic art took the form of abstract decoration based on geometrical forms like spirals, knotworks and key patterns. When contemplating the infinitely knotted patterns of Celtic art, it is easy to notice that dynamism is their dominant feature. Celtic ornament was all about non-equilibrium and motion: it rotated, danced and turned. For this reason Celtic art was often characterised as abstract, iterated and unbounded as it rejected stable, orderly and static designs in favour of chaos and fluctuation.[30]

The Romans entirely rejected the abstractive and dynamic character of Celtic ornament to the extent that Celtic art almost ceased to be produced during the four-century Roman occupation of Britain. The most influential factor determining Roman critical views on Celtic art was connected with the Greek-influenced approach that considered the image of man as the source of highest artistic creativity. According to Roman norms of aesthetics, most successful works of art explored the inner depth and external physical appearance of the human body. The Romans favoured realism: their portraits of famous and powerful people rejected the ideal look (so popular in ancient Greek art) and strived to show every blemish and wart of the portrayed.

Yet, Celtic art was looked down upon not only because it was not realist and anthropocentric or because it used abstraction and geometry, but also because it used the wrong style of geometry. The Romans did use geometry too, particularly in their architecture, which was a powerful aesthetic representation of the Roman imperial power. Roman architecture was supposed to be solid, simple, monumental, ostentatious in scale, unquestionable in authority and deemed eternal in order to become the architectural mirror image of the ideals and ambitions of the Roman Empire. Accordingly, the geometry of Roman architecture had to be practical and politically meaningful: the Roman world was to be controlled and rationally ordered. Classical geometry was therefore concrete, rigid, finite, precise, rationally ordered, axiomatic, and based on simple static shapes of circles, triangles and rectangles.[31] The dynamic feature present in Celtic geometry could not, then, be adopted in the Roman ornament as to Romans the "dynamic" geometry represented the instability and irrationality of the Celtic culture, and therefore reflected the lower art of an inferior, primitive civilisation.[32]

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[30] Ian Stead, *Celtic Art before the Roman Conquest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 20–25.

[31] J.M.C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 2–10.

[32] Toynbee, *Art in Britain*, pp. 11–15.

A sense of superiority was present also in the eighteenth-century preference for English landscape garden designs over French formal gardens. In fact the geometrically arranged garden was the principle gardening style in Britain in the preceding periods of the Renaissance and Baroque whose dominant aesthetic and philosophical ideas where epitomized by the formal design of the garden. In the sixteenth century the so-called Italian Renaissance garden (the predecessor of the French garden) became popular. This style of garden based on symmetry, harmony and order, and the principle of imposing order over nature represented the ideals of the Renaissance and recalled the virtues of Ancient Rome. Later in the seventeenth century the French gardern with intricate regular patterns carved in and upon the flattened surface reflected to the British the ideals of the scientific revolution and in particular the power of the newly developed sciences of botany, geometry, astronomy, agriculture and political economy to elimitate chaos, irrationality and wilderness.[33]

In the eighteenth century, however, the new generation of British gardeners, influenced by the classical Chinese garden of the East, on the one hand, and the rationalism and humanitarianism of the Enlightenment on the other, began to see the formal, geometrical garden not just as monotonous, unnatural, cold and spiritless but, more importantly, as monstrous. Critiques of the geometrical garden were referred in terms of aesthetic tastelessness, ethical condemnation and political crime. To the Enlightenment British, the violation of nature in the French garden, exemplified by its nature being segregated, clipped, straightened and turned into geometrical shapes, stood for the cruel and uncivilised past that the British had put behind. In particular, it symbolised to the British the unjust and unnatural system of government based on absolute royal power and feudal system. The grid, geometrical pattern of paths and canals and the regular patches of greenery reminded of formative sections of the feudal society with clearly but brutally defined limits of destinations and purposes as well as rigorous codes of behaviour in all realms of life and reflection – the limits and codes aimed at uprooting or weeding out any undesirable, unruly parasitic social growth. A whole variety of corrective procedures of disciplining nature (pruning, rolling, levelling, weeding) were seen as representations of the absolute power of God-king who operated as the distributor of order, guardian of limits, tyrant who ostracized all licentiousness and ruthlessly reduced the wild to the domesticated and tamed.[34]

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[33] John Dixon Hunt, *The Genius of the Place. The English Landscape Garden 1620–1820* (London: Elek. 1975), pp. 3–8.

[34] David Jarret, Tadeusz Rachwał and Tadeusz Sławek, *Geometry, Winding Paths and the Mansions of Spirit. Aesthetics of Gardening in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1997), pp. 24–76.

The English garden, on the other hand, stood for civilisational progress. Its characteristic features, like meandering streams and paths; nature distinguished by variety, plentifulness and apparent disorder; and flowers and plants allowed to bloom in their individual beauty without being penned into regular borders and parterres, stood for a whole spectrum of new social and political liberties. They varied from social mobility and progress, the career door open to talent to constitutional monarchy and modern civil society following the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Declaration of Rights of 1689.[35]

In short, to Ruskin, the Romans and the eighteenth-century British, geometry and abstraction possessed a dominant element of inferiority, barbaric primitivism and cruelty. Yet Ruskin's attitude was different in one important aspect. Celtic art and French gardens stood for civilisations of the past that had to give in to the benevolent, progressive and modern civilisations of the Romans and the Enlightenment British. In contrast, the fault of the Indian zigzags was that they were promoted as modernist beauties, that they served the amoral positivist science, the frightful future of industrial progress, the modern civilisation of machines, and the inhuman civilisation of perfection.

One important reason why Ruskin rejected the reformers' new British design based on Indian ornament was that it followed the contemporary positivist attitude to nature, which did not allow art to perform its moral goals. Ruskin believed that "all true science is 'savoir vivre'. But your modern science is the contrary to that. It is 'savoir mourir'."[36] Because modern science employed a language shorn of human associations, it could not, Ruskin argued, be used for the ethical and experiential purposes of art, and therefore it could not be used in great art:

> In representing this organic nature, Art has nothing to do with structures, causes or absolute facts; but only with appearances. […] In representing these appearances, she is more hindered than helped by the knowledge of things that do not externally appear […]. You are, in drawing, to try only to represent the appearance of things, never what you know the thing to be […], the artist has no concern with invisible structures, organic or inorganic.[37]

Ruskin dismissed the reformers' notions of science and new design as "unclean stupidity […] essentially the work of human bats; men of semi-

[35] Hunt, *The Genius of the Place*, pp. 146–148.

[36] John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera. Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*, Letter 5 (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1871–1875), p. 3.

[37] John Ruskin, *The Eagle's Nest. Ten Lectures on the Relation of Natural Science to Art*, vol. 12 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, paras. 148–150, 161, 171–172.

faculty or semi-education, who are more or less incapable of seeing, much less of thinking."[38] What is more, he believed that such a positivist system of design was a counter-blast to creativity and conventional pedagogy, because it proposed to give the art or design student "such accurate command of mathematical forms as may afterwards enable him to design rapidly and cheaply for manufactures."[39] The attack on the South Kensington System, on its positivist, conventional anti-naturalism, continues all through Ruskin's work. It followed from his visions of the dehistoricised and decultured world of positivism and the pattern of confident industrial culture secreting transcendental abstraction resulting in a savage world shorn of humane associations.[40]

Ruskin was highly critical of the geometric approach to design also because he considered it to be too "perfect." By "perfection" he meant a mathematical and mechanical perfection which designers and labourers were expected to achieve in their work, through the progress of industrialisation. Ruskin's opposition to perfection in art or manufacture is based upon three grounds: the religious, the aesthetic and the humanitarian.[41] Firstly, Ruskin asserted that irregularity is woven into the fabric of God's creation as almost the beautiful hallmark of His divine work. The many irregularities found in the external world "are literally better, lovelier, and more beloved for the imperfections, which have been divinely appointed."[42] Hence, Ruskin concluded that all things made by man must be made imperfectly if man desires them to be beautiful. Moreover, Ruskin agreed with ancient Christian teaching that imperfection in man's handiwork is a frank confession of his fallen nature. Therefore, only crude and irregular things express the condition of man, and so "neither architecture nor any other noble work of man can be good unless it be imperfect."[43] While perfection meant stagnation, imperfection in a piece of work showed the willingness of man to see imperfection in himself: it was natural, and altogether a sign of being human and unconstrained, to express that which may be called "human nature." In his aesthetics, Ruskin's regard for the imperfect, for the irregular in man's work, assumed considerable proportion. He exalted the rough finish of handicraft, the asymmetrical building, the irregular street; indeed Ruskin strived to increase our admiration for the imperfect in all human endeavours.

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[38] John Ruskin, *Proserpina. Studies of Wayside Flowers* (London: Sunnyside and Orpington, 1879), chap. 3, para. 6.

[39] John Ruskin, *Elements of Drawing*, vol. 9 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, p. 36.

[40] Brett, "Interpretation of Ornament," pp. 108–109.

[41] Robert Simpson McLean, "Altruistic Ideals versus Leisure Class values: An Irreconcilable Conflict in John Ruskin," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1973), pp. 347–356.

[42] Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, vol. 10 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, pp. 203–204.

[43] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 204.

Ruskin also dismissed regularity and symmetry on aesthetic grounds: "no good work whatever can be perfect, and the demand for perfection is always a sign of a misunderstanding of the ends of art."[44] Since he believed that the perfect object must always be monotonous and unimaginative, Ruskin advised that "very accurate workmanship is to be esteemed a bad sign."[45] Speaking of architecture, Ruskin stated that "we must no more expect to derive pleasure from an architecture whose ornaments are of one pattern, and whose pillars are of one proportion, than we should out of a universe in which the clouds were all of one shape, and the trees all of one size."[46] For this reason Ruskin formed a doctrine of the imperfect based on the belief that great art has to have a quality that Ruskin called "changefulness" – "great art, whether expressing itself in words, colour or stones, DOES NOT say the same thing over and over again."[47] Therefore, Ruskin habitually depreciated mass production and any mechanical means by which art could be inexpensively duplicated, such as etching, engraving, lithography, or photography, and any other arts that "create only a copy."[48] In fact, Ruskin spurned any object that was not unique, original, single and precious:

> All the stamped metals, and artificial stones, and imitation woods and bronzes, over the invention of which we hear daily exaltation – all the sort, and cheap, and easy ways of doing that whose difficulty is its honour – are just so many new obstacles in our already encumbered road. They will not make us happier or wiser – they will extend neither pride of judgement nor the privilege of enjoyment. They will only make us shallower in our understandings, colder in our hearts, and feebler in our wits. They will lower our taste and waste our money. And most justly.[49]

His third objection to regularity was based upon his belief that the machine cruelly turns the worker into a mere operator, compelling him to adhere to an inhuman standard of exactness and stifling his creativity.[50] He also attacked the division of labour, the system that enabled men to produce goods en masses. His grounds were humanitarian: "It is not labour that is divided; but men: – Divided into mere segments of men – broken into small fragments of life; [...] all the little pieces of intelligence that is left in a man is

[44] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 202.
[45] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 268.
[46] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 207.
[47] Ruskin, *Lectures on Art*, p. 219.
[48] Ruskin, *Lectures on Art*, p. 220.
[49] Ruskin, *Lectures on Art*, p. 219.
[50] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 193.

not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail."[51] Ruskin urged rigorous restriction of the use of machinery and a boycott of the products of the new industrial order, as he objected to their perfect finish and what he believed was the inhuman discipline required to achieve it. "You must either make a tool of the creature or a man of him," Ruskin claimed, "to be counted off into a heap of mechanism, numbered with its wheels and weighed with its hammer strokes – this nature bade not – this God blesses not – this humanity for no long time is able to endure."[52] Ruskin denounced severely such "degradation of workman," and asked that Britain sacrificed the "convenience" and "cheapness" of the factory system, and instead desired "the products of healthy and ennobling labour," as found in handicraft industry.[53] Ruskin warned people not to fall for the appeal of perfection, stating that such "perfectnesses" should be taken as signs of slavery "a thousand times more bitter and more degrading than that of scourged Africa."[54]

Great Britain, the first Western territory to become industrialised, owed her wealth and power in the nineteenth century to her machinery. The machine-made product – smooth, perfect, ubiquitous – is a commonplace to us, but to newly industrialised Victorian Britain it was something of a miracle. The steam engine and the factory system revolutionised British society, bringing grievous problems, but also bringing much good, since machinery produced an amazing abundance, lowering costs and providing consumers with articles that handicraft production had never put within their reach. Yet, Ruskin could regard the machine only as a diabolical agent, producing filth, soot, dirt and noisome odours, with a consequent debilitation and degradation of man. His indignation at the "cruelties at the English sweatshops" or the ugliness of "the dark Satanic mills"[55] led him to see in the machine the instrumentality of the destruction of human values resulting in the world and human practices (scientific, artistic, social) truncated from moral evaluations and becoming increasingly positivistic and narrowly utilitarian. Ruskin was indeed a fountainhead of articulate anti-industrial and anti-positivist attitudes. He believed that abstract geometric art joined with mass production and the machine-based positivist orientation of culture would result in violent emotions and turbulence, in a world distorted out of all recognition and full of people with trivial interests, committed to "pathetic fallacy" and "morbid sensibilities."[56]

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[51] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 196.
[52] Ruskin, *The Nature of the Gothic*, vol. 1 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, p. 87.
[53] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 197.
[54] Ruskin, *Nature of the Gothic*, p. 87.
[55] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 194.
[56] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, p. 195.

To sum up: what Ruskin was calling for was originality and a break away from the mass production and machine-orientated society of Victorian Britain. Art which was man-made, imperfect, singular and unrepeatable, acting within nature with mimetic imperative – this was the cure for false and incorrect art as well as immorality, industrial slavery, degradation and ugliness. In other words, Ruskin believed that only pre-industrial art could redeem industrial society. If art could be reformed in this way it would in turn produce a healthy and moral society, which would reflect back to sustain the greatness of its art.

Indian art, on the other hand, by turning aside from nature and using abstract geometry, was art reduced to "heartless laws," "dead colours" and "conventional monotonies";[57] it was elegant and delightful, but also aesthetically savage and cruelly immoral. Indian ornament put at the service of the machine and mass production further transformed Indian design into an inhumanly perfect industrial monster. For Ruskin, both Indian art and industry represented soulless alienation from the "natural fact," and for him, as Partha Mitter has noted, the self-referential spiral of Indian ornament was equivalent to the cog-wheels of the machine:

> The dire warning given to the manufacturers was that, instead of basing themselves on a study of nature, if the designed decorative ornament "either in ignorant play of their own heartless fancy, as the Indian does, or according to the received application of heartless laws, as the modern European does [...] there is but one word for [them] – Death."[58]

To Ruskin, fine and good art was the work of the hand, the head and the heart – the work of most delicate mechanisms, emotionally engendered, intelligently directed and irreplaceable by cogs of the machine. The replacement of manual work and delight in nature with industrial production and geometrical abstraction respectively could lead only to "meaninglessness" and "death." For all these reasons Ruskin warned the V&A authorities against the employment of Indian ornament to heal British design:

> Among the models set before you in this institution, and in the others established throughout the kingdom for the teaching of design, there are, I suppose, none in their kind more admirable that the decorated works of India. [...] [Yet] are we met here as honest people? Or are we not rather [...] assembled to devise the hasty degradation of our

[57] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, pp. 94–95.

[58] Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters. A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 257.

> country, or like a conclave of midnight witches, to summon and send forth, on new and unsuspected missions, the demons of luxury, cruelty and superstition?[59]

After Ruskin's inaugural speech, however, the V&A Museum continued with its quest to make British art look more Indian, and the changes in the style of British design of the 1860s and 70s clearly reflect that the V&A's positive attitude towards Indian art, and geometrical, abstract art in general, prevailed. Yet, interestingly, the twenty-first-century attitudes to geometrical art seem unable to escape the residues of the Victorian interconnected past and Ruskin's opinion in particular. These attitudes more often than not take the form of enduring clichés about the ambivalent and somewhat contradictory character of this art, which appears modernist, attractive and elegant on the one hand, and on the other primitive, cold, clinical and inhuman, as if following simultaneously the ideas of both Owen Jones and John Ruskin. As we look at the ornamentation of design against which Ruskin railed so forcefully, it is difficult to sense the "fear," the "brutality," the cruel immorality, which he saw. Perhaps it is worth reminding ourselves briefly that a hundred and sixty years have passed, in which modernism and modernist rejection of imitative, illusionist art have in many ways become the background to our aesthetic sensitivities. Nonetheless, I dare to say that Ruskin's negative response to the delicate, balanced, and even refined (to our eyes) Indian design in the mid-Victorian period might have been in fact in many ways like our own negative response to a more contemporary architectural geometrical radicalism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Ruskin was perhaps demonstrating a different degree of sensibility from that of his contemporaries, as he saw in the new geometry an abstraction akin to a dehumanisation, a disassociation of man from his environment and from God, but from today's perspective we might consider Ruskin's many statements as prophetic. After all, his aesthetically conservative criticism of the direction art and design were taking could be read as a prescient visions of the godless horror and dehumanisation to be described in the coming decades by numerous critics who witnessed first-hand the modernity itself.

[59] Ruskin, *Two Paths*, p. 263.

Anna Antonowicz

Indyjskie zygzaki – przemysłowy potwór

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia wybrane wiktoriańskie poglądy na temat pięknej i poprawnej sztuki ery przemysłowej, szczególnie skupiając się na teoretyku sztuki Johnie Ruskinie i jego krytyce rządowej reformy sztuki zdobniczej przeprowadzonej w latach 50. i 60. XIX wieku. Celem reformy było podwyższenie jakości brytyjskiej sztuki dekoracyjnej przez oparcie jej na zasadach sztuki indyjskiej. Według reformatorów, a zwłaszcza Owena Jonesa, przedmioty sztuki indyjskiej stanowiły ideał estetyki przemysłowej: ich wspaniała forma, skonwencjonalizowany i geometryczny ornament, wyszukana paleta barw oraz wysoki poziom wykonania określały kanon piękna, który był atrakcyjny dla nowoczesnego człowieka epoki wiktoriańskiej, jak i niezbędny do zażegnania kryzysu dekoracyjnego. Dla Ruskina natomiast, antymaterialisty i orędownika sztuki moralnej, indyjskie artefakty były wytworami irracjonalnego, okrutnego narodu i uosabiały estetyczną dzicz oraz duchową śmierć. Sprzeczność poglądów Ruskina i Jonesa to ciekawe świadectwo konfliktu wartości w okresie wielkiego niepokoju o wpływ postępu technicznego na piękno i smak estetyczny.

Anna Antonowicz

Indische Zickzacke – industrielles Monster

Zusammenfassung

Im vorliegenden Artikel stellt die Verfasserin ausgewählte viktorianische Ansichten über schöne und richtige Kunst der industriellen Ära dar. Sie konzentriert sich besonders auf den Kunsttheoretiker John Ruskin und auf die Kritik, die er an die von der Regierung in den 50er und 60er Jahren des 19.Jahrhunderts durchgeführte Reform der Ornamentik geübt hat. Die Reform bezweckte, die britische Ornamentik auf die Prinzipien der indischen Kunst zu gründen und auf diese Weise ihre Qualität zu steigern. Für die Reformatoren, darunter vor allem für Owen Jones, waren indische Kunstgegenstände das Idealbind der industriellen Kunst: deren prachtvolle Form, konventionalisiertes geometrisches Ornament, ausgesuchte Farbpalette und perfekte Ausführung bestimmten das Schönheitsideal, das für den modernen Menschen der viktorianischen Epoche verlockend und zur Beilegung der dekorativen Krise unerlässlich war. Ruskin dagegen, als Antimaterialist und Befürworter einer moralischen Kunst, sah in indischen Artefakten die Erzeugnisse eines irrationellen und grausamen Volkes, welche die ästhetische Wilde und den geistigen Tod verkörpern. Der Widerspruch zwischen den Ansichten von Ruskin und Jones ist ein interessantes Zeugnis von dem Konflikt der Werte zur Zeit der großen Angst um die Einwirkung des technischen Fortschritts auf die Schönheit und den ästhetischen Geschmack.

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The Victorian Culture and the Fear of the Talented Woman in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

Among many things which constitute our notions of modernity, the nineteenth century gave us our modern fears. By firmly establishing the middle-class, white, Anglo-Saxon, Christian male as the target recipient and ideological addressee of culture, especially in the growing variety of popular genres, the existential terror of the Other could be presented from the dominant ontological perspective. Victorian writers elaborated on the earlier Romantic and Gothic traditions, expanding the notions of Otherness to encompass a wide range of possible sources of fear for their bourgeois readers. The figure of a vampire came to embody the threat of sexually transmitted diseases connected with popular middle-class stereotypes of libertine aristocrats, a danger of foreign invasion, but also a bloodsucking capitalist, as observed by Karl Marx, and even the fear of the female, as noticed by Walter Pater in his well-known essay on the Mona Lisa. The process never really ceased, and the list of such symbolic personifications could be extended to include nineteenth-century man-made monsters, like those of doctors Frankenstein and Jekyll, who embodied the fear of Science, and werewolves who personified the fear of Nature. The early twentieth century added to this catalogue the living mummy, symbolising the dangerous powers of History and the Phantom of the Opera, who exemplified the menacing aspects of Art. Even the relatively recent horror-film character of a zombie could be seen, among possible interpretations, as an un-dead incarnation of the threatening proletariat. Still, the perspective of what should be considered natural and normal has not changed much since the Victorian era.

The presentation of the various forms of Otherness could be done in earnest, to reinforce the cultural hegemony of bourgeois values, or to challenge it. Women writers dealing with the "woman question," so crucial to Victorianism – and it would be difficult to find a nineteenth-century novelist more sympathetic to the cause than Mary Ann Evans who used the pen-name George Eliot – used the imagery and rhetoric of the female Other to reassure the relevance and cultural importance of their sex. Her last novel, *Daniel Deronda*, published in 1876, deals with the plight of the talented woman. As the critic Delia de Sousa Correa notes, *Daniel Deronda* is the most "musical" of Eliot's novels. The author herself wanted everything in her book "to be related to everything else there," so musical allusions contribute greatly to its form and plot.[1] The title character, a young man raised as a member of English gentry, who in the course of the narrative discovers the truth about his Jewish origins, is entangled in a web of complicated relations with three vocally gifted women. These are: his beautiful but egotistic friend, Gwendolen Harleth; his long-estranged mother, the Princess Alcharisi; and a young Jewish girl whom he rescues after a suicide attempt and with whom he eventually falls in love, Mirah Lapidoth. The complex plot, dealing with the subjects of Zionism, marital violence and female creativity incited mixed reactions from both the reading public and literary critics. F.R. Leavis suggested that the book should best be divided in two and the story of Gwendolen – her development from a spoiled girl, through a mistreated wife, to a chastened widow with undecided future – published as a separate novel.[2]

The subject of a woman's musical talent and its social implications provides a visible backdrop to the storyline, as all three principal female characters have some vocal training and experience in public performing, ranging from very modest acclaim offered to Gwendolen, through promising, if short-lived, attempts of Mirah, to a spectacular career of the prima donna Alcharisi. As Patricia Zakreski observes, the ideological interpretation of the characters of female performers in Victorian fiction changed in the second half of the nineteenth century. Theatre acting, long dismissed as a low form of entertainment, was re-evaluated in the later decades of the century, with the increased popularity of respectable art periodicals, where the reputation of the profession could be defended.[3] On the other hand, the figure of a classical singer, performing in operas or giving concerts, was infused with more

[1] Delia de Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (New York: Macmillan, 2003), p. 130.

[2] Quoted in: Helen Hayward, *Never Marry a Girl with a Dead Father: Women's Troubled Relationships in the Realist Novels* (New York: I.B. Tauris Publishing, 1999), p. 75.

[3] Patricia Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour 1848–1890: Refining Work for the middle-class woman* (Aldershot UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), pp. 166–167.

positive associations and the British society, up to the level of its crowned head, passionately adored the glorious prima donnas of the age, whose brilliant careers often assumed international proportions. Some celebrated opera singers married into European aristocracy e.g. Catherine Stephens who became the Countess of Essex, Christine Nilsson who married a Spanish grandee, or the Polish soprano Josephine Reszke who married Baron Leopold Julian Kronenberg. In the vast majority of cases it was taken for granted that the public performances would cease after the wedding.

One of the acclaimed international divas was the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, a sister to even more famous Maria Malibran. She starred in the title (male) role in Glück's *Orpheus* in Paris and London and her performance in Covent Garden in 1862 moved Charles Dickens to tears.[4] She was a friend of two literary ladies publishing under the names of George: George Sand, who was inspired by her to write one of her novels (*Consuelo*, 1842) and George Eliot, who produced her first attempt of depicting a splendid female singer in fiction in her 1871 verse drama entitled *Armgart*. Like the title character of *Armgart*, Pauline Viardot pursued her vocal career devotedly and when the voice started to fail her, she took on a respectable profession of an independent singing teacher. Married to a much older man, Viardot nevertheless turned down the romantic advances of the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev, wishing never to subordinate her art to love. In Eliot's poem, Armgart goes as far as to refuse an offer of marriage from a nobleman, professing she would only consider marrying a man who would "wed [her] Art – honour and cherish it, not tolerate."[5]

A very similar, implacable attitude – played up to its full terrifying potential – can be found in the character of the Princess Alcharisi in *Daniel Deronda*. The ageing prima donna, living in the memories of her now faded glory, is as much of a monster as the Victorian society would have her. To her long-estranged son Daniel, whom she unexpectedly wishes to see after twenty years of separation only to reveal to him a family secret, she seems not a human mother, but "a Melusina" from "some world which is independent of ours"[6] – a creature of legend, comprising a woman's upper body with the lower parts of a snake-like beast. In the context of a Victorian realist novel, this Melusine becomes a woman who possesses an enchanting voice, a burning, demonic ambition, and who rejects her feminine duties of a daughter, wife, and especially mother as if her reproductory organs had been replaced

[4] Rebecca A. Pope, "The diva doesn't die: George Eliot's *Armgart*," in *Embodied Voices, Representing Female Vocality in Western Culture*, ed. Leslie C. Dunn and Nancy A. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 143.

[5] George Eliot, *Complete Poems: The Personal Edition of George Eliot's Work*, ed. Esther Wood (London: Doulbeday, Page and Co., 1901), p. 339.

[6] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 536.

by something evil and inhuman – the Biblical Eve and the seducing monster rolled into one.

By her lack of interest in motherhood, the Princess is unsexed – much like Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth had been – and even her son, with his naive fantasies of finding and comforting her, has in him more feminine characteristics.[7] For Daniel, who had been educated to be a perfect English gentleman, maternity is the ultimate aspiration and achievement any woman should dream of. Therefore, the reunion with his long-lost mother – whom he had imagined as a tender, caring person – turns into a bitter disillusionment. The aged and fatally ill Princess Alcharisi resembles the younger diva Armgart who also voiced some condescending opinions on conventional womanhood:

> Yes, I know
> The oft-taught Gospel: "Woman, thy desire
> Shall be that all superlatives on earth
> Belong to men, save one highest kind –
> To be a mother. Thou shalt not desire
> To do aught best save pure subservience:
> Nature has willed so!" O blessed Nature!
> Let her be arbitress; she gave me voice
> […] gave me ambitions too, […]
> Men did not say, when I had sung last night,
> "T'was good, nay, wonderful, considering
> She is a woman"[8]

Her talent elevates her above the limitations of her sex. Her genius is that of a man, whose similar actions of total and unrelenting dedication to his calling at the expense of his family duties would easily be excused by the Victorian reading public. The Princess's declaration that "a great singer and actress is a queen"[9] reverberates with boldness that had made Elisabeth I add that she had "a heart and a stomach of a king." Helen Hayward observes that: "Throughout *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot suggests that, independently of biological gender, individual men and women (such as herself and George Henry Lewes?) sometimes have a great deal more in common with each other – in personality, temperament and 'force of genius' – than with other members of their own sex."[10] Yet, even if some of the Victorians – like the medi-

[7] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 566.
[8] Eliot, *Complete Poems*, p. 334.
[9] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 544.
[10] Hayward, *Never Marry a Girl with a Dead Father*, p. 90.

cal doctor and author James Compton-Burnett – agreed that "genius has no gender,"[11] the social reality was far less unbiased.

The Princess Alcharisi, perceived by Daniel as monstrous and criminal, is faced with a futile task to explain herself. She tells a story how, intimidated from childhood by her overbearing Jewish father, she rebelled and used an opportunity of marriage to pursue her vocal talent, raising – with the help of her supportive first husband – to international stardom. "It was my best way of getting some freedom,"[12] the Princess admits and adds that the only hindrance to enjoying her artistic potential in full was the threat of childbearing. "I did not wish you to be born. I parted with you willingly. When your father died, I resolved that I would have no more ties, but such as I could free myself from. I was the Alcharisi you have heard of: the name had magic wherever it was carried,"[13] she tells her flabbergasted son. For nine years after their separation she dedicated her whole energy to her art, until a sudden illness – in a way reminiscent of *Armgart* – deprived her of her voice. Only then, in an act of "desperation,"[14] she conceded to an offer of marriage by one of her many titled admirers. Unlike in the poem, the illness passed, but it was already unimportant. Soon, beside the new husband the Princess had five new children,[15] as if the laws of poetic justice were to lay on her motherhood with a vengeance as divine punishment for her sins. Domesticated and permanently removed from the stage, the Alcharisi "repented [for her hasty decision to marry], but it was too late."[16]

Melusine, a figure of European legends and folklore, was a water-fairy who – in many version of the legend – became the wife of a nobleman on a condition that he left her considerable freedom and privacy. Using her powers, she built him a splendid castle, sometimes appearing magically overnight. However, the prying husband – in a story resembling the legend of Bluebeard with reversed genders – who could not resist the temptation of spying on his wife, discovers her to be a half-beastly monster (often similar to a mermaid – a mythical creature known for her mesmerising voice). This unmasking causes Melusine to flee, never to be seen again, yet in some versions of the legend she secretly protects the descendants of her human family.[17] The Alcharisi follows the pattern of Melusine not only in the way in which her "unwomanly"

[11] James Compton-Burnett, *Best of Burnett*, ed. H.L. Chitara (New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 1992), p. 36.

[12] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 537.

[13] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 543.

[14] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 548.

[15] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 547.

[16] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 548.

[17] Władysław Kopaliński, *Słownik mitów i tradycji kultury* (Warsaw: PIW, 1991), pp. 677–678.

ambition renders her monstrous, but – eventually – also as a secret protectress. Domesticated and burdened with unwanted maternity, she guards the secret of her Jewish origin which, in her opinion, would make her even more of a social outcast in the world she inhabits and also stigmatise her children. In her second, aristocratic marriage the Princess feels trapped and forced to conform with the social expectations. The voice of the enchantress is silenced – her vocal strength is restored, but the magic is gone. The former *femme fatale* recedes into the background full of bitterness and regret.[18]

For Daniel, the Jewish heritage which the Princess perceives as the most stifling element of all, turns out to be a revelation of the purpose in life he had been looking for. He feels empowered to declare his love for Mirah and to travel with her to the Middle East, in doing so cutting short her promising career as a concert singer. Mirah is the Alcharisi's reversed image. She is, as one of the secondary characters observes, "an angel,"[19] but a quintessential Victorian "angel in the house" rather than a divine angel of music. Whereas the Alcharisi dreamed of the stage, Mirah, who had been raised in a theatre by her musician-entrepreneur father, hated its atmosphere and was embarrassed by the applause and praise.[20] She enjoys her femininity, which the Princess associated with the horrors of slavery and Chinese foot-binding.[21] As Zakreski observes: "Mirah does not sing because she wants a career on the stage or because she has a vocation; instead she sings in order to please other people; first her father and then her new friends."[22] As if to emphasize her domesticity and respectability, even her voice, although considered extraordinary by the most accomplished musician in the novel, the Jewish composer and virtuoso pianist Herr Klesmer, is also delicate and not suited for "singing in any larger space than a private drawing-room."[23] In the case of Mirah, music is returned to its proper feminine social space, as a private entertainment and an ornamental accomplishment to be taught to daughters and performed by wives within their homes.

The Jewish motives, which brought George Eliot much popularity among the Jewish community and stirred controversy elsewhere, are not essential to the treatment of the talented woman as the social Other. The patriarchal taboos the Alcharisi defied are by no means limited to the Jewish culture. As Harriett Hawkins points out: "If a gifted young woman portrayed within a comparable work of art in the context of virtually any other religious orthodoxy (Catholic, Protestant, or Islamic) had shown the same dedication to

[18] This observation has been kindly suggested to me by Professor Andrzej Wicher.
[19] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 416.
[20] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 181.
[21] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 541.
[22] Zakreski, *Representing Female Artistic Labour*, p. 179.
[23] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 415.

her own genius and likewise refused to serve any man [...] so as to enjoy reigning as a queen in the theatre [...] she would consequently [...] *have* to be shown to suffer for her sins and/or deemed to be as monstrous, as unnatural, as 'lacking' in 'true womanhood' as la Alcharisi."[24] In the Victorian society, "every woman is supposed to have the same set of motives, or else to be a monster,"[25] "her happiness is to be made as cakes are, by a fixed receipt"[26] – revolving around the kitchen and the nursery. The lives of the two Jewish singers do not differ in this aspect from the prescribed existence of the novel's principal heroine, the blond and Christian Gwendolen Harleth.

Gwendolen shares her youth with Mirah and her towering ambition with the Princess, but she lacks the greatness of their talents. Her little voice, very "ill taught"[27] as she likes to stress, does not go beyond a reasonably accomplished amateur, yet she charms the (principally male) audience with her performance of Bellini's aria at a private party. Her "moderately powerful soprano" is said to be similar to that of Jenny Lind.[28] The famous "Swedish Nightingale" debuted in London in 1847, and her performance was described by Queen Victoria as a "complete triumph."[29] However, George Eliot and her life partner George Henry Lewes, who met her in April 1871, were rather unimpressed.[30] The allusion to this particular singer might therefore be read as a veiled criticism of Gwendolen's mediocre vocal skills. Also, as Susan Leonardi and Rebecca Pope observe, Jenny Lind's personality, publicized almost as well as her singing, would situate her in opposition to Gwendolen's ruthless social ambition and thirst for luxury. "Lind had carefully constructed a public persona as an anti-diva who, unlike her sister divas, was religious and morally upright [...] shy and modest, reluctant of fame and longing for her Swedish home – as a singer, in other words, whose thought and actions were as pure as her voice."[31] This attitude of modesty and purity would link Jenny Lind with meek, submissive Mirah rather than with lively and selfish Gwendolen.

The reader is introduced to Gwendolen Harleth as a "spoiled child,"[32] a rebellious, pretty girl who wants to raise above the dreary existence of her impoverished middle-class family and whose "observation of matrimony had inclined her to think it rather a dreary state in which a woman could not

[24] Harriett Hawkins, *Classics and Trash. Traditions and Taboos in High Literature and Popular Modern Genres* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), p. 54.

[25] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 539.

[26] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 541.

[27] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, pp. 39, 215.

[28] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 38.

[29] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 699.

[30] De Sousa Correa, *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture*, p. 141.

[31] Susan J. Leonardi and Rebecca A. Pope, *The Diva's Mouth: body, voice, prima donna politics* (Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 44.

[32] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 3.

do what she liked, had more children than were desirable, was consequently dull, and became irrevocably immersed in humdrum."[33] This stern and defiant remark likens her to the Princess Alcharisi. When, in the later part of the novel, Deronda's much-talked-of mother is finally introduced, one might see in her an older equivalent of Gwendolen, despite their different religious backgrounds. To those following social conventions, the Alcharisi was a Melusine – Gwendolen in her turn is referred to as "a Lamia."[34] A Lamia – popularized in Britain by John Keats's poem of 1819 – is another version of a serpent-like she-monster, notorious in Greek mythology for devouring little children. Unsexed beneath her waist, she became associated with such mythic creatures as vampires and succubi, seducing young men and feasting on their blood (or semen).

The Alcharisi boasts she had seduced many men with her voice; Gwendolen vainly exercises the power of her fresh beauty to secure a profitable marriage. This "delicate-limbed sylph of twenty"[35] has a cold, calculating mind which regards marriage purely as a vehicle of social promotion to be pursued even by harming, Lamia-like, another woman's offspring. In her resolve to marry a wealthy local landowner, Henleigh Grandcourt, Gwendolen breaks her promise to his former lover, Lydia Glasher, who had hoped for the formal recognition of herself and her children by him. The marriage – as if in fulfilment of Lydia's curse – turns out to be disastrous, the cold and profoundly unmusical Grandcourt intimidating and emotionally abusing his wife, just like her tyrannical father had abused the Princess. Pushed to the brink of madness, Gwendolen seeks solace in her friendship with Daniel who finds himself at the same time powerfully attracted to her physically and repulsed by her unconventional behaviour. Eventually, Grandcourt is killed in a mysterious boating accident in the Mediterranean – the enchanting and ostensibly harmless "Nereid in sea-green robes and silver ornaments"[36] finally fulfils her ominous potential and kills her tormentor just by wishing him to die: "I held my hand, and my heart said, 'Die!' – and he sank."[37]

Of all her singing ladies, George Eliot seems to be the most sympathetic towards Armgart – with both her voice and the prospect of marriage gone, she resolves to become a singing teacher in another town, a level-headed decision taken in real life by Pauline Viardot. Compared with the splendid life Armgart knew as a prima donna, this might be seen as a social degradation, but not a dishonourable one. Moreover – contradicting the conventions of both opera and Victorian fiction – in the end she is neither dead nor dependent nor ail-

[33] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, pp. 30–31.
[34] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 7.
[35] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 31.
[36] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 7.
[37] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 596.

ing and embittered, as the Princess Alcharisi is. Unlike Mirah, and another of Eliot's talented women, the preacher Dinah Morris from *Adam Bede*, she is also not completely silenced. Rebecca Pope notes that, as a teacher, "Armgart still has a part [...] in the production of art, and she still has the freedom and independence she has always associated with her female voice."[38] Bringing to mind Armgart's star role – Glück's unorthodox and optimistic operatic version of the myth of Orpheus and Euridice, there is, after all, a possibility of resurrection for the heroine.[39]

In the end of *Daniel Deronda*, the threatening Melusina, the Princess Alcharisi, is dying, haunted by her long-dead father and his Jewish ways. The angelic Mirah is duly domesticated by the politically and religiously converted Daniel. She is last seen on board of a ship to the Promised Land, likely soon to become a *Jidische Mame*, possibly never to sing again. Gwendolen walks out alive and independent, liberated from the burden of matrimony, unharnessed by motherhood, free to rediscover life and the relationship with her sisters. The pang of learning of Deronda's attachment to Mirah is brief. "Don't be afraid. I shall live. I mean to live,"[40] she assures her mother. The Lamia, wizened and strengthened by experience, prevails.

[38] Pope, "The Diva Doesn't Die," p. 150.

[39] The mythical Euridice is also, in a way, a version of an enchanted, disappearing wife, reminiscent of Melusine, even if less ominous than her.

[40] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 692.

Dorota Babilas

Kultura wiktoriańska a strach przed utalentowaną kobietą w powieści George Eliot pt. *Daniel Deronda*

Streszczenie

Kultura wiktoriańska, przykładająca wielką wagę do spraw porządku społecznego i jasno określonych ról płciowych, traktowała kwestię kobiecego talentu z mieszaniną obawy i ekscytacji. Nawet jeśli w myśl oficjalnej retoryki twierdzono, że „Geniusz nie ma płci", rzeczywistość była mniej tolerancyjna. W artykule omówione zostały wybrane przykłady dotyczące talentów muzycznych, którymi charakteryzują się bohaterki powieści George Eliot pt. *Daniel Deronda* (1876). Trzy bohaterki – uwodzicielska Gwendolen Harleth, niekobieca i potworna hrabina Alcharisi oraz anielska Mirah – traktowane są bardzo odmiennie, co można uznać za przegląd sposobów traktowania utalentowanych artystycznie kobiet przez Wiktorian.

Dorota Babilas

Die viktorianische Kultur und die Angst vor einer begabten Frau in Georges Eliots Roman *Daniel Deronda*

Zusammenfassung

Die viktorianische Kultur legte großen Wert auf die Gesellschaftsordnung und auf klar umgrenzte Geschlechtsrollen, doch der weibliche Talent war durch sie mit Angst und Erregung betrachtet. Selbst wenn es der offiziellen Rhetorik gemäß behauptet wurde, dass „ein Genie geschlechtslos sei", gab es demgegenüber in der Wirklichkeit keine solche Toleranz. Im vorliegenden Artikel bespricht die Verfasserin ausgewählte Beispiele für musikalische Begabung von den drei Heldinnen des George Eliots Romans *Daniel Deronda* (1876): verführerische Gwendolen Harleth, unweibliche und furchtbare Gräfin Alcharisi und engelsgleiche Mirah werden ganz verschieden beurteilt, was eine differenzierte Betrachtungsweise von kunstbegabten Frauen in der viktorianischen Epoche gut widerspiegelt.

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The Renaissance *Plus ultra* and the Recurrence of *Non plus ultra* as Reflected in the Poetry of John Donne and John Milton's Epic *Paradise Lost*

It is generally acknowledged that the allegorical vision of the world was characteristic of the Middle Ages.[1] As Umberto Eco writes in his *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* it might have been an escape from reality, since the Middle Ages witnessed such tragedies as the ruin of cities and countryside, hunger, wars, epidemics, and early death. It may have been a reaction of the imagination to the pervading anxiety and insecurity,[2] symptomatic of our fallen, sublunary world. In like manner, the medieval model of the universe, for which the division between the sublunary and translunary world formed the basis,[3] might have been a reflection of human longing for order and safety. In medieval view the universe was a vast but finite

[1] For the sake of brevity more elaborate introduction of the subject has to be omitted in hope that the readers will settle for the very concise commentary offered. For more on the medieval perception of the world and universe see, for instance, Umberto Eco, *Sztuka i piękno w Średniowieczu* [*Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*], trans. Magdalena Zabłocka, Mikołaj Olszewski (Cracow: Znak, 2006); Aron Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976); Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image, An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

[2] Eco, *Sztuka i piękno w Średniowieczu*, p. 76.

[3] The sublunary world is subject to changeability, decay and death, whereas the translunary one is unfallen, immutable, filled with love for God (see Lewis, *The Discarded Image*).

space,[4] ordered as a mirror of the Divine:[5] it was not understood as a pitch-black, silent and cold vacuity, instead it reverberated with the music of the spheres and was illuminated and warmed by the Sun – paradoxically it was more heliocentric than the modern one.[6] The harmony it provided constituted a shelter against the uncertainty that might have easily been the share of a medieval man.

In this context the *mappae mundi* (medieval world maps) seem to be an inseparable part of the period as well, being a reflection of the allegorical reading of the world but also providing protection against the underlying anxiety. The practical value of these maps was small, as opposed to ideological value – their role was not to guide you in travel but in faith, and to explain the history as a realization of God's plans towards humanity.[7] The particular *mappae mundi* portrayed a specific area of the Earth, and being a tool of education in the understanding of the world some of them have caused considerable discussion. One such example may be the map of Ebstorf, which portrays Asia in the north, Europe in the south-west, Africa in the south-east, and Jerusalem in the centre.[8] As with the other *mappae mundi* it is characteristic that apart from the physical world it presents the world of symbols and myths as well. Within the frame of the map the figure of Christ is inscribed, with his head, palms, and feet placed in specially separated areas at the edge of the Earth. By some the globe is equated here with the body of the Saviour,[9] as He is not holding the globe nor standing behind it – the globe *is* His body. Such reading implies that not only does the map constitute both literal and allegorical reflection of the world, but also communicates a certain idea: the globe is the body of Christ, hence to aspire beyond the outlined world is to leave God. As the body of Christ is

[4] Jonathan Friedman, *Cultural Identity & Global Process* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 46.

[5] Manuel Aguirre, *The Closed Space: Horror Literature and Western Symbolism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 40.

[6] Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, pp. 111–112.

[7] Katarzyna Zalewska-Lorkiewicz, *Ilustrowane mappae mundi jako obraz świata* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1997), p. 5.

[8] According to C.S. Lewis the East was at the top of medieval maps (Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, p. 144). He argues that at first glance it may seem that the thirteenth-century cartographers were oblivious of geography, while in fact practical geography was widely spread (Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, p. 145). What the cartographer wanted, in actuality, was to "make a rich jewel embodying the noble art of cosmography, with the Earthly Paradise marked as an island at the extreme Eastern edge and Jerusalem appropriately in the centre. Sailors themselves may have looked at it with admiration and delight. They were not going to steer by it" (Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, p. 144).

[9] The claim was made first by A. Wolf, and it was seconded by A.D. von den Brincken, D. Woodward and J.G. Arentzen (Zalewska-Lorkiewicz, *Ilustrowane mappae mundi*, p. 174).

the Church, *Ecclesia* – it amounts to abandoning the Church[10] and, in consequence, spiritual death.

A corresponding message is communicated through the Hereford Map, where outside the circle of the Earth we may distinguish the letters *MORS* (death) placed specifically in the north, east, south and west points of the circle, in the immediate vicinity of the location of the head, palms and feet of the Ebstorf Christ.[11] On the Hereford Map the figure of the Saviour is situated at the top, dividing the saved from the doomed.[12] The warning is the same as in the Ebstorf Map: when you leave the world, you abandon Christ/Church, but doing so you choose death, for it is Christ who is the sole source of life. In a sense the Middle Ages may be said to have embraced the supposed inscription on the Pillars of Hercules *Non plus ultra* ("Go no farther"[13]) as their motto.

Reflecting the formula of *Non plus ultra* both the Pillars and the Church marked the ultimate border of the known world, either physical or spiritual.[14] As Małgorzata Grzegorzewska writes: "Any journey beyond the limits of the world thus defined was unthinkable and sinister."[15] If you chose to travel beyond, you risked death or damnation. In this way the world portrayed on a *mappa mundi*, both material and mythical, embodied the idea of a *hortus conclusus* (the enclosed garden): limited area providing protection against the unknown and the dangerous. The narrowness and conciseness of the medieval world[16] was actually a reflection of the medieval perception of space, which was understood not as an abstract concept (characteristic of modern times) but either as *locus* (room filled with an object) or *spatium* (distance between two objects or events), and as such it contained no empty space as in the modern meaning of the word.[17] Since both the world portrayed

[10] Małgorzata Grzegorzewska, "Rewriting Early Modern Maps: Cartography and Post-Colonial Critical Practice," in *Mosaics of Words: Essays on the American and Canadian Literary Imagination in Memory of Professor Nancy Burke*, ed. Agata Preis-Smith et al. (Warsaw: Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw, 2006), p. 151.

[11] For a more detailed description of the map see Gerard Aylmer and John Tiller, *Hereford Cathedral: A History* (London: The Hambledon Press, 2000), pp. 557–558.

[12] Aylmer and Tiller, *Hereford Cathedral*, p. 558.

[13] Anthony Oldcorn, Notes to Canto xxvi of *Inferno*, by Alighieri Dante, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2009), p. 245.

[14] It is interesting that the feet of Christ in the Ebstorf Map are found to correspond to the Pillars of Hercules (Zalewska-Lorkiewicz, *Ilustrowane mappae mundi*, p. 174).

[15] Grzegorzewska, "Rewriting Early Modern Maps," p. 151. We have to emphasise after Lewis, however, that the medievals were by no means Flat-earthers (Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, pp. 142, 140). The aforementioned borders of the Earth do not denote the borders of a flat Earth but limits of the known world. What is beyond is menacing in its undefinedness.

[16] Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, p. 35.

[17] Bartłomiej Błaszkiewicz, "The Function of Time and Space in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, 2000), p. 150, after Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury*

on the *mappae mundi* and the medieval universe were an expression of this idea of space (limited, occupied), they provided a cover against the *horror vacui* (the fear of empty space), anxiety that would result from the opening of the space.[18]

Nevertheless, in the Renaissance the worldview changes. The theocentric model of the world is replaced with anthropocentric one, with human as an autonomous being.[19] The *Non plus ultra* approach is rejected, substituted with the formula of *Plus ultra* ("farther beyond"), which is even inscribed into Spain's coat of arms.[20] To aspire beyond becomes the motto of a Renaissance man, the embodiment of which trait is, for instance, Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, who has no qualms about conquering the territories beyond, but also Faustus, who explores the world and the universe (not to mention the deepest recesses of science). The example of Faustus points to a significant thing – the motto of *Plus ultra* does not refer only to the borders of the Earth. The human is at last willing to explore the universe, which in the Renaissance becomes a moving, infinite, eternally extending space – replacing the immovable[21] and finite universe of the Middle Ages.

Already in the writings of Nicolas of Cusa ("the last great philosopher of the dying Middle Ages"[22]) we may encounter a rejection of the finite model of the universe – still, while for him the world is not finite, it is not infinite yet, for this term can be reserved solely to God.[23] The next great step in perception will be the Copernican revolution, with *De revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* published almost on Copernicus's deathbed. Despite having been found revolutionary, with the proposed heliocentrism and the trepidation of the spheres abandoned for the trepidation of the Earth among others, Copernican vision of the universe is still rich in remnants of the standard astronomy.[24] This stage

średniowiecznej, pp. 45–47, and Paul Zumthor, *La Mesure du Monde. Représentation de l'espace au Moyen Age* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), pp. 51–54.

[18] Both the *mappae mundi* and the medieval universe are in the form of circle. It is interesting that circle is a symbol of eternity (Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, p. 30) and perfection (Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, p. 44). It might imply the perfection of the closed space.

[19] Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, p. 4. As we will see, paradoxically the geocentric model of the universe was more anthropocentric than the heliocentric one.

[20] Julián Marías, *Understanding Spain*, trans. Frances López-Morillas (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press and University of Puerto Rico, 1990), p. 173.

[21] Of course by immovable we mean the absolute space, beyond *the Primum Mobile*. See, for instance, Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957).

[22] Koyré, *From the Closed World*, p. 7.

[23] Koyré, *From the Closed World*, p. 8.

[24] James Evans, *History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 280.

in the mental extending of the universe will be followed by the philosophy of Giordano Bruno, who advocates existence of matter which endlessly begets infinite, ever-changing and ever-growing univers-*es*.[25]

As one can observe there seems to be a linear movement in the perception of the universe, which evolves from the closed and immovable through the infinite and movable, to the innumerable, eternally growing univers-*es*. It could be said, in the manner of Bruno, that at last man is liberated from fetters of the finite universe,[26] however, what might be also evoked by the opening of the space is not a sense of freedom, but a recurrence, or rather *unshackling* of the anxiety that underlay the Middle Ages. Europe is shaken, not only by conflicts, but also scientific discoveries. Through the prism of the infinity man is able to recognize his smallness and weakness in comparison to God and the world. It turns out that the geocentric model of the universe was more anthropocentric than the heliocentric one, not only in the literal sense of the Earth and human located in the centre. While the medieval universe is vast, it is also definitely finite, perfectly spherical, ordered.[27] The Earth is infinitesimal indeed, however, there is no sense of agoraphobia, for "the spheres of the old [astronomy] present us with an object in which the mind can rest, overwhelming in its greatness but satisfying in its harmony."[28] As Lewis describes it, the medieval model is vertiginous – the earth constitutes the centre and the lowest place of the universe – so to look up at the universe is like looking up at a great building (as opposed to the modern universe, where we look out "over a sea that fades away into mist"[29]). We do not look at darkness, but through darkness; we look in, not look out.

In England there is no period known as the Baroque, but it becomes visible that the late English Renaissance embodies the Baroque state of mind. As the Renaissance witnesses the growing dilemma, the optimism gives way to anxiety. The poetry of John Donne provides an illustration to this rift. While it acknowledges the smallness and weakness of the human being, its despair is frequently soothed by the presence of God, as here religion permeates the secular, and vice versa. Still, Donne's poems consist of so many layers, multitude of seemingly contradictory notions, that we cannot be sure what the

[25] Michele Ciliberto, *Wstęp do Bruna* (*Introduzione a Bruno*), trans. Paweł Bravo (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2000), p. 64. Naturally, the three steps mentioned are a far-reaching simplification, however, the scope of this essay does not allow for a more comprehensive account. For more see, for instance, Koyré, *From the Closed World*, and Lewis, *The Discarded Image*.

[26] Jadwiga Sokołowska, *Dwie nieskończoności. Szkice o literaturze barokowej Europy* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1978), p. 13.

[27] The subsequent account is based on Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, pp. 98–120.

[28] Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, p. 99.

[29] Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, p. 99.

true meaning is, thus we cannot say that the anxiety is totally eradicated. The poet uses a vast panoply of allusions to the contemporary discoveries, both scientific and exploratory. He often seems to praise the discoveries of foreign lands, as if echoing the motto of *Plus ultra*, yet, when faced with close reading the poems reveal that their author successfully smuggled the notions of danger and anxiety into seemingly optimistic and simple lines.[30] The encouragement all of a sudden transforms into a warning.

With similar ambiguity Donne treats the Copernican revolution in his "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." At first sight the words "Moving of th' earth brings harmes and feares; / Men reckon what it did, and meant, / But trepidation of the spheares, / Though greater farre, is innocent" [31] (9–12) seem to be a reference to earthquakes inflicted upon the Earth. However, in the light of recent discoveries it may also be read as an allusion to the change in perspective and its repercussions. "Moving of th' earth," that is the Copernican revolution, "brings harmes and feares," while the old concept of trepidation of the spheres is "innocent."[32] Donne's four-line passage may point to the disturbance Copernicus caused, and with it anxiety and fear: notions which were believed up until this point are put in doubt, and the whole harmonious universe crumbles into pieces. Similar view is expressed by Donne's "The First Anniversary: An Anatomy of the World," but here the statement is put quite bluntly: "And new Philosophy calls all in doubt, / The Element of fire is quite put out; / The Sun is lost, and th' earth, and no mans wit / Can well direct him where to looke for it. / And freely men confesse that this world's spent, / When in the Planets, and the Firmament / They seeke so many new; they see that this / Is crumbled out againe to his Atomies. / 'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone"[33] (205–213).

Bearing in mind the background sketched above, let us now look at John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which also seems to depict the return of anxiety in

[30] See Małgorzata Grzegorzewska, "God's Part, the Woman's Part: John Donne's Maps," *Zeitschrift Anglistik und Amerikanistik. A Quarterly of Language, Literature and Culture*, vol. 51 no. 3 (2003), pp. 272–286.

[31] John Donne, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," in *John Donne: A Selection of his Poetry*, ed. John Hayward (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1950), pp. 54–55.

[32] The trepidation (backward motion of the fixed stars sphere) was a concept advocated by medieval astronomers in order to account for the phenomenon of precession, a slow change in the motion of equinoxes. For more see Wilbur Applebaum, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Scientific Revolution from Copernicus to Newton* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), p. 811; Gordon Braden, ed., *Sixteenth-Century Poetry. An Annotated Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 541, James M. Lattis, *Between Copernicus and Galileo. Christoph Clavius and the Collapse of Ptolemaic Cosmology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 71–72.

[33] John Donne, "The First Anniversary," in *The Collected Poems of John Donne*, ed. Roy Booth (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), p. 177.

the late Renaissance. In the beginning of the epic both Eden and the universe are perceived as *enclosed gardens*. Paradise has borders (IV, 131) and is described as "enclosure green, / As with a rural mound the champain head / Of a steep wilderness, whose hairie sides / With thicket overgrown, grottesque and wild, / Access deni'd"[34] (IV, 133–137), which implies circularity[35] and safety. The sense of security is reinforced by the "Insuperable highth of loftiest shade" (IV, 138), "the verdurous wall of Paradise" (IV, 143), "so thick entwin'd, [...] shrubs and tangling bushes had perplext / All path of Man or Beast" (IV, 174–177). Moreover, as it is directly said by the narrator there is only one gate to the east.

Grażyna Bystydzieńska has thoroughly analysed the features of Paradise in her article "Paradise and After."[36] To outline it briefly: she suggests that "such a sheltered, central space stands for the sphere of *sacrum*"[37] and points to the fact that Paradise seems to be highest point on Earth, constituting a crown of it ("It is a place which is closer to 'heavens' than the rest of the Earth"[38]). Furthermore, she shows how Milton uses pastoral conventions to describe Paradise as *locus amoenus*:[39] in Eden we almost do not feel the flow of time, which is cyclical and measured by the planetary motions; eternal spring prevails there, and the landscape is full of light and glitter; there is no sense of space; daily routine of Adam and Eve provides "idyllic stability."[40] I could not agree more with those statements, since these are crucial elements that constitute the feeling of a closed, safe place no evil can enter. It is a little world of the human pair, a world in which they can live in communion with God, nature and each other.

It is visible that the whole world revolves around the first couple, quite literally. The first view of the Earth (Satan's) is that of the centre of the universe, which is suspended to Heaven by a golden chain (II, 1051–1052). Heaven, the *Empyrean,* in turn is located above the Starry Sphere (III, 416). In order to get there you must pass seven planets, the fixed stars and "that Crystalline Sphear whose ballance weighs / The Trepidation talkt, and that first mov'd" (III, 481–483). As we can see it is the Earth taken straight from

[34] This and all the subsequent quotations are from John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Complete English Poetry of John Milton*, ed. John T. Shawcross (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday & Company Inc., 1963).

[35] Grażyna Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," in *Approaches to Literature. Part 1*, ed. Grażyna Bystydzieńska (Warsaw: Department of English Literature, University of Warsaw, 2001), p. 53.

[36] Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," pp. 53–60.

[37] Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," p. 53.

[38] Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," p. 53.

[39] Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," pp. 54–55.

[40] Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," p. 55.

the Ptolemaic system, where it was viewed as the centre of the universe, with Spheres surrounding it.[41]

If it is the narrator who utters the words, however, is it in any way important that the above description is seen through the eyes of Satan? One may point to the fact that the context and the person undermine the truth of the description – is not true that the fallen angel is called the first liar? One might say it is just the narrator, not Satan – but has not Satan proved his ability to manipulate without words?[42] At the same time, nevertheless, why should he lie at this point? Maybe it is what he really sees? In Book IX the fallen angel repeats his words, talking about "Terrestrial Heav'n, danc't round by other Heav'ns, / That shine, yet bear thir bright officious Lamps, / […] for thee [Earth] alone / […] As God in Heav'n / Is Center, yet extends to all, so thou / Centring receav'st from all those Orbs" (IX, 103–109).

Also Raphael at first seems to advocate the view in his conversation with Adam, saying: "As yet this world was not, and *Chaos* wild / Reign'd where these Heav'ns now rowl, where Earth now rests / Upon her Center pois'd" (V, 577–579). What is significant, when he talks about the creation of the universe he points to the fact that it is a finite one: "He [God-Son] took the golden compasses, prepar'd / In God's eternal store, to circumscribe / This Universe, and all created things: / One foot he center'd, and the other turn'd / Round through the vast profunditie obscure […] / Thus God the Heav'n created, thus the Earth, / Matter unform'd and void" (VII, 225–233). The words obviously go in line with the short line in Book III – "The rest in circuit walls this Universe" (III, 721). Still, in Book VII the perception of the universe is going to expand; it will be "Of amplitude almost immense, with Starrs / Numerous, and every Starr perhaps a World / Of destind habitation" (VII, 620–622). In fact, it can be read as a presage of the changes evoked by the Fall.

The stationary quality of the Earth is reiterated through the Books IV to VII, from the remarks of the narrator ("this less volubil Earth" IV, 594) to Adam and Eve, who praise the Sun in their hymn, stressing the superiority

[41] The number of spheres was subject to discussions. Guriewicz recounts that, for example, Bede believed in seven spheres going round the Earth, Honorius of Autun wrote about three spheres, while the scholastics distinguished fifty-six spheres (Guriewicz, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, p. 36). Generally it was believed that the first sphere was the sphere of Seven Planets (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn). The eighth sphere was the Heaven of Fixed Stars. Because of irregularities (the aforementioned precession) in the movement of spheres another two spheres were added: the ninth, the Crystalline Sphere, and the tenth, the *Primum Mobile*. See, for instance, Edward Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs. The Medieval Cosmos, 1200-1687* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) or Lewis, *The Discarded Image*.

[42] See Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin. The Reader in "Paradise Lost"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

of the Earth to the Sun and the latter's eternal movement praising the globe, which is presented as an object of admiration: "Thou Sun, of this great World both Eye and Soul, / Acknowledge him thy Greater, sound his praise / In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st, / And when high Noon hast gained, and when thou fallst" (V, 171–174). The vision will be developed in Book VII, where we encounter the Sun, which is "jocond to run / His Longitude through Heav'ns high rode" (VII, 372–373), the whole universe moves, while it is the Earth which "in her rich attire / Consummate, lovely smil'd" (VII, 501–502). The Earth is here perceived as a bride who calmly accepts the admiration of the other heavenly bodies.

It may seem simply a depiction of motions of the Sun seen through human eyes, but in Book VIII it becomes visible that the couple really finds the Earth the centre of the universe, while being able to perceive the globe's smallness:

> this Earth a spot, a grain,
> An atom, with the Firmament compar'd
> And all her numbered Starrs, that seem to rowl
> Spaces incomprehensible [...]
> meerly to officiate light
> Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
> [...] in all thir vast survey
> Useless besides [...]
> How Nature wise and frugal could commit
> Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
> So many nobler Bodies to create,
> Greater so manifold, to this one use
> For aught appeers, and on thir Orbs impose
> Such restless revolution day by day
> Repeated, while the sedentarie Earth,
> That better might with farr less compass move,
> Serv'd by more noble than her self, attains
> Her end without least motion. (VIII, 17–35)

It is obvious that Adam and Eve use their senses to account for the things which they see around. They have right to be wrong as they do not have any innate or bestowed knowledge of the world's structure and have to base upon the visual. However, do angels have such knowledge?

Oddly enough, it seems that angels also are not initiated into the secrets of the universe. We may disregard Satan, since he is a totally different case,[43]

[43] We have to bear in mind that Satan is already a fallen being and for that reason we cannot be sure what the consequences of his fall were. It is probable that by having

but Raphael does not openly correct Adam when the latter expresses his opinion on the relationship between the Earth and the Sun. He merely states "whether Heav'n move or Earth, / Imports not, if thou reck'n right, the rest / From Man or Angel the great Architect / Did wisely to conceal" (VIII, 70–73) adding later "What if the Sun / Be Center to the World, and other Starrs / […] dance about him various rounds?" (VIII, 122–125), which may imply that he is not certain of the reality. Significantly, the angel warns Adam not to think about too high matters, which belong to God alone, as if voicing the *Non plus ultra* attitude, and subsequently relates the future efforts of mankind to understand the universe (to God's amusement), which is, in fact, a depiction of what is happening around Milton's times. The angel admonishes "knowledge within bounds" (VII, 120) – is it Milton's opinion that some elements of knowledge should remain hidden, and there are borders which must not be crossed? It seems so, as the only advocate of unlimited knowledge and intemperance is Satan:[44] "Knowledge forbidd'n? / Suspicious, reasonless. Why should thir Lord / Envie them that? can it be sin to know, / Can it be death? and do they onely stand / By Ignorance, is that thir happie state, / The proof of thir obedience and thir faith?" (IV, 515–520).

In fact even if the reality was not certain at this point, whether it was the Earth or the Sun that moved did not matter at all, so heretofore Raphael was right. What was important was how the first couple felt about the world around. We have already mentioned the peculiarities of the Garden, and it must be explained that the universe also acquired the characteristics of a *hortus conclusus*, circular place granting the feeling of security and reliability. Apart from the factual remarks about its circuit walls and circumference measured by God and His twin compasses, also the very people perceived it

abandoned God his nature, and with it his knowledge and reasoning, has been impaired, as can be seen on the basis of his gradual degradation from Book I on.

[44] What is more, Satan is the being that introduces the sense of distance into the *hortus conclusus* of the unfallen universe and the unfallen Paradise. His leaving Hell and the travel through Chaos are described in detail, presenting his sense of direction (Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," p. 57) and imbuing the universe with distance. Also, he manages to soil the Paradise when he wanders round the Garden. Up until this point there was never a description of empty space in the Garden, which was always full of life and its manifestations. It was always in movement, and as Bartłomiej Błaszkiewicz writes "blurred, impressionistic" (Błaszkiewicz, "The Function of Time and Space," p. 225). When Satan enters the Paradise, every object in space he passes is enumerated ("Through wood, through waste, o're hill, o're dale," IV, p. 538), thus creating the sense of distance (Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," pp. 57–58). We cannot say, however, that he is able to alter the reality permanently. He is able to soil everything he encounters with his Fall, but it is not yet in his power to deprave them eternally. It seems that in Milton's world all things are created good in their nature, however, they have an element entailing a possibility of fall. Satan is not able to sully this universe permanently, unless people allow it of their own free will. They do. It is the Fall of the humans that invariably changes everything.

as a closed space, with their position in the centre. They were able to notice the smallness of the Earth as compared to "Spaces incomprehensible" (VIII, 9–10), however, they did not feel the *horror vacui*. The sense of distance was eradicated since they found the existence of other heavenly bodies solely a complement of their globe. Moreover, the area most important for Adam and Eve, that is Heaven, was in the vicinity of their abode, and God was ubiquitous.

It seems that with the Fall the *hortus conclusus* of both the Garden and the universe is opened up and is subject to change. Before we had a closed safe space, now it has been opened, and the opening is not a pleasant feeling. Everything Adam and Eve knew about their abode crumbles to pieces. The spring and perfect weather end, and historical time begins, with death at the end of an individual path. Heaven is no longer nearby – it is distant and alienated.[45] What is more, instead of the golden chain connecting Earth to Heaven, now we have a bridge built by Sin and Death, a passage to Hell. It seems that as a result of the Fall everything is subject to change: the stars are blasted, planets experience eclipse and learn new motions and influence, the Sun has its path and power altered so that it "might affect the Earth with cold and heat / Scarce tollerable" (X, 653–654), and the Earth has its axis moved. Antipathy is introduced among the species on the Earth. The whole universe becomes divided and altered in almost every aspect.

Just like the reader who learns the sense of distance due to Satan's journey, also the pair becomes acutely aware of the space and time[46] in the postlapsarian world, an illustration of which may be Eve's lament: "Must I thus leave thee Paradise? thus leave / Thee Native Soil, these happie Walks and Shades, / […] Thee lastly nuptial Bowr" (XI, 269–280). The narration becomes fragmentary at once, quick and enumerating, enhancing the feeling of the world being shattered. The whole globe becomes "fenceless" (X, 303), which may mean that it is not protected, but also that there is no border to surround it. It becomes literally an open space, described with such words as "lower World" (XI, 283), "obscure / And wild" (XI, 283–284), "all ends of th' Earth" (XI, 345). It is no longer concise, but seems to be ever-widening: "The Hemisphere of Earth in cleerest Ken / Stretcht out to the amplest reach of prospect" (XI, 379–380). The opening of the space immediately initiates the feeling of *horror vacui*, and the open space is found to be empty, lonely, and seemingly endless, which is also illustrated by the last lines of the poem: "The World was all before them, where to choose / Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide: / They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow, / Through *Eden* took their solitarie way" (XII, 646–649).

[45] Interestingly, this is the first thing Eve notices, having tasted the Fruit: "Heav'n is high, / High and remote to see from thence distinct / Each thing on Earth" (IX, 811–813).

[46] Bystydzieńska, "Paradise and After," p. 58.

Although for some the ending passage seems to express hope about the ultimate consequences of the first humans' Fall and unity ("hand in hand") in the face of misery, others may read them as an expression of resignation. The first couple is expelled from their *hortus conclusus*, both in physical terms – they are banished from the Garden, and mental – after the Fall they inwardly expel themselves from the safe circle of their mental Paradise and end up in Hell, which can be seen on the example of Adam, who is able to feel his inner Hell, while physically still in Paradise: "O Conscience, into what Abyss of fears / And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which / I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!" (X, 842–844). We may doubt if the couple is able to find the rest the narrator is talking about. Rather, they are going to be suffering from their inner hell to the end of their lives.[47]

What is more, it is significant that one of the meanings of the word "rest" is "to die." Accordingly, we may read the passage not as the first pair looking for a place to settle, but looking for a place to die. The phrase "hand in hand" can also be understood in two ways: having their hands clasped together, but also standing next to each other, separately. In this context the last words of the epic do not express any hope, but utter despair and loneliness, which is enhanced by the phrase "their solitarie way."

If we refer to the context outlined in the beginning of this essay, the last four verses of the poem warn us that the abandoning of the safe, closed circle designates death, which in fact mirrors the message communicated through the *mappae mundi*. The *Non plus ultra* warning does not have to be taken literally, nevertheless. Maybe it refers to the temperance Raphael admonishes? Some things belong solely to God. When humans breach their covenant with God in quest for knowledge – they acquire it but have to suffer the consequences of their choice. They cross the line of the safe circle, which inflicts death upon them. It may seem that knowledge is the forbidden fruit and death in the long run.

If read in this way, *Paradise Lost* may illustrate what was John Milton's opinion about the events happening in his period. Due to the discoveries, the seventeenth-century man lived in a world nothing was certain about. All of a sudden he had to abandon the finite Ptolemaic universe, ordered and safe, for the sake of a new, Copernican one – infinite, dark and silent, full of open, immeasurable spaces. For the people of the Middle Ages the finiteness provided a cover against the *horror vacui*, but in the face of the infinite universe we do not have such protection. Thus, although at first it seemed that the change in the perception was a linear movement, it turns out that the end of the Renaissance witnessed a regress, the recurrence (or liberation)

[47] They may be referred to as the first *homines viatores*. Still, it is Satan who has initiated the movement.

of the fear of the things beyond. In the end, the movement turns out to be circular, however, as compared to the medieval man who found shelter in his theocentric world with the finite, divinely ordered universe, the Renaissance one was deprived of that possibility.

Katarzyna Blacharska

Pojęcie *plus ultra* i nawrót *non plus ultra* w renesansowej poezji Johna Donne'a i *Raju utraconym* Johna Miltona

Streszczenie

Według Umberto Eco alegoryczna wizja świata, charakterystyczna dla epoki średniowiecza, mogła być reakcją wyobraźni na wszechobecny niepokój przenikający ów okres (Umberto Eco, *Piękno i sztuka w Średniowieczu*). W tym kontekście pojawienie się *mappae mundi*, średniowiecznych map świata, może stanowić wyraz niepokoju, jak i systemu symbolicznego, są wszak nie tylko alegorycznym odbiciem świata, ale posiadają też wartość ideologiczną – ich zadaniem jest przekazywanie konkretnych treści. Przykładem może być pojęcie *Non plus ultra* („ani kroku dalej"), które wskazywało Słupy Heraklesa jako ostateczny skraj-granicę świata, za którym czekała nas nicość – wyprawa poza ten punkt oznaczałaby śmierć, fizyczną, jak i duchową. Wraz z początkiem Renesansu wizja ta zmienia się, jednakże koniec epoki będzie świadkiem nawrotu niepokoju i strachu przed nieznanym. Celem artykułu jest zarówno zarys zmieniających się tendencji na przestrzeni średniowiecza i renesansu, jak również w samym renesansie, z naciskiem na ich odzwierciedlenie w poezji Johna Donne'a oraz *Raju utraconym* Johna Miltona.

Katarzyna Blacharska

Der Begriff *plus ultra* und *non plus ultra* in der Renaissancedichtung von John Donne und in dem *Verlorenen Paradies* von John Milton

Zusammenfassung

Umberto Eco vertritt die Meinung, dass die für das Mittelalter charakteristische, allegorische Vorstellung von der Welt eine Reaktion der Phantasie auf derzeitige allgegenwärtige Unruhe sein konnte (Umberto Eco, *Kunst und Schönheit im Mittelalter*). In dem Kontext können die im Mittelalter erscheinenden Weltkarten (*mappae mundi*) als Ausdruck sowohl der Unruhe als auch des symbolischen Systems betrachtet werden, doch sie sind nicht nur eine allegorische Widerspiegelung der Welt, sondern sie haben auch einen ideologischen Wert und haben bestimmte Informationen zu übermitteln.

Ein guter Beispiel dafür ist der Begriff *non plus ultra* („keinen Schritt weiter"), der auf die Säulen des Herakles hindeutete, als auf ein Symbol für den letzten Rand – für die Weltgrenze, über der es nur ein Nichts gab; eine Reise über den Punkt hinaus würde den körperlichen und geistigen Tod zur Folge haben. Zu Beginn der Renaissanceepoche änderte sich diese Vorstellung, um am Ende der Epoche wieder Unruhe und Angst vor dem Unbekannten zu bedeuten. In ihrem Artikel beabsichtigte die Verfasserin, die sich im Verlauf des Mittelalters und der Renaissance verändernden Tendenzen umzureißen und deren Widerspiegelung in der Dichtung von John Donne und im *Verlorenen Paradies* von John Milton hervorzuheben.

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"To Be Saved by Chaos": "Emancipation" of Self by Mutilation and Perversion Chuck Palahniuk's *Invisible Monsters* and *Choke*

The imprisonment of an individual's identity originates greatly from cultural categories. Since modern culture, like any other system, is organised around dualistic expressions within categories of culture, one might be characterised either as a man or a woman, as a pervert or a martyr, as a beauty or a monster. However, cultural structuralisation cannot be obtained without the employment of symbolic violence: if a certain element does not suit the category created by ordination, it is either forced to adapt to the imposed order or excluded. The terror of cultural categories strikes mainly at the authenticity of self. Individuality that escapes categorisation deals with a brutal rejection or is captured in structures that it does not fully comprehend, copying schemes of behaviour enforced from the outside. The main focus of Palahniuk's characters' anxiety and fear is categorisation, being captured in schemes that totally organise one's identity and experience of reality. "We're so trapped in our culture," points out Brandy Alexander, *Invisible Monster's* heroine, "[…] that any way we could imagine to escape would be just another part of the trap. Anything we want, we're trained to want."[1] While running away from one pattern one falls into another. As Brandy explains: "if you can find any way out of our culture, then that's a trap, too. Just wanting to get out of the trap reinforces the trap."[2] A vicious circle: being trapped in a culture means being

[1] Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters* (London: Vintage, 2002), p. 259.
[2] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 220.

trained to rebel only through the use of cultural schemes, never exceeding its borders. Palahniuk creates an interesting paradox, where it is impossible to rebel against cultural oppression, as any imaginable means of escape would be just another element of the trap. Therefore, referring to Brandy Alexander's words, the only way to achieve authenticity is to choose a way no one could imagine, thus to reject the whole categorisation and totally immerse oneself in chaos. It is not the lack of order that terrifies Palahniuk's characters, but the very opposite: being trapped in schemes that one cannot escape from.

The problem of an individual's struggle against the culture's regime is the key motif in Chuck Palahniuk's prose. Each of his novels is immersed in the popular culture, exploring and exaggerating its themes in order to critique the whole phenomenon. In most of Palahniuk's works, the main protagonist is someone who does not fit into the binary logic, who for some reason escapes from any standard classification. In *Fight Club*, it is a schizophrenic anarchist, in *Survivor* a sectarian TV faith healer, in *Invisible Monsters* an undecided transsexual and in *Choke* a deceiving sex addict. Palahniuk usually builds his story around an individual who willingly or unwillingly, in a certain stage of his or her life, has become an outcast and who, from the position of social and cultural exclusion, contests the boundaries of cultural categories. The protagonists of *Choke*, suffering from extreme sexual addiction Victor Mancini and his half-rebellious, half-lunatic mother Ida, as well as the main characters in *Invisible Monsters*, Shannon and Shane McFarland, siblings who indulged in deliberate self-mutilation, exist somewhere on the borderline of the society. Victor Mancini cannot decide whether he resembles more Jesus Christ or Don Giovanni, Shannon McFarland with her mutilated face is a half monster, half beauty, Brandy Alexander remains an androgyne captured between masculinity and femininity. It seems that to avoid being defined, to exist as a blank, a sphinx, a hybrid, one has to go beyond the borders of culture, reject all general categories and choose chaos over the suppressive order of culture.

Yet, Palahniuk's heroes are more than cultural or social outcasts. One could call them *abjects* of the modern world, applying the Kristeva's term. Originally, *abject* is something that horrifies, sickens and disgusts; it is a part of the subject that has been excluded beyond its limits due to its improperness and thus repulsiveness. As a result of the abjection, the self disintegrates. The violated borders of self are becoming more and more blurred and all the hitherto clear distinction between what belongs to the inside and what is expelled outside disappear. However, in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* Kristeva indicates that disintegration is the foundation for the construction of the true self. It is only through this process that the subject has a chance to confront its rejected parts and reconstruct itself in a new, freely chosen form. As Kristeva puts it:

> One is then led to conceive of the opposition between pure and impure not as an archetype but as *one* coding of the differentiation of the speaking subject as such, a coding of his repulsion in relation to the other in order to autonomize himself. The pure/impure opposition represents (when it does not function as metaphor)/the striving for identity, a difference.[3]

Thus, only by its own dissolution the subject gains the opportunity to grow distant from itself and distinguish between what is truly own and freely chosen and what has been imposed from the outside. The aim of this constant process of disintegration and recreation is to put one's abjection into words and to reach the real essence of one's selfhood through the process of narration.

There is also another way to interpret Kristeva's *abject* besides the terms of subjectivity. Kristeva defines the *abject* in her *Powers of Horror*: "it is not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."[4] *Abject* remains always on the outside, beyond the set rules, unable to understand neither a whole nor the rules that whole is governed by. "And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master,"[5] continues Kristeva. The exclusion of Palahniuk's characters makes them perfect *abjects* of the society, as they perceive contested culture from the distance of their exile. While transgressing the limits of cultural categories, they constantly challenge the order and attempt to redefine it. As stated above, consistent with the view held by Kristeva, speech has its source in abjection and it is the only thing that is entirely human. "For, when narrated identity is unbearable, when the boundary between subject and object is shaken, and when even the limit between inside and outside becomes uncertain, the narrative is what is challenged first."[6] The narration of the *abject* is not only a rebellion against the outside world and the order of society or culture, but also a constant struggle with oneself, in order to find the foundation of one's authenticity.

The narration of both *Invisible Monsters* and *Choke* concentrates on the theme of re-telling the story of one's life. The protagonist of *Choke*, Ida Mancini, is a lunatic anarchist, who through her whole life has been trying to introduce an element of chaos into the structures of the society. Eventually she ended up in a psychiatric ward. She was confined following being charged

[3] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 82.

[4] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 4.

[5] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 2.

[6] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 141.

with: feeding LSD to monkeys in a ZOO, running naked through a theatre's aisle during a ballet show, mailing hundreds of people with the information that they have won a coupon entitling them to a free meal in an elegant restaurant, mailing thousands that they should check themselves for venereal diseases, as their former sexual partner has been diagnosed with an STD. Ida Mancini did all those things to gain a glimpse of true chaos. She insisted that without real disaster there is no chance for real salvation.[7] Therefore for Ida, struggle for true identity explodes in total rebellion against cultural regimen. When her son Victor was a child, her goal was to teach him how to question and rebel against everything he saw. "'I don't want you to just accept the world as it's given,' she said. She said, 'I want you to invent it. I want you to have that skill. To create your own reality. Your own set of laws. I want to try and teach you that'"[8], recalls Victor his childhood memories.

For Victor, retelling his life is obligatory, since it is the fourth stage of sexual addiction recovery. Since Victor is also a habitual impostor, he has some problems retelling his story: "It's hard enough remembering my own past so I can do my fourth step. Now it's mixed up with the past of these other people. Which defence attorney I am today, I can't remember,"[9] he confesses. Nevertheless, he still struggles with "the fourth step" trying to release himself from the haunting past, in order to freely recreate his own self. As a result, from the sex addict symbolised by Don Giovanni, Victor Mancini becomes a martyr, the duplicate of Jesus Christ. First by experiencing and then rejecting the state of "the martyrdom of Saint Me,"[10] he finally gains the kind of authenticity his mother has attempted to achieve. "Just keep asking yourself: 'What would Jesus NOT do?'."[11] Victor stubbornly repeats. Soon, he becomes an in-betweener, not clearly defined and thus opened to each possibility for a new self-creation. In *Invisible Monsters* Brandy Alexander, while lying on the floor bleeding, begs Shannon: "Tell me my life. Tell me how we got here"[12] and it is somehow inevitable for Shannon, the woman with her past destroyed by the mutilation of her face, to narrate their story. Before, Shannon was encouraged by Brandy only to narrate their future, not through reporting the past facts, but through discovering of the future events, still undetermined and open to all imaginable possibilities. Now, she has to overcome the past to fully comprehend and reinvent her own self.

The narration is crucial for the authenticity of self, argues Giddens in *Modernity and Self-Identity*. While re-telling one's life, future or past, one is

[7] Chuck Palahniuk, *Choke* (London: Vintage, 2003), p. 159.
[8] Palahniuk, *Choke*, p. 284.
[9] Palahniuk, *Choke*, p. 62.
[10] Palahniuk, *Choke*, p. 61.
[11] Palahniuk, *Choke*, p. 169.
[12] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 19.

re-telling oneself in the continuous process of self-invention. As Giddens puts it: "It is made clear that self-identity, as a coherent phenomenon presumes a narrative: the narrative of self is made explicit."[13] Similarly, in *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Bauman diagnoses this state of alternately destroying and rebuilding identity as a typical problem of the modern culture. "Individual identity becomes therefore something to be yet attained (and presumably to be created) by the individual involved and never securely and definitely possessed – as it is constantly challenged and must be ever anew negotiated," he observes.[14] Self is under constant construction. It is a persistent process of creating and re-creating, much in the way in which the stories of Victor or Shannon have to be told again and again. Developing genuine identity may be reached only in the form of discovering or inventing the uniqueness of one's personality, of surpassing the body and sexuality in seek of true self.

The self is embodied. Obvious as it may seem, still it is a fact of paramount importance. According to Giddens, manipulating with visible appearance of the body is the method of giving external form to narration of self-identity. The modern body is seen more as a part of the system than a passive object. "Appearance," states Giddens in *Modernity and Self-Identity*, "becomes a central element of the reflexive project of self. The body participates in a very direct way in the principle that the self has to be constructed."[15] In modernity there is a kind of urge to design your own body, using a number of methods provided by culture. There is a need for individual identity to be artificially challenged. Food, clothing and sexual practices, are equally standardized and socially regulated.[16] Manipulation of one's body in response to the cultural demands and for social approval becomes just another element of the cultural oppression. Rejecting one culturally acceptable body image is equal to accepting another. The only solution for the cultural rebel is the bodily denial or the attempt to transcend the physical in an act of intentional self-mutilation. The necessity of hybridization of one's identity entails the destruction of main structures of self.

Shannon, one of Palahniuk's *invisible monsters*, is a former catwalk model who had been over-concerned about her body and eager for attention, so she shot her face off, feigning a disastrous accident. "I wanted the everyday reassurance of being mutilated," confesses Shannon afterwards, "I was tired of staying a lower life form just because of my looks. [...] Trapped in

[13] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 76.

[14] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 201.

[15] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p. 100.

[16] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p. 62.

a beauty ghetto is how I felt. Stereotyped. Robbed of my motivation."[17] For Shannon, the path to the greatest discovery of her true self leads through violating her beauty that has been the main element defining her individuality. Turning into a faceless monster who nobody dares to look in the eye, becomes the perfect opportunity to escape from stereotypes and seek out her true self. Another excellent example of the ultimate form of bodily denial is the other character of *Invisible Monsters*, Brandy Alexander: a transsexual Queen Supreme, also known as Shane McFarland, Shannon's older brother. Brandy has decided to undergo a series of sexual reassignment surgeries in a desperate act of struggle for authenticity. "My whole body is my story,"[18] states Brandy, condemned to female hormones for the rest of her life. After a number of sex change operations Brandy has only one surgery left: the surgery of genital reconstruction. For now she is an androgyne constructed by a series of plastic surgeries, stuck somewhere between a man and a woman. Brandy Alexander is an example of beauty entirely artificial, and thus perfect.

The praise of androgyny and artificiality is one of the leitmotifs of Baudrillard's work *Seduction*. Considering what he believes is a crucial factor in seduction, he answers: cancelling the meaning, pure pretence, pure illusion. That is also the essence of the ideal woman that Brandy seems to be. The other fine example that Baudrillard mentions in *Seduction* is a face wearing make-up. Make-up creates an artificial ideal of the sign altering face in a way that it remains only the appearance, an illusion of the ideal. Putting on make-up is equivalent to erasing one's facial features for their more adequate substitute: rosy lips, sparkling eyes, blushing cheek, flawless complexion. In Baudrillard's account, the whole idea of make-up that corrects all imperfections and restores the ideal order, ideal hence unreachable, belongs to the domain of the meta-meaning beyond true and false, to the domain of illusion, pretences and seduction. "Appearances, which are not at all frivolous, are the site of play and chance taking the site of a passion for diversion – to reduce signs is here far more important than the emergence of any truth,"[19] observes Baudrillard. Seduction is for him the unavoidable consequence of the vacuum of meanings, like absence of features behind the make-up, much like Shannon's disfigured face that is hidden behind veils. As it is posed by Baudrillard, the perfect seducer would not be a woman or a man, but a transsexual whose sex by definition is entirely artificial. The essence of seducing consists in dying as a real being and being reborn as a pure sign, pure form, as an illusion. Not only does seduction question the

[17] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 286.

[18] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 259.

[19] Jean Baudrillard, *On Seduction*, in: *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster, trans. Jacques Mourrain (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 152.

natural, confronting it with glimmer of theatricality, but it also questions the truth that remains beyond its reach.[20]

Mystification and domination of indistinctness typical of the seduction's discourse is, according to Baudrillard, the only solution for the anxiety and fear caused by the order of consumerism and consumption. "You're a product just as much [as a car is]. A product of a product of a product,"[21] says Brandy to Shannon. As Bauman points out in *Liquid Love*, an individual cannot escape from ruthless laws of economy and cold calculations of the supply and demand mechanism. Those who feel helpless in the face of a diverse and vast reality, tend to transfer the control over their life to the dominant mechanism of the free market. Therefore, the attempt to gain the maximum of self-control over one's body and appearance is continuously alternating with a feeling of utter helplessness and lack of control over one's life. What was once human, over time has become alienated and less autonomous. Each individual is either a consumer or a product about to be consumed and the torments of *homo consumens* are very similar to the sufferings of *homo sexualis*, states Bauman in *Liquid Love*. Bauman indicates that indirect cause of the main anxiety of the modern man lies in liquidity of the world. If one is aware of the constant change, fluctuation of the rules that the modern world is governed by, solidity seems untrustworthy. The burden of commitments restricts the individual's freedom and limits the number of possibilities that wait around every corner.[22] Since everything changes, the idea of short-term casual relationships is becoming more and more tempting.

The one who is addicted to casual relationships, free from ordinary obligations, but full of his own – "Wednesday nights mean Nico. Friday nights mean Tanya. Sundays mean Leeza"[23] – is Victor Mancini, the protagonist of Palahniuk's *Choke*. As a figure of its generation, Victor's life has been a constant struggle with addiction. Being addicted to sex, he builds his life around casual intercourses with both complete strangers and other sex addicts. In his mind, women are divided into two groups: those that he will have and those that he has already had, thus the scheme of his compulsive behaviour structuralises the reality and his identity. This character hold a resemblance to Don Giovanni, who as a figure of a sophisticated seducer, according to Bauman, refers more to the archetype of the impotent who continually seduces and abandons women, because he is apparently unable to have sex.[24] Undoubtedly, from the very beginning, sexual addiction has been a hideout

[20] Baudrillard, *On Seduction*, pp. 152–168.

[21] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 217.

[22] Zygmunt Bauman: *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 106.

[23] Palahniuk, *Choke*, p. 16.

[24] Bauman, *Liquid Love*, p. 45.

from all of Victor's insecurities and fears. About his fellow sex addicts Victor Mancini says: "these are people who don't want an orgasm as much as they just want to forget. Everything. For just two minutes, ten minutes, twenty, a half hour."[25] His mother, Ida, had also persistently tried to achieve this ideal state of blissful temporary amnesia. Through her attempts to temporarily disturb the social order, she was trying to find a cure for knowledge, trying to look at things as if for the first time, without the framework of language or any cultural associations. Apart from the addiction, it was the other way to release oneself, to feel human. Another one was to enter the realm of imagination, where everything is possible and no rules apply. Before being admitted to a mental hospital, Ida Mancini worked as a self-styled therapist. She did something between therapy and prostitution, as she used hypnosis to give her clients an opportunity for a sexual experience with a partner that they had always dreamed of. Marilyn Monroe, Eleanor Roosevelt, Emily Dickinson, Edith Piaf, Audrey Hepburn, they would simply tell her the name of an icon they wanted to have sex with, and while they were in a trance, she guided the experience. "She just introduced men to their ideal. She set them up on a date with their subconscious because nothing is as good as you can imagine it. No one is as beautiful as she is in your head. Nothing is as exciting as your fantasy,"[26] recalls Victor. It was not only about sex, it was something more, the experience free of disappointment, free of consequences, responsibility and guilt. It was a play of imagination, completely unreal, therefore absolutely fulfilling.

The motif of deceit plays a major part in *Choke* and *Invisible Monsters*. In *Choke*, the motivation for deceit varies, just as the very concept is explored through its various layers. Victor Mancini works as an eighteenth-century American colonist in a living history museum, playing the part of an Irish indentured servant. To earn some extra money he simulates choking in restaurants. Through his choking episodes he gives others the opportunity to be brave, saving them from the unbearable boredom of an unheroic life. As he is a sex addict and, in a way, a martyr, his identity is stuck somewhere between Jesus Christ and Don Giovanni. In *Invisible Monsters*, where Palahniuk presents a milieu of photographers and models, demimonde of transsexuals and frauds, there is a whole world built on deception. There, though Shannon was paid to pretend various emotions for the sake of the commercial demands of her modelling industry, "Give me wonder, baby. Flash. Give me amazement. Flash,"[27] the master of deception is a transsexual beauty, the Queen Supreme, Brandy Alexander with her "Brandy Alexander nonstop continuous

[25] Palahniuk, *Choke*, p. 257.
[26] Palahniuk, *Choke*, p. 131.
[27] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 43.

live action theatre"[28] and with hundreds of ideas for new personal details of her two companions: Manus Kelly and Shannon McFarland. "Some days, I hate it when Brandy changes our lives without warning. Sometimes, twice in one day, you have to live up to a new identity. A new name,"[29] confesses Shannon, alias Kay McIsaac, alias Daisy St. Patience.

In his work *Seduction* Baudrillard compares the phenomenon of dimming the lines between what is true and false, ugly and pretty, right and wrong to the mind game between the seducer and his victim. The art of seduction blurs all the distinctions and transgresses all the impassable borders, drawing its power from mystification and pretences. As verification ends an illusion, seduction, based on the constant fluctuation of desire and indifference, flickering of truth and fantasy, is destroyed by the definement. Just like a perfectly created illusion always evades verification, seduction escapes from any attempt of ordination. As the Baudrillardic *simulacra* transcend the distinction between truth and falsehood, Palahniuk's characters aim for the indefinability of self by disputing sexuality and questioning the body. Going beyond the borders of cultural categories seems to be the only answer to the cultural anxiety.

Living on the border, in the space of the in-between, seems the only chance to save the authenticity of the self. "I'm not straight, and I'm not gay," insists Brandy Alexander, "I'm not bisexual. I want out of the labels. I don't want my whole life crammed into a single word."[30] The general categories not only do not suffice for self-identification, but also are seen as the element of oppression. One's true identity is constantly under threat of being squeezed into the trite schemes of acting. Being imprisoned in a certain class, category, in certain definition, causes the greatest human fear; since being defined means being condemned to a fixed destiny that ends the process of creation of self, it is equivalent to being dead. In the struggle for authenticity and freedom, Palahniuk's characters try to avoid classification by any means, consistently blurring the cultural divisions and immersing in the vagueness, holding to indistinctness and appreciating ambiguity. They persistently remain in the no-man's-land, manoeuvring between one category and another. Rebellion against the general social categories and the rejection of the dichotomous world result in becoming a being in-between, a hybrid, an androgyne, a monster.

As Brandy characterises herself, she is: "Unknown. Undefined. Unknowable. Indefinable,"[31] escaping general categories that no longer suffice for self-identification. In Palahniuk's prose the anxiety over self-definement explodes with total rebellion, mainly against oneself. The modern individual becomes

[28] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 18.
[29] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 64.
[30] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 261.
[31] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 261.

preoccupied with a task of self-creating, treating his or her self as a project that is not to be completed. Scattered identity is a source of suffering and pain, though every attempt to order fractured personality is seen as a clear indication of violence. The problem of fractured personality, that Bauman finds so alarming, Kristeva treats as a certain and necessary stage of self-assertion. According to Kristeva, self's disintegration is of great importance in a process of establishing of an individual's true identity. As Giddens explicates it: "To be able to act authentically is more than just acting in terms of self-knowledge that is valid and full as possible; it means also disentangling [...] the true from the false self."[32] However, in Palahniuk's novels, civilisation is a realm of the *simulacrum*, where everything is neither true nor false and nothing is strictly defined. The layer of the *simulacra* covers emptiness in the same way that the different veils hide Shannon's lack of face: "my veils, muslim and cut-work velvet, brown and red, tulle threaded with silver, layers of so much you'd think there's nobody inside."[33] According to Baudrillard, it is necessary to retain the state of indistinctness. "Our real discoveries come from chaos,"[34] states Brandy Alexander and only chaos in the domain of symbols, the black hole of non-differentiation has the power to violate the cultural code.[35] While seeking the true self in the modern world, one has to escape from classification by transgressing all distinctions. One has to become a *simulacrum*, a sign without a meaning, a sphinx, a blank.

[32] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p. 79.
[33] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 24.
[34] Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*, p. 258.
[35] Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Jean and Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 215.

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„Zostać uratowaną przez chaos" – „emancypacja" podmiotowości poprzez okaleczenie i perwersję *Niewidzialne potwory* oraz *Udław się* Chucka Palahniuka

Streszczenie

Powodem największego lęku bohaterów *Niewidzialnych potworów* i *Udław się* jest możliwość bycia schwytanym w sieć kategorii, które w pełni organizują tożsamość i sposób postrzegania rzeczywistości. Victor Mancini nie może się zdecydować, czy bardziej przypomina Jezusa czy Don Juana. Shannon McFarland ze swoją okaleczoną twarzą jest w połowie pięknością, a w połowie potworem. Androgeniczna Brandy Alexander trwa w zawieszeniu gdzieś pomiędzy pełnią męskości a idealną kobiecością. Wydaje się więc, że aby umknąć

wszelkim definicjom, trzeba wykroczyć poza granice kultury i pogrążyć się w chaosie. Wojna, w której stawką jest autentyczna tożsamość jednostki, wybucha w dzikim buncie przeciw reżimom kultury i przejawia się w przeróżnych formach perwersji seksualnych lub celowych okaleczeniach ciała. Nieunikniona konieczność hybrydyzacji własnej tożsamości pociąga za sobą destrukcję głównych struktur „ja". Tak jak Baudrillardowskie symulakra wykraczają poza dystynkcje pomiędzy prawdą a fałszem, bohaterowie powieści Palahniuka, podważając seksualność i kwestionując ciało, dążą do stworzenia takiego „ja", które uchyli się przed wszelkimi próbami klasyfikacji.

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„Durch den Chaos gerettet zu werden" – die „Emanzipierung" der Subjektivität durch Verletzung und Perversion *Fratze* (engl. *Invisible Monsters*) u. *Der Simulant* (engl. *Choke*) von Chuck Palahniuk

Zusammenfassung

Die Ursache dafür dass die Helden der Werke *Fratze* und *Der Simulant* von Furcht erfüllt sind ist die Möglichkeit, in ein Netz von Kategorien zu geraten, die die Identität und die Betrachtungsweise von der Wirklichkeit völlig organisieren. Victor Mancini kann sich nicht entscheiden, ob er dem Jesus oder eher dem Don Juan ähnlich ist. Shannon McFarland mit ihrem verletzten Gesicht ist halb Schönheit und halb Monster. Die androgyne Brandy Alexander verharrt zwischen der vollen Männlichkeit und der idealen Weiblichkeit. Es scheint also, dass man die Kulturgrenzen überschreiten und im Chaos versinken muss, um allen Definitionen entgehen zu können. Der Krieg, dessen Einsatz eine authentische Identität des Menschen ist, bricht als ein wilder Protest gegen Kulturstrenge aus und kommt in allerlei Formen der sexuellen Perversionen oder absichtlicher Körperverletzungen zum Ausdruck. Die unvermeidbare Notwendigkeit, eigene Identität zu hybridisieren, zieht die Destruktion von den Hauptstrukturen des „Ichs" nach sich. So wie die Simulakren von Baudrillard über die Distinktionen zwischen Wahrheit und Unwahrheit hinausgehen, versuchen die Helden des Romans von Palahniuk, die Sexualität anzweifelnd und den Körper in Frage stellend, ein solches „Ich" zu erschaffen, das jedem Klassifizierungsversuch entgeht.

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Who's Afraid of the Supermarket: A Study of Andrzej Wójcik's and Ewan Jones-Morris's Semi-documentary *Brand New World*

Brand New World is a semi-documentary[1] directed by Andrzej Wójcik and Ewan Jones-Morris. An independent production, it has been promoted throughout Poland and Britain by the makers and received its share of awards from critics.[2] Despite this, the 2005 movie seems to have attracted no scholarly attention. While the fact is understandable, the movie being both recent and not widely popular, I suggest the documentary might be worthy of an enquiry. Especially so, since it appears to still be relevant to at least some audiences, as evidenced by its recent screenings.[3]

The enquiry in the present essay is focused on fear, specifically, on an attempt to understand what kind of fear this movie expresses and, consequently, what kind of fear its audiences might be drawn to. In order to conduct such an analysis, it seems necessary to first discuss the movie's links with *Brave New World*, a novel published by Aldous Huxley in 1932.

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[1] A term used here because, as will be shown later, the directors seem to intervene in the world portrayed, while generally using documentary techniques.

[2] The movie was awarded the Silver Castle (Srebrny Zamek) award at the 2005 edition of the Off Cinema Festival. Reference: *Laureaci festiwali „Off Cinema,"* Centrum Kultury Zamek, accessed July 21, 2010, http://www.zamek.poznan.pl/index.php?s=192&k=7.

[3] For example at the 2nd Controversial Movies Festival (II Festiwal Filmów Kontrowersyjnych), Katowice, 19–20 June 2010. Reference: *Podsumowanie II Festiwalu Filmów Kontrowersyjnych*, Festiwal Filmów Kontrowersyjnych, accessed December 29, 2010, http://www.ffk.org.pl/index.php?/Ogolne/build.html.

In *Brave New World* Aldous Huxley describes London in 632 A.F. (After Ford). The former British capital has become one of the cities of the World State, where everything is under strict control: from the way new citizens are created (no longer born but "decanted" in "hatcheries" after embryonic conditioning) and brought up (with the use of further conditioning), through the approach to knowledge and science, to spirituality, emotionality and lifestyle choices.

The novel is usually classified as a dystopia i.e. a description of a "non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived."[4] A distinguishing feature of this particular dystopia is that the "worseness" of its world is not the result of traditional oppression. In the World State "People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get."[5] One can even argue, even if only somewhat ironically, that the elites are those most oppressed by the system. For example, World Controller Mustapha Mond had once developed dangerously dissident views and was given the choice of being banished or entering the Controllers' Council. He summarizes his choice thus: "I chose this and let the science go. […] Sometimes […] I rather regret the science. Happiness is a hard master – particularly other people's happiness. A much harder master, if one isn't conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth."[6]

Because of this agreeableness, Huxley's dystopia has secured a place among the classics of the genre – so much so, that, as David Garrett Izzo writes, "The title, while from *The Tempest*, is recognized today as being from Huxley's novel."[7]

In consequence, a fairly transparent allusion to the title-phrase *Brave New World* in the title of the movie by Wójcik and Jones-Morris can be treated as an attempt at providing the viewers with an interpretative key even before the movie begins. Those who recognize the allusion have thereby been forewarned and should expect that the movie will deal, in some way, with agreeable nightmares. The viewers who miss the allusion are treated to a short introductory part of the movie that makes this connection explicit.

Using Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* as a background text may be interesting from a number of perspectives, but the one of particular interest

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[4] Lyman Tower Sargent, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," *Utopian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1994), p. 9, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20719246.

[5] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), p. 220.

[6] Huxley, *Brave New World*, p. 227.

[7] David Garrett Izzo, "Introduction," in *Huxley's Brave New World: Essays*, eds. David Garrett Izzo and Kim Kirkpatrick (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2008), p. 2.

for this essay is the fact that dystopias are often understood as warnings and "projections of fear."[8] If, then, the filmmakers decided to use Huxley's dystopia, they also entered into a dialogue with the fear it embodies.

To analyse this dialogue, it is first necessary to discuss the various kinds of dystopian fear. Two particular classifications have been selected for this essay.[9] The first comes from a study by Erika Gottlieb comparing "Western" (mainly North American and English) and "Eastern" (mainly Soviet bloc) dystopias. Gottlieb suggests that while in Western works the fear and horror is projected into the future, in Eastern ones it is a "catastrophe experienced as a reality."[10] In other words, one kind of fear is hypothetical and the other is actual.

Another method is to classify dystopian fear on a spectrum stretching from a totally successful utopia, embodying hope, to a complete anti-utopia, embodying resignation. Dystopias are located in the not-directly-hopeful part of this spectrum and their exact positioning depends on the extent to which they are "emancipatory, militant, open" or "compensatory, resigned."[11] If one wanted to simplify this distinction, one might say that dystopias stretch on a continuum between potential activity (hope for change) and total passivity (utter resignation).[12]

If both of those classifications were applied simultaneously to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, I would propose that the dystopia Huxley presents is Western, since it locates the nightmare in a relatively distant future, and passive as regards hope within the text (the outsider in dystopia eventually commits suicide, unable to either overthrow it or carve out a niche for himself). It, however, maintains an element of hopefulness insofar as its warning function suggests that the nightmare may yet be avoided, if the readers take action.

When making a movie that dialogues with Huxley's novel, Wójcik and Jones-Morris had many options, which, however, can be summarised in an alternative – their movie could adopt and express the same type of fear as the novel, or it could use the novel – and its associated type of fear – as a springboard, so that the fear expressed by the movie would be somehow different. In order to see what the directors actually did, it is useful to juxtapose

[8] See Erika Gottlieb, *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial* (Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 20.

[9] The author acknowledges that using other classifications and frameworks may yield other interesting results.

[10] Gottlieb, *Dystopian Fear East and West*, p. 20.

[11] Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), p. 8.

[12] Baccolini and Moylan actually focus on a yet different distinction, between classical dystopias that locate hope outside of the text and critical dystopias that include it within the narrative. However, for the purposes of this essay, the distinction between militancy and resignation in general seems more interesting.

main themes that are common to both the novel and the movie: commentary on consumerism, the power of propaganda and the fate of the rebel.

Because the problem of consumerism seems to be the most pronounced in the movie, it shall be analysed first. The issue is first tackled when the directors go on a hunt in search of modern rebels against the society (which will be discussed separately). The first one they interview is a British man who had lived in India as a *sadu* and, after eventually returning to Britain, has a relatively minimalist lifestyle. He mentions that during a visit to a supermarket he learned it sells 26,000 different products. While in India he used 20, which leads him to conclude that it sells 25,980 things that are unnecessary for him. He goes on to suggest that the society as a whole is in a similar predicament: being sold what it does not need. As the man delivers this verdict, viewers are treated to suggestive images of supermarket shelves filled with goods.

This criticism connects fairly well to Huxley's portrayal of an economy bent on overconsumption.[13] The next appearance of this theme is, however, more interesting: besides "Savages" the directors also interview various scholars and one of them, Dr Scott Newton from the University of Cardiff, links consumerism to capitalism – he states that after World War II people discovered they "could have more than they needed." Additionally, professor Orvar Löfgren from the University of Lund is later shown discussing the commercialisation of sport: a naturally simple activity became complex because of the "need of equipment." The filmmakers seem to want to prove the scholar's point in practice – in between statements by Löfgren, the viewers see a man go to a sports store and inform the shop assistant that he wants to look like a skater, whereupon the assistant selects the "necessary" clothing, skateboard and gadgets for a total price of £ 309.40.

Meaningfully, however, neither in the discussion of the post-War increase in consumption nor in the approach to commercialised sport is there any clear indication that the problem is complex – the viewer may be left with the feeling that it all hinges merely on the consumers' disordered appetite. Huxley's interpretation, as offered in *Brave New World*, is subtly but significantly different.

In the novel, the problem is not merely that people want to consume unnecessary goods; they, in a sense, have to. Huxley sometimes lets the reader see the deeper logic behind the system. One such chance is offered in Chapter III, when the World Controller lectures a group of students. Through this lecture the reader learns, among other things, that the founding principle of the World State is stability, since: "The machine turns, turns and must keep on turning – for ever. It is death if it stands still. A thousand millions scrab-

[13] See e.g. Huxley, *Brave New World*, pp. 22–23.

bled the crust of the earth. The wheels began to turn. In a hundred and fifty years there were two thousand millions. Stop all the wheels. In a hundred and fifty weeks there are once more only a thousand millions; a thousand, thousand, thousand men and women have starved to death."[14]

To rephrase that: once the machine is widely used, the population increases due to the ensuring prosperity. If the machine is later stopped, the surplus population will die for lack of sustenance.[15] In other words, overconsumption is not merely a disorder of the appetite; it is a condition the mechanized society has to suffer, because overconsumption gives work to the machine, which, in turn, gives people livelihoods.

This relatively complex relationship is, for some reason, not really addressed in the movie. So far as complexity is shown, it is mostly in the context of repair and thrift. The filmmakers interview owners of repair shops in Poland, Sweden and Britain. From their answers the viewers learn that repairs have now become largely uneconomic, since new goods are cheaper than repairs, old parts are sometimes hard to obtain, and some things are simply built so as to make even an affordable repair impossible. All this is given to the viewer to the tune of "Mending is antisocial" and "Ending is better than mending" – two of the slogans Huxley's dystopian society is fed with.

To conclude the discussion of this theme: both the novel and the movie seem to be drawing attention to, and criticising, overconsumption, but they do so with differing complexity. In the movie, overconsumption does not seem to be part of a larger network of relations, but mainly a simple fault of the consumers who could, presumably, curtail the problem, if they controlled their appetite and did not give in to the producers.

The second issue to be analysed is the treatment of propaganda. In Huxley's novel that term could be applied mainly to hypnopaedia, i.e. "sleep teaching,"[16] which is a method of conditioning children with the use of relatively short statements (sometimes simply slogans) played to them while they sleep. The messages are eventually internalized and will be repeated whenever needed – the equivalents of today's "common sense wisdom" supposedly found in various proverbs and mottoes.

This technique obviously does not apply directly to the reality Wójcik and Jones-Morris comment on. However, they do make use of this motif: it is referred to when the filmmakers discuss marketing and advertising strategies. Initially, the similarity is highlighted by a Huxley scholar, Dr Kirpal Singh from Singapore Management University, who suggests that modern advertising and hypnopaedia both employ a "passive learning effect." Various scholars

[14] Huxley, *Brave New World*, p. 42.

[15] Huxley also made this point in some of his essays, e.g. a 1929 essay "Spinoza's Worm," which is part of the *Do What You Will* collection.

[16] Huxley, *Brave New World*, p. 25.

also explain that the basic purpose of advertising is strictly emotive: to create emotions about particular brands or objects and also to "teach people to get bored" with what they have. This is somewhat comparable to the aim of hypnopaedia, which is not used to teach facts, but to instil convictions.

As if to heighten the perceived similarity, the viewers are told that currently children watch, on average, 20,000 commercials a year and this is juxtaposed with a quote from the novel, which states that the children will listen to a particular piece of hypnopaedia "forty or fifty times more before they wake; then again on Thursday, and again on Sunday. A hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months."[17] Furthermore, selected hypnopaedia slogans are used as a recurring background in some scenes. Therefore, it seems justified to discuss the makers' treatment of advertisement in comparison with hypnopaedia, despite some obvious differences between the two techniques.

Understandably perhaps, the documentary focuses most on marketing directed at children. The viewers hear, from Stephen Kline, a PhD from the Simon Fraser University, that children may be able to understand how an advertisement works by the age of eight, but this understanding does not probably make them more resistant to the intended emotive effect. Presumably to prove the point in practice, the filmmakers also included an interview with a group of school kids who quite intelligently explain how advertising works, but when one of them is asked why she likes to buy new things, she can only say that she likes to buy new things because they are new.

The same method of pairing statements by scholars and the children is used once more when Kline claims that consumption is now treated as a prerogative of adulthood and the viewers are offered a comment by another schoolgirl, who says she would like to be adult, because she would be able to buy all the things she wants.

The final indictment of marketing is executed with a variation of this technique. The directors interview the manager of a marketing company that specifically targets children and his statements are contrasted with a scholarly analysis of marketing mechanics, given by Kline. During the interview, the viewers learn that a good commercial has to be efficient (cause "purchase behaviour") and children are just like other consumers. Eventually, the advertiser is made to concede that children grow up amidst various pressures and marketing adds even more, "probably" not making the child's life easier.

In sum, the treatment of advertising as contemporary hypnopaedia seems to lack nothing in intensity. In fact, if one wanted to level criticism at that comparison, one could say it is over intensified. The distinguishing feature

[17] Huxley, *Brave New World*, p. 28.

of hypnopaedia (especially when safeguarded by other measures used by the World State) is inescapability – in Huxley's novel, even an Alpha Plus psychologist who works professionally with hypnopaedia cannot clearly formulate any full-scale criticism of the state of things. This is decidedly not the case with real world marketing, since the very existence of the movie seems to prove marketing is not irresistible: if the directors could make the movie and the audience can see their concerns as valid, advertising is not yet really like hypnopaedia.

Obviously this must be – at least in part – ascribed to the difference between a fictional mechanism, which the writer can tailor at will, and a real one. Yet, since the directors themselves seem to willingly make a comparison with this fictional (and therefore more thorough) mechanism of social control, it seems fair to highlight that it may not be entirely justified and, paradoxically, may be a case of appealing to the viewer's emotions, not unlike in marketing.

Finally, the third issue to consider in this analysis is the rebellion against the consumerist society, a "John the Savage" lifestyle. In Huxley's novel, John the Savage is a young man of World State ancestry who was brought up in a primitive enclave, known as the Reservation, and who is brought to London. He provides the necessary outsider perspective in the novel.[18]

The filmmakers use that character for two purposes. Firstly, the viewers meet a "literal" John the Savage: a man in a T-shirt, with "John the Savage" printed in large letters on the front, appears almost at the beginning of the movie. Secondly, "John the Savage" functions as a symbol of rebellion: the viewers learn that John could not escape the brave new world of the World State (he eventually commited suicide) and the filmmakers go off in search of modern "Savages," to see whether they have managed to escape.

In the course of the documentary, the viewers are introduced to three main "Savage" figures. One of them is the already mentioned former *sadu* – a man who had travelled to India and, at some point, began to lead the life of a socially sanctioned beggar. He eventually returned to Britain and the filmmakers interviewed him about his current lifestyle. Another one is a man who makes a living by impersonating hermits. The third is a Pole removed from a religious order, who decided to continue the life of a hermit "for God."

All three modern Savages seem to practice, to some extent, a more ascetic way of life than is typical of their societies of origin, the hermit-impersonator probably being the most ambiguous and least pronounced case. The former *sadu* lives in a small trailer and the ex-monk in a wooden hut he person-

[18] Rudolf B. Shmerl, "The Two Future Worlds of Aldous Huxley," *PMLA*, vol. 77, no. 3 (1962), p. 329, http://www.jstor.org/stable/460493.

ally built, without any electricity, with a radio for entertainment and an oil lamp to use after dusk. These men could, therefore, be treated as examples of a supposedly better way of life.

On the other hand, the directors point out things in the men's lifestyles that seem to undermine their position of genuinely committed rebels. The former *sadu* used to live in a tent but now has a relatively comfortable trailer. Furthermore, he has, as the camera scrupulously documents, different kinds of not-necessary foods in his kitchen cupboard, and appliances such as a radio.

Similarly, the ex-monk lives near a highway to which, as he says, he has become accustomed. His interview actually ends with a question about temptations to leave this way of life. The viewers hear he has them, that if he were younger he would probably have left this lifestyle, and that even now he is not sure whether he would not take a small colour TV if offered – seemingly a concession to consumerism.

It is worth noticing that the filmmakers do not mention the ambiguity of John the Savage as a character in Huxley's novel. There are numerous critical interpretations that see John as a defective hero or even an anti-hero.[19] Furthermore, Huxley himself had written something that suggests the "savage" life is not necessarily a desirable ideal. In a 1946 foreword to the novel, he characterizes life in the Reservation as "more human in some respects, but in others hardly less queer and abnormal" than the one in the World State.[20]

Not discussing John as a potentially defective character has important implications – the average viewer of *Brand New World* should probably not be expected to remember the ambiguities of John's persona and, if the directors do not mention the issue, there is a likelihood that the viewer will assume being a "Savage" is mean to be a good and practicable ideal.

Consequently, the way the filmmakers deconstruct the "Savages" they meet, by letting the viewers leave each meeting with a sense of inadequacy, opens the door to the interpretation that it is now as tragically impossible to escape from the "Brand New World" as it is for John in Huxley's *Brave New World*.

While no such thing is said expressly and the question is left open, a fatalistic interpretation is not improbable. Indeed, that is the opinion Piotr

[19] See for example: Peter Firchow, "Science and Conscience in Huxley's Brave New World," *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 16, no. 3 (1975), pp. 301–316, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1207404, Jerome Meckier, "Aldous Huxley's Americanization of the *Brave New World* Typescript," *Twentieth Century Literature* 48:4 (2002), pp. 427–460, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3176042, and three essays in the collection edited by David Izzo and Kim Kirkpatrick, entitled *Brave New World: Essays*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland. 2008) – those by Bradley W. Buchanan, Sean A. Witters and Paul Smethurst.

[20] Huxley, *Brave New World*, p. viii.

Bielski seems to have formulated. In his review of the movie, he sums up the problem (translation mine): "The situation is this: the loud and expansive Takers have already won the war with the Leavers, if I may use the names from Daniel Quinn's 'Ishmael'."[21]

This fatalistic interpretation seems to be also strengthened by the other use the directors make of the "Savage" figure. It has been mentioned earlier that a man appears in some scenes in a brown T-shirt with "John the Savage" printed on it. The full context of his appearances, of which the viewers eventually learn, is this: as "John the Savage" he shouts, mainly admonitory, passages from the novel in the middle of a London crowd. Quite predictably, the crowd pays little serious attention.

I would suggest that the event was staged – Luke Evans is listed in the credits as "John the Savage." It seems plausible that the scenes were included to make a point and to strongly suggest that the modern society is like the one portrayed by Huxley precisely *because* the Londoners react the way they do. This is the interpretation Bielski seems to support (translation mine): "Preaching in front of a Harrods store, as attempted by one of the movie's protagonists, also brings no effect. The consumers will just label you a 'weirdo' if you do that; you might even become trendy and they might take a photo with you."[22]

Such an interpretation poses a problem. If the Londoners' reaction is supposed to suggest that we are living in a Huxleyan brave new world, then it would follow that Londoners should have, and reasonably could have, done something else. But what should that be? Should they have entered into a thoughtful dialogue with the "street preacher" who is quoting Shakespeare at them? Should they treat his admonitions literally and throw away their shopping to prove they are not mindless consumers?

It is significant that responses which would be "right" in the sense that they would demonstrate a willingness to oppose mindless consumerism – i.e. reactions based on frugality and reasonableness – do not have to produce results that would be visible during such a confrontation on the street. For example, there may be no immediate connection between one's willingness to be frugal and one's willingness to strike up thoughtful conversations with street preachers. In other words, while the scenes are admirably dramatic, the

[21] Piotr Bielski, "Brand New World już istnieje!," Białe Gawrony: Fundacja na rzecz Kultury Żywej, accessed December 29, 2010, http://www.bialegawrony.org/page.php?cms=12. Original text: "Mamy do czynienia z sytuacją, w której ekspansywni i głośni Zgarniacze wygrali już wojnę z Cichymi, że posłużę się nazwami z powieści *Izmael* Daniela Quinna."

[22] Bielski, "Brand New World już istnieje!" Original text: "Kaznodziejskie nawoływanie przed Harrodsem do opamiętania się, co próbuję robić jeden z bohaterów filmu również nie przynosi efektu. Konsumenci wrzucą cię w kategorię 'dziwaka', być może staniesz się przy okazji trendy i zrobią sobie z tobą zdjęcie."

conclusions that may be drawn from them – and perhaps are even intended – may be *non sequiturs*.

In fact, it could be argued that in the novel John the Savage is set to fail not only because the inhabitants of the World State are hopelessly psychologically deformed, but also because John has communicative flaws of his own, even if he is a hero – e.g. a queer, archaic language and a tendency to vent extreme emotion. In using his persona and replicating a scene from the novel in front of a Harrods store, the moviemakers would then also be replicating John's flaws, including his inability to communicate effectively.

To conclude this part, one could perhaps say that Wójcik and Jones-Morris explore rebellion against the society more or less like Huxley did. They also question the success of the rebels and pinpoint their perceived inadequacies which may lead their viewers to fatalistic conclusions. What they seem to not do, unlike Huxley, is clearly indicate that the rebel ideal is, perhaps, not entirely desirable and an inability to live it is possibly even healthy.

Having thus analysed three main themes that the movie shares with the novel, it is time to discuss how the different handling of the topics influences the overall type of fear expressed by both works. I believe such a discussion should start with an examination of the position of the author as a critic of society.

In a "Western" dystopia, to use Erika Gottlieb's classification, the author issues a warning, using the work as a vehicle for the message. He or she can lay claim to being more far-sighted than others, because he or she can see the danger. On the other hand, the ultimate success of the venture depends on active audience participation – only the audience can prevent the dystopia from actually happening. In other words, the author cannot claim a much higher moral ground than his or her audience, because success depends on cooperation.

In an "Eastern" dystopia, by contrast, the author might claim higher moral ground than his audience, because both sides live in a nightmare but only the author has the courage to face it. However, this potential moral superiority has its cost – the work faces suppression and the author may be prosecuted. As Gottlieb points out, in the Soviet Union, "Some of the authors were sent into exile; others were imprisoned, sent to labour camps, or even executed."[23]

Brand New World matches neither of those patterns. Considering the amount of fatalism in the message, I would classify it as expressing an "Eastern" or actual dystopian impulse. However, that message is not really suppressed or prosecuted – the critique of the system is provided in an easily

[23] Gottlieb, *Dystopian Fear East and* West, p. 19.

accessible movie form and, while independent and not widely popular, is still being screened around Poland.[24]

Furthermore, the movie has to deal with another problem, not present in the case of either Huxley's work or Soviet dystopias. A minor theme that runs through the movie is the role and power of the media in general, e.g. the popularity of television as pastime. By using a movie to voice their concerns, the directors are, in a sense, cooperating with this system.

If the makers cooperate with that which they fear or warn against, the act of cooperation changes the quality of that fear. Especially so if they are conscious of the problem of complicity, as I would suggest Wójcik and Jones-Morris are. Therefore, I think it would be worthwhile to briefly trace instances in which the makers become self-reflexive or auto-ironic.

When interviewing the hermit impersonator, Wójcik asks him if his performances attracted an audience. The man replies that there was a lot of interest, also from the press, who are "mostly thick," i.e. stupid. At that point the camera swirls around to show Wójcik sitting opposite, as if suggesting that, if members of the press are "thick," the directors can be "thick" too.

Later in the movie, the viewers are treated to a series of interviews with media specialists who explain how the viewers' attention should be controlled. Some of the suggestions they give are applied instantly: viewers see brief flashes of eye-catching pictures. The process is culminated with the movie trailer being shown in the full movie, right after the interviews, suggesting that it was created according to the guidelines the viewers have just heard.

Another episode of this type happens when the crew try to pay a second visit to the Polish ex-monk. Apparently, Wójcik, carrying a hidden camera, stumbles upon another hermit, who is not talkative at all and who threatens to become quite unpleasant, if they do not leave him alone. Wójcik returns to the others, takes Jones-Morris with him and goes back. Although there is no particularly interesting footage, the journey to the hermit – essentially to bother him some more – is fittingly commented on using a passage from Huxley's novel, in which a reporter nags John during his final attempt at solitude.

Due to the nature of the movie production process, it is impossible to say what that episode was: a fully premeditated stunt; a moment when the filmmakers got carried away and which they decided not to edit out, but to use for self-criticism; a staged piece (the hermit playing his part), or something else. Whatever that was, it was allowed to remain in the finished narrative

[24] Furthermore, the movie seems to have received some institutional support (as evidenced in the acknowledgements section of the credits) – while this is not an issue the essay will deal with in depth, it is nevertheless worth noting.

and it suggests to the viewers that the makers might also be implicated in what they are criticising.

This suggestion of complicity is carried to its ultimate level in the closing scenes. The very last interview is conducted with Krystyna Romaniszyn, a PhD from the Jagiellonian University, who decides not to show her face – the viewers see the makers and only hear the interviewee. When asked why she decided on such an unusual arrangement, she explains that she did so to escape the trap of complaining about the media while participating in them. The filmmakers ask what they could do to escape this paradox and are told that the scholar believes it is impossible in a movie and that the proper reaction is to remain silent. At this point viewers see someone (presumably one of the crew) using a sledgehammer to smash a TV on which this final interview is being shown. This act of destruction is followed by the credits.

All those instances create an atmosphere of ambiguity about complicity that Huxley's novel does not have (perhaps simply due to the difference of medium). It is an atmosphere of both auto-irony and genuinely undermining the validity of one's own criticism. Is it appropriate to make a gripping trailer for a movie that bashes advertising techniques? Is it acceptable to seek those rebels who do not want to be found? Finally, does it make sense to make a movie about the evil power of television?

I believe that the Huxley who wrote *Brave New World* would have enjoyed the way the movie ends – drafting an argument with one hand, to possibly question (or even negate) it with the other. In fact, it may be claimed that the destruction of the TV is somehow equivalent to John's (obviously self-destructive) suicide.

But Huxley apparently later began to regret he had not offered John a meaningful way to respond to the World State London.[25] It could be argued that Wójcik and Jones-Morris are repeating his "mistake" – if the right thing to do is to symbolically destroy the movie, what was the point of making and releasing (and watching) it?

The problem seems even worse in this case than in the novel, as Huxley places John's dilemma quite far away in the future, while Wójcik and Jones-Morris seem to speak of the society as it is now and – at least in my opinion – they do so with enough fatalism to suggest the society is already inescapably dystopian. In that situation, smashing the TV set with a sledgehammer would not be a Huxleyan ironic twist but a declaration of ultimate futility – there was indeed no point to watching the movie.

While a completely fatalist interpretation seems to be contradicted by the fact *Brand New World* continues to be screened, there does seem to be

[25] See foreword to *Brave New World* in entirety.

a fatalist streak in *Brand New World*, as evidenced, for example, by Piotr Bielski's review.

In conclusion, I would argue that precisely this mixture of fatalism and acknowledged complicity most clearly differentiates *Brand New World* from *Brave New World*. While one could also invoke certain differences in argumentative complexity that have been mentioned earlier, they are less glaring than the fact that while Huxley wrote a warning, Wójcik and Jones-Morris created something of a hybrid between a warning and a resigned, perhaps even self-destructive, proof of ultimate submission to their brand of dystopia.

Studying that difference in the kind of fear expressed by both works can be meaningful when exploring Huxley's current reception and also, perhaps even more importantly, the viability of hope driven, active dystopias in the contemporary discourse about society. If each dystopia is a product of a particular society, then the difference between *Brand New World* and *Brave New World* may point to certain important changes in this regard. In consequence, the question of whether, had Huxley lived in the twenty-first century, he would have written or directed something akin to *Brand New World*, may, in my opinion, merit further discussion beyond the scope of this essay.

Joanna Jodłowska

Kto się boi supermarketu
***Brand New World* – quasi-dokumentalny film**
Andrzeja Wójcika i Ewana Jonesa-Morrisa

Streszczenie

Artykuł porównuje quasi-dokumentalny film Andrzeja Wójcika i Ewana Jonesa-Morrisa *Brand New World* (2005) z powieścią Aldousa Huxley'a *Nowy Wspaniały Świat* (1932), do której film świadomie nawiązuje. Porównanie dokonywane jest głównie na gruncie lęku zawartego w utworach dystopijnych, a podstawę analizy stanowi zestawienie typów lęku wyrażanych przez powieść i film w kwestiach dla nich wspólnych. Te kwestie to przede wszystkim: konsumpcjonizm, marketing i działanie środków masowego przekazu, a także bunt przeciw współczesnemu społeczeństwu. Poza tym artykuł sygnalizuje problem udziału autorów w krytykowanym zjawisku – kwestia ta jest bardzo wyraźnie zarysowana w filmie, a praktycznie niewidoczna w powieści (częściowo może to wynikać z różnicy medium).

Joanna Jodłowska

Wer hat Angst vor einem Supermarkt? *Brand New World*, ein Quasidokumentarfilm von Andrzej Wójcik u. Ewan Jones-Morris

Zusammenfassung

In dem Artikel wird der Quasidokumentarfilm *Brand New World* (2005) von Andrzej Wójcik und Ewan Jones-Morris mit dem Roman *Schöne neue* Welt (1932) von Aldous Huxley verglichen, auf den sich der Film ganz bewusst bezieht. Die Grundlage der Analyse sind verschiedene Arten der sowohl durch den Film, wie auch durch den Roman ausgedrückten Angst, deren Ursachen für die beiden gemeinsam sind. Diese Ursachen sind v.a.: Konsumerismus, Marketing, die Einwirkung von Massenmedien und der Protest gegen zeitgenössische Gesellschaft. Die Verfasserin deutet die Beteiligung der Autoren an der kritisch beurteilten Erscheinung an – in dem Film kommt das Problem deutlich zum Vorschein, während im Roman taucht es kaum auf (wofür die Spezifizität des Mediums verantwortlich sein kann).

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Civilisation, Fear and Trauma in Doris Lessing's Writing

Civilisation is one of the frequently recurring themes in Doris Lessing's fiction. A selection of works can actually be treated as a proper study on the history of civilisation, e.g. *The Cleft* explores the beginnings of civilisation; *Memoirs of a Survivor* examine the breakdown of all social structures; *Mara and Dann* anticipates the necessity to rediscover and rebuild civilisation. The writer unveils the dark sides of the development of civilisation in every phase of its fictional existence. Narrative techniques used by Lessing to represent civilisation at every stage of its creation display features that are symptomatic of speaking of traumatic experiences. In the way Lessing conceives of civilisation, fear is the ever-present factor and often the underlying cause of trauma.

In *The Cleft*, a fictional account of the beginnings of civilisation, Lessing ponders on what it might have been like supposing women had been the first and only representatives of the human race. Initially, the women, the Clefts from the novel, are self-sufficient: pregnancies and births are synchronized with the phases of the moon. Their peaceful existence is disturbed when they start giving births to children with what they consider a peculiar kind of a deformity. These Monsters, who are in fact males, later come to be recognized as the separate branch of the species. But the initial instinct is for the women to get rid of the terrifying creatures: throw the babies off a cliff and into the sea. Doing so, the women account their first-ever enemy: they have to fight the eagles who try to prevent the women from killing the boys. Dealing with this unusual enemy women feel afraid for the first time in history.[1]

[1] Doris Lessing, *The Cleft* (London: Harper Perennial, 2008), p. 17.

Soon, there are so many male babies born that some of the women find it harder and harder to kill them. The older ruling women still opt for destroying the Monsters despite the fear of the eagles, but the young mothers feel bad about having to murder their children. Thus, contradictory emotions divide the Clefts in what is called the first civil war.[2] Some of the babies are finally left for observation, however, much of this observation includes nagging and mutilating. Nevertheless, thanks to the eagles, a group of boys manages to set up a settlement nearby the women. The description of the moment when the groups find out about each other's existence is filled with horror: the men are equally afraid as the women. As one of the first women approaches the male settlement, the men rape and murder her. Thus, the history of both sexes is underlain with traumatic events that are nearly forgotten and reluctantly spoken of in the future.

This intense fear that accompanies their first attempts at the creation of a unified society is reinforced when the humans have to stand up for themselves against nature. The notion of civilisation is traditionally contrasted with nature. Yet, civilisation can never be free from the influences of nature, which is wild and dangerous. The women and men living together in *The Cleft* face various difficulties. The hazards in great forest where they live are multiple: "a charging boar, or an angry bear; a snake that doesn't have time to get out of the way of those naked feet; a boulder rolls down a hillside; someone unused to fire sets a handful of burning grass in an unburned place and does not run fast enough to avoid the bounding, leaping flames; poison from plants and insect bites. And the river flowing there is deep and easily sweeps away an incautious child."[3] Yet, the worst danger is brought about by the Noise: a great wind that sweeps across the island destroying everything on the way, including a bunch of human lives: "The wind put fear in the people who before had not – so it seems – known fear [...] Of course bad things had happened before, a death, a drowning, the unfortunate beginnings of the males, but when had murderous attack from nature, surely their friend, happened before? 'What has happened may happen again.' The Noise, the wind had taught them all how helpless they were."[4]

One may draw parallels between Doris Lessing's description of the Noise, and the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder. The unexpected encounter with the "murderous attack from nature" can definitely be categorised as an event that is "outside the range of usual human experience"[5] from the 1980's American Psychiatric Association's *Manual*. The encounter

[2] Lessing, *Cleft*, p. 23.

[3] Lessing, *Cleft*, pp. 105–106.

[4] Lessing, *Cleft*, pp. 140–141.

[5] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), p. 33.

overwhelms "the ordinary human adaptations to life"[6] which is precisely what lies at the core of the definition of a traumatic event. The second crucial element of trauma mentioned in the quotation is the projected repetitiveness of traumatic event: "what has happened may happen again." Judith Herman, who is a psychologist working with trauma patients, writes about the "repetition compulsion"[7] which is an aftermath of trauma. Traumatised people not only expect such events to happen again, but also have a predilection towards dangerous re-enactments of the past. Finally, in the same way as the Noise renders the first human beings helpless, "psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. When the force is that of nature, we speak of disasters. When the force is that of other human beings, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning."[8]

The encounter with nature in *The Cleft* entails symptoms of PTSD. What is more, the whole text is narrated in such a way that trauma studies find symptomatic of bearing witness to traumatic experience. According to Laurie Vickroy, who deals with the representations of trauma, writers often employ multiple narrators in order to approximate a faithful account: many voices, emotions and experiences intermingle in order to "produce individual and collective memory, and to counteract silence and forgetting."[9] In *The Cleft* the main story is told by an ancient Roman historian meandering through a multiplicity of oral accounts from the past; he finishes at such point within history where the written accounts begin. This is supposed to be a lost story that survived only as a set of legends. The past oral accounts are supposed to have been immediately verified when they were being created: "When the story is told to the young ones – they have a name, they are called Memories – it is told first among ourselves, and one will say, 'No, it was not like that,' or another, 'Yes, it was like that,' and by the time everyone is agreed we can be sure there is nothing in the story that is untrue."[10] Yet, the account given by the historian is full of intrusions of his subjective comments on particular events as he needs to fill in the gaps of the incomplete legends, or feels obliged to filter the knowledge. The narrative truly reveals "obstacles to communicating"[11] the experience of the first humans: when the historian comes to speak of the mutilation of the babies and the murder of the first

[6] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, p. 33.

[7] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, p. 41.

[8] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, p. 33.

[9] Laurie Vickroy, *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p. 207.

[10] Lessing, *Cleft*, pp. 8–9.

[11] Vickroy, *Trauma and Survival*, p. 3.

female, he faces a problem. For some reason, he seems to acknowledge the male version of history yet not the female one, and the reader is not informed why: "The female kept records – and I cannot bring myself to write all that is there; the male kept records: and I do bring myself to write down what is there."[12] What the reader deals with is "silence, simultaneous knowledge and denial, dissociation, resistance, and repression, among others"[13] typical of speaking about trauma.

The men and women in *The Cleft* gradually learn about each other, and make attempts at building a unified society. There is a lot to overcome, as females are thoughtful and conservative, while males adventurous and irresponsible. Now, however, the two species need each other in order to keep up the existence of humanity. As the outcome of the women's constant complaining about the males' behaviour, men set out to explore the sea, leaving the women on their home beach. They come back decimated, the women's beach is accidentally destroyed, and by the end of the novel they find themselves back together, bound by the common experience of suffering, and the fear of the dangers of the surrounding world.

As civilisation develops, one might have hoped for the taming of the dangerous and unpredictable nature. Yet, even though the sources of fear have changed, fear itself has remained an inherent part of civilisation. At the core of the change there is the development of technology: human hand has now seemingly more influence on the occurring events, yet such control is illusory. Natural environment can be controlled to an extent thanks to the development of technology, for example, the dams are built in order to prevent the floods. Yet, when the technological devices fail, the risk of a catastrophe is even greater. Kai Erikson in his article on trauma and community specifies two kinds of disasters: natural and technological. "The irony," he claims, "is that the technological advances that have afforded us that degree of protection from natural disasters have created a whole new category of what specialists have come to call technological disasters – meaning everything that can go wrong when systems fail, humans err, engines misfire, designs prove faulty."[14] Human beings have exposed themselves to new dangers of "collisions, explosions, breakdowns, collapses, leaks." And the fear factor increases as "now technological disasters have clearly grown in number as human beings press the outer limits of their competence. […] they have also grown in size. This is true in the sense that events of local origins can have consequences that reach across huge distances – as was the case, say, at Chernobyl. And it is also true in the sense that news of it broadcast so quickly and so widely that

[12] Lessing, *Cleft*, p. 49.

[13] Vickroy, *Trauma and Survival*, p. 3.

[14] Kai Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 191.

it becomes a moment in everyone's history, a datum in everyone's store of knowledge."[15]

This is not only true about the technological disasters: the knowledge of all kinds of catastrophes, wars, accidents is nowadays transmitted more easily and efficiently. The nature of modern civilisation is such that we are all more aware of its potential threats; we are all witnesses should a disaster occur. A good example of the influence of the media in transmitting such knowledge might be Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, the heroine of which is obsessed with collecting pieces of news from around the world. The sequence of titles and passages creates a mosaic in the Anna Wulf's diary: "RUSSIA BUILDS A-BOMBER; KOREA: 371 KILLED, WOUNDED OR MISSING; ATROCITIES IN EGYPT; REVOLT IN ROUMANIA."[16] The effect of such an accumulation of unfortunate news is overwhelming. If that world-encompassing threat is what modern civilisation is founded on then the question arises about its future.

Doris Lessing predicts a breakdown of civilisation in *Memoirs of a Survivor*. A memoir is in itself a genre of testimonial literature typically used for writing about trauma. The narrator invokes how difficult it was to assess what was happening at the time when it was taking place: "while everything, all forms of social organization, broke up, we lived on, adjusting our lives as if nothing fundamental was happening."[17] When the traditional concept of family breaks down, the narrator comes to live in constant fear of groups of young people, or even children, walking in the streets, and attacking strangers. The building she lives in is falling apart; there is no electricity and no running water.

As the "survivors' experience resists chronological narration or normal modes of artistic representation,"[18] the narration in the novel is fragmented and full of shifts. The descriptions of the present state of affairs, which is elusively described as "it," are intertwined with the dream-like descriptions of a childhood past. Among the shifts and turns, the narrator voices her doubts as to the validity of her testimony:

> Perhaps I would have done better to have begun this chronicle with an attempt at a full description of 'it'. […] Perhaps, indeed, 'it' is the secret theme of all literature and history, like writing in invisible ink between the lines, which springs up, sharply black, dimming the old print we knew so well, as life, personal or public, unfolds unexpectedly – we see 'it' as the ground-swell of events, experience… For 'it'

[15] Erikson, *Notes on Trauma*, p. 191.

[16] Doris Lessing, *The Golden Notebook* (London: Granada Publishing, 1973), pp. 241–250.

[17] Doris Lessing, *Memoirs of a Survivor* (London: Picador, 1974), p. 20.

[18] Vickroy, *Trauma and Survival*, p. 5.

> is a force, a power, taking the form of earthquake, a visiting comet whose balefulness hangs closer night by night distorting all thought by fear – 'it' can be, has been, pestilence, a war, the alteration of climate, a tyranny that twists men's minds, the savagery of religion. 'It' is the word for helpless ignorance, or of helpless awareness.[19]

In the description of "it" lies yet another feature of trauma: the inaccessibility of the experience itself. The nature of traumatic experience is such that it cannot be made entirely conscious, "in the sense of being fully retrieved or communicated without distortion."[20] Traumatic event is registered rather than experienced. Cathy Caruth refers to this inaccessible quality as unclaimed experience, which is "experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and [which] therefore is not available to consciousness."[21]

The multiple features of narration in *Memoirs of a Survivor* comply with the modes outlined by Vickroy for the representation of trauma. The aforementioned qualities make one look for "the event outside the range of human experience" in order to find the reason behind these symptoms. The constant exposure to fear appears to be a possible reason for the development of the symptoms of trauma, as the unclaimed experience in the novel is "felt as an immediate threat which could not be averted,"[22] or as "an atmosphere of a siege of war."[23] Such descriptions bring the reader the closest to the unknown traumatic event, as they display features that constitute the criteria for PTSD: "unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with death. [...] the common denominator of psychological trauma is a feeling of intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation."[24]

A similarly unidentified, still definitely traumatic, event shatters the existence of the protagonist of *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*. At the beginning of the novel a patient suffering from amnesia is admitted to a psychiatric hospital. While two doctors try to find the cause of his condition by sending multiple letters of inquiry to his family, co-workers and friends, the patient's drifts off into his own imagination and dreams. On the one hand, the reader receives an account of the doctors' investigation, on the other some insight is provided into the patient's inner account of his experience.

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[19] Lessing, *Memoirs of a Survivor*, p. 136.

[20] Geoffrey H. Hartman, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," *New Literary History*, vol. 26, no. 3 (Summer, 1995), p. 537.

[21] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 4.

[22] Lessing, *Memoirs of a Survivor*, p. 9.

[23] Lessing, *Memoirs of a Survivor*, p. 20.

[24] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, p. 33.

The patient's dreams revolve around some fundamental fears inherent in modern civilisation. Initially, he is a sailor at sea, and the aliens come to kidnap the members of the crew on his ship. He lands on an island where he is a witness of a war between two species of animals. He struggles to survive with a belief that the aliens are going to come and take him as well on their Crystal ship. The aliens finally come, and his experience changes into transcendental. First, he sees the Earth as suffering from an ecological cataclysm. The sea is fouled with poisonous gases and patches of oil. Then, he is transported into the outer space and sees all human beings as merely atoms of the whole, and the whole history of the Earth, with all the evolutions and downfalls, is shown in fast forward. All the planets in the Solar System, the brothers and sisters of the Earth, are called up by their father, the Sun, to help restore political and ecological balance on Earth. They are given a briefing as to how to behave on that fearful planet. They are warned that once they are there they might forget what their mission is, but in the course of their lives they will recall. The protagonist seems to believe that he is one of those sent to Earth to fix it.

This is the world of the patient's imagination. The doctors, however, find out that he is in fact a Cambridge University Professor in the department of Classics. The information comes from all kinds of sources, and is delivered in a variety of conventions and styles. To recount the imaginary experience, the patient recites poems of his voyage and life at sea. The conversations with the doctors and the nurse are delivered in a mode of a play. Letters between family, friends and doctors are exchanged to provide various dimensions and answers to the predicament the patient has found himself in. Thus, the patient's breakdown is very well reflected in the fragmentation of the fictional form, even though the reader is not given any straightforward answers as to the nature of the disorder. The various perspectives give no definite answer as to what exactly has led to the present mental condition of the patient.

Although the traumatic event remains undiscovered, important aspects typical of a trauma narrative are clearly discernible. According to Geoffrey Hartman the mode of negative narratability, in which the temporal structure tends to collapse, is characteristic of trauma narratives.[25] Such a feature of narration is evident in the case of *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, as the different modes of writing shatter the chronology of events. The timeline in the novel is evidently disturbed, and all the explanations refer back to only potential traumatic events. What is more, the doctors' approach to the treatment reminds of the "talking cure"[26] that, since Jenet and Freud's studies on women suffering from hysteria, has been a method of dealing with traumatic

[25] Hartman, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," pp. 547–548.
[26] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, p. 12.

experiences. The function and understanding of the "talking cure" is such that in order to alleviate his or her suffering, the patient needs to retrieve the experience and put it into words. The doctors look for answers emphasising the importance of the patient's testimony. They complain, however, that they cannot understand the patient's muttering: "Because when you're muttering, we can't hear you. And it is very important that we hear what you're saying."[27] In the novel the possibility of a faithful account, and thus successful integration, is renounced.

Traumatic event remains undisclosed, even though it is strongly implied at some points in the novel. The patient's experience of war is the most powerful suggestion of traumatic experience. The protagonist is claimed to have participated in the Second World War. Once he admits to it, he is invited by a doctor to write down whatever he might recall of that experience. He writes an account of a mission in Yugoslavia, on which his partner died. On his own, he joined a guerilla group in order to fight the enemy, and fell in love with a beautiful girl named Konstantina, who was also killed. Nevertheless, soon after the protagonist's account, the doctors receive a letter from the partner, who supposedly died on that very mission, saying that the protagonist has never fought in Yugoslavia. Even though he might have experienced some discomfort and fear when he was a soldier, his war experience was far from the agony he himself describes.

All the investigations finally come to a dead end, as the patient is miraculously cured through shock-treatment. The author reveals herself in the after-word to the novel in order to take her stance, and provide further explanations. The final comment is that human experience does not always allow for a label, and whatever happened to the protagonist serves only as an example of what cannot be categorised.[28] Nevertheless, if the experience cannot be articulated, it falls into the category of "unclaimed," and therefore traumatic experience. If the role of literature is, as Geoffrey Hartman puts it, to teach us "to read for what is without words,"[29] then this is precisely what happens in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*. The author admits at the end: "I am describing the sensation, for I cannot say what was the fact."[30]

In *Mara and Dann* the facts are given straightforwardly: these are precisely war and environmental changes that sweep away advancements of civilisation, and the peaceful existence of the eponymous characters with them. In the devastated world, Yerrup (Europe) is covered with ice, and the two

[27] Doris Lessing, *Briefing for a Descent Into Hell* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 12.

[28] Lessing, *Briefing*, p. 278.

[29] Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Trauma within the Limits of Literature," *European Journal of English Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2003), p. 259.

[30] Lessing, *Briefing*, p. 17.

protagonists need to fight for survival in Ifrik (Africa). In the South of the continent, where Mara and Dann live, water supplies are scarce, and the earth is dried-up, which leads to the lack of crops. People and animals are dying: Mara and Dann need to set out North in order to survive. As their parents have long been killed, they can only rely on each other. The atmosphere of constant threat accompanies the characters on their way North. They have enemies that do not want them to succeed in travelling North; they escape fires that encompass the Southern Ifrik; they travel North in fear that the drought is spreading right behind them.

Narration in the novel is chronological, yet it is full of the images of breakdown. For as long as Mara and Dann travel, they seek knowledge about their past. They do not remember exactly how they have lost their parents, and various strangers deliver them pieces of information about these past events. They find and explore traces of the existence of past civilisations: there are clothes from material that cannot be destroyed, or tools made with the use of unknown advanced technologies. Their journey North is successful, yet it is only in the sequel, *The Story of General Dann, Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snowdog*, that some successes are achieved in understanding the past.

The sequel is a story of obtaining access to the forgotten experience, and the "talking cure." Protagonists make attempts at retelling their life-stories. Mara being dead, Dann passes their story on as it seems to be the only possible way of keeping a historical account. He travels alone, and offers his stories to a community in return for a bed to sleep on, and a supply of food. As he recounts his adventures, he cannot help noticing fear amongst the members of the audience. Nevertheless, sharing his experience appears to alleviate some of his own suffering:

> He began his tale with the dust drifts and dried rivers, with the bones of dead animals lying in heaps where floods had carried them earlier. He saw the children's faces grow dubious, and then a child began crying, hushed by its mother. Dann told of how he had hidden behind a broken wall and saw carried past on the shoulders of porters wooden cages that had in them captives from a war who would be sold in the slave markets. And a child cried out and its mother took him out.
> 'I see,' said Dann, smiling in a shamefaced, desperate way, 'that my memories are not for children.' […] And so Dann's memories emerged softened and some became comic. When he heard his audience laughing for the first time he felt he could laugh himself, with relief.[31]

[31] Doris Lessing, *The Story of General Dann, Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snowdog* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), pp. 52–53.

After Mara's death, Dann relies mainly on Griot, who becomes his most faithful companion in the new attempts at exploring past civilisations. When some ancient texts are found in in the Centre of Ifrik, stored safely in a transparent box, the two engage in the complex procedure of deciphering the texts. The box allows only individual pages of the books to be seen. In order to explore them properly, the box needs to be opened. Once it is done, all the books start turning into dust. Dann and Griot try to preserve the last bits and pieces of the ancient knowledge:

> All along the hall the scribes were scribbling down odd phases, even words, as the books fell into dust in their hands.
> *…truths to be self evident…*
> *Un vieux faun de terre cuite…*
> *…be in England…*
> *…Rose, thou art sick…*
> *…all the oceans…*
> *…rise from the dead to say the sun is shining…*
> *…into a summer's day…*
> *…Helen…*
> *Western wind, when…*
> *The Pleiades…*
> *…and I lie here alone…*
> *…and all roads lead to…*[32]

The knowledge of the past civilisations remains fragmented and incomplete. The hidden past remains Dann's unclaimed experience, for which he has been striving since he left South Ifrik. As Dann watches the last words disappear together with the fragile material on which they were written, Griot encourages him not to give up on the knowledge of past civilisations: "Dann, sir, what has been made can be made again," he says, but Dann replies with a note of resignation: "And again, and again, and again."[33]

It is war that seems to be the ever present force destroying each and every human achievement, sooner or later: "There is always killing, and people running from wars. And new wars."[34] Nevertheless, by the end of the novel Dann and Griot manage to set up a new settlement and ensure safety to its inhabitants. Griot, whose name reminds of a figure of a poet or a bard who stores common tribal memories in African culture, takes over the role of the keeper and transmitter of his and Dann's experience, and sings songs about their adventures. With the hope of a better future, Mara's daughter commits

[32] Lessing, *The Story*, pp. 250–251 (italics in the original).
[33] Lessing, *The Story*, p. 251.
[34] Lessing, *The Story*, p. 14.

herself to learning and spreading knowledge, and thus the foundations of a new civilisation are established.

Within the selected group of novels, the existence of civilisation seems to have completed a full cycle. Fear haunts civilisation's difficult beginnings, and shatters the fragile humans standing up against the incomprehensible forces of nature. Once a degree of the taming of nature is achieved, humans have to pay the price for destroying the natural balance on Earth, and face ecological consequences. The threat of annihilation seems to never disappear completely. Traumatic experience, which is fundamentally constituted on fear, is variously explored in Lessing's narratives. Through fragmentation the breach in chronology is achieved, in the same way as traumatic experience destroys the integrity of perception of an individual's life. The reader is embedded in the sensation of what cannot be directly explained by being engaged in multiple perspectives and incomplete testimonies. Whatever the unclaimed cause is, many of them seem to originate in the development of civilisation. Thus, the notions of civilisation, fear and trauma in Doris Lessing's writing seem to overlap, while the protagonists strive for survival.

Paulina Kamińska

Cywilizacja, strach i trauma w twórczości Doris Lessing

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule analizuję sposób przedstawienia cywilizacji w utworach Doris Lessing z perspektywy teorii traumy. Wpływ cywilizacji na jednostkę jest jednym z powracających tematów w twórczości pisarki. W przytaczanych utworach Lessing pokazuje społeczeństwa na różnym etapie ich rozwoju – początków lub schyłku cywilizacji, przedstawia także próby odbudowania struktur społecznych. Kluczowe dla doświadczenia traumatycznego stan zagrożenia życia oraz uczucie strachu są nieuchronnie związane z tymi transformacjami. Przedstawiony obraz cywilizacji nosi cechy urazu traumatycznego (na co wskazują Caruth, Hartman i Vickroy), występujące zarówno na poziomie narracji, jak i fabuły. Zaburzenie chronologii wydarzeń czy też obecność wielu narratorów, świadczące o niemożliwości wiernego oddania wydarzeń, leżą u podstaw proponowanego przez autorkę obrazu cywilizacji.

Paulina Kamińska

Zivilisation, Angst und Trauma in Doris Lessings Werken

Zusammenfassung

In ihrem Artikel untersucht die Verfasserin vom Standpunkt der Traumentheorie wie die Zivilisation in den Werken von Doris Lessing dargestellt ist. Die Auswirkung der Zivilisation auf den Menschen ist eines der von der Schriftstellerin immer wieder behandelten Themen. In den hier vorgebrachten Werken lässt Lessing die Gesellschaften in verschiedenen Stadien deren Entwicklung erscheinen und zeigt, auf welche Weise man soziale Strukturen wiederherzustellen versucht. Mit solchen Transformationen sind unvermeidlich die für ein traumatisches Erlebnis charakteristischen Erscheinungen: Lebensbedrohung und Angst verbunden. Das hier geschilderte Bild der Zivilisation trägt die Merkmale eines Traumas (von solchen Kritikern wie: Caruth, Hartman und Vickroy dargelegt), die sowohl auf der Erzählungs- als auch Handlungsebene zum Vorschein kommen. Gestörte Chronologie der Ereignisse oder mehrere Erzähler, die eine genaue Wiedergabe der Geschehnisse unmöglich machen, liegen dem von der Schriftstellerin dargestellten Bild der Zivilisation zugrunde.

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Masochism and Its (Dis)contents: The Politics of In-Yer-Face Theatre and Mark Ravenhill's Bodies in Crisis

> What a potent obstacle to civilisation aggressiveness must be, if the defence against it can cause as much unhappiness as aggressiveness itself!
> (Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*)

The debates over the politics of in-yer-face theatre have been oscillating between two views. The first one denigrates its engagement and sees it as either deliberately evaded or replaced by violence and marketing strategies; the second one situates engagement in the pertinence of violent images and experiential strategies. The debates have recently been systematised and supplemented by fresh perspectives – most notably by a series of essays collected under the telling title *Cool Britannia? British Political Drama in the 1990s* and Amelia Howe Kritzer's *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain. New Writing: 1995–2005*. Bearing in mind their enormous contribution and well-informed accounts as well as selected developments in studies of contemporary British drama and theatre, the article tries to put a political slant on why bodies in pain take centre stage in the in-yer-face aesthetics. The trail that is picked up here brings together a revised version of the political (and, consequently, of political drama and theatre) and the legacy of Antonin Artaud's "theatre of cruelty."[1] The present article argues that its regressions from language into images, from sense into sensation, or from word into flesh, are symptomatic of coming to terms with the dissemination of the political, and in particular in

[1] Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary C. Richards (New York: Groove Press, 1958).

the meaning ascribed to it by Chantal Mouffe. Finally, of all the playwrights carried by the wave of new writing in the 1990s, Mark Ravenhill has produced a body of work that seems fertile and topical given the concerns hereof. One of the concepts that encapsulates the sensibility and theatricality of the politics of in-yer-face theatre is masochism. As deployed by psychoanalysis and refurbished by Slavoj Žižek, the concept allows one to map out the intricacies between bodily pain and politics.

It has become a truism to claim that it "was easier to write political theatre in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Britain was ablaze with ideological conflict,"[2] than at the turn of the twenty-first century. The socio-political reasons behind this alleged difficulty – such as the disillusionment with New Labour politics – fostered the ideological vacuum that undermined the possibility of political activity based on careful analysis.[3] The general relationship of in-yer-face theatre to the tradition of post-war British political drama seems complex and ambiguous. In *New British Political Dramatists*, John Bull sums up the political theatre of the 1970s by proposing a division into two: the *avant-garde* groups – rejecting the dominant political discourse and drawing on the counter-culture tradition of the Situationists – and the *agit-prop* groups – steeped in the traditional Marxist analysis of class struggle.[4] In a memorable interview entitled "Petrol Bombs through the Proscenium Arch," Howard Brenton endorsed the former camp and advocated that "[y]ou don't write to convert. More – to stir things up. For people to make what they wish of it. When it comes to agit-prop, I like the agit; the prop I'm very bad at. I'm not wise enough. Yet."[5] This somewhat paradoxical statement resounds with the anger of John Osborne and Arnold Wesker, and in particular its somewhat critical reinterpretation by Dan Rebellato.[6] Brenton's words seem to reiterate a tendency in thinking about theatre and politics. Interestingly, the author of *1956 and All That* even writes about a frustration shared by the New Left and the New Wave, a frustration concerning "new definitions of socialism."[7] However, the confidence in (the paradoxical) agitation without propaganda

[2] Michael Billington, "Modern life is rubbish." *Guardian* (December 18 2002), accessed September 27, 2009, http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2002/dec/18/theatre.artsfeatures.

[3] Graham Saunders, introduction to *Cool Britannia? British Political Drama in the 1990s,* ed. Rebecca D'Monté and Graham Saunders (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 1–15.

[4] John Bull, *New British Political Dramatists: Howard Brenton, David Hare, Trevor Griffiths, and David Edgar* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1984), pp. 1–27.

[5] Catherine Itzin and Simon Trussler, "Petrol Bombs through the Proscenium Arch" [an interview with Howard Brenton] *Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 5 (1975), quoted in Bull, *New British Political Dramatists*, p. 28.

[6] Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That. The making of modern British drama* (London, New York: Routledge, 1999).

[7] Rebellato, *1956 and All That*, p. 18.

and the related counter-culture of the Situationists, so explicit in the work of Brenton and Portable Theatre, has been on the wane already since mid-1970s.[8] Unsurprisingly perhaps, by mid-1990s, the contentions of Guy Debord formulated in *The Society of the Spectacle* – that society dominated by the spectacle is atomized and overrides any forms of transcendence by replacing "everything that was directly lived"[9] with representations – no longer seemed a dilemma to be confronted, but to be accepted and at best contemplated. Writing about the decline of British political theatre of the 1970s and 1980s, Howe Kritzer devotes much attention to the impact of postmodern theory, with its questioning of identity, agency, community, and the very distinction into reality and illusion.[10] Generally, this erosive impact blurred clear distinctions and measures of change – and change is the cornerstone of any political theatre. In this context, Rebellato writes about "shifting political agendas in contemporary British playwrighting" from the state-of-the-nation to the globalised (and "deterritorialised") world.[11] He argues that "if in the era of globalization, nation and state do not map effectively onto one another, it is harder and harder for the nation-state to be an adequate means of realizing our ethical commitments."[12] Different, but not incompatible, is Aleks Sierz's perspective on the changing agendas of political theatre when he writes that "[c]onfrontational [in-yer-face] theatre's politics came not from scrawling on large political canvasses but from intensive examination of private pain."[13] In such a theatrescape – where strong gusts of global capital have direct effect on individual bodies – commentators discern not only an expression of

[8] Bull, *New British Political Dramatists*, 25. For an inspiring study on the Situationists and post-1968 British drama see: Chris Megson, "'The Spectacle is Everywhere': tracing the Situationist legacy in British playwriting since 1968," *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 14(2), pp. 17–28.

[9] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Black & Red, accessed December 21, 2010, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/debord/society.htm.

[10] Amelia Howe Kritzer, *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain. New Writing: 1995–2005* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 19–20.

[11] Dan Rebellato, "From the State of the Nation to Globalization: Shifting Political Agendas in Contemporary British Playwriting," in *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Drama*, ed. Nadine Holdsworth and Mary Luckhurst (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 245–262.

[12] Rebellato, "From the State of Nation to Globalization," p. 257.

[13] Aleks Sierz, *In-Yer-Face Theatre. British Drama Today* (London: Faber and Faber, 2000), p. 241. This argument is even put onstage by Ravenhill in *Shopping and Fucking* (first staged in 1996): "[…] long time ago there were big stories. Stories so big you could live your whole life in them. The Powerful Hands of the Gods and Fate. The Journey of Enlightenment. The March of Socialism. But they all died or the world grew up or grew senile or forgot them, so now we're all making up our own stories. Little stories. It comes out in different ways. But we've each got one." Mark Ravenhill, *Shopping and Fucking*, in *Plays: 1* (New York: Methuen Drama, 2001), p. 66.

isolation or desperation, but also mourning and nostalgia.[14] The play that engenders those changes of political agendas as well as feelings of nostalgia for agitprop or "a situationist gesture" is Ravenhill's *Some Explicit Polaroids*.[15] In the climactic scene, Nick, a former leftist activist, who spent 15 years in prison for kidnapping and torturing Jonathan, a currency trader, meets his victim and states that he is "rather nostalgic about the time we spent together […] when I hated you. I knew where I stood."[16] This crude assertion evidences the displacement of political agency. Just as the sweeping socio-political perspectives of the state-of-the-nation play or the ethics behind the pedagogical style of agitprop, history was rarely considered by the in-yer-face playwrights as a discourse of great pertinence to their artistic ends.[17] Even if Ravenhill does make use of history, as for example the history of a nineteenth-century gay brother in *Mother's Clap Molly House*, he ends up with a nostalgic representation of a utopian communality in a pre-modern society.[18] What such deployment of history exposes is a longing for a collective force that could not only allow for a founding of a collective subjectivity and political agency, but also "shape and validate personal identity."[19] Yet, as Chantal Mouffe argues in *The Return of the Political*, identity can be validated only when "the other […] begins to be perceived as negating [instead of merely differing from] our identity, as putting in question our very existence."[20] Thus, Mouffe would no doubt concede that what Nick and Jonathan long for in the above-discussed scene from *Some Explicit Polaroids* is nothing else but the political antagonism. Having briefly introduced the concept of antagonism in constructing identity, she goes on to formulate her definition of the political, which "can-

[14] Amelia Howe Kritzer, *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain*, p. 218.

[15] Mark Ravenhill, *Some Explicit Polaroids*, in *Plays: 1* (New York: Methuen Drama, 2001), pp. 267–315.

[16] Ravenhill, *Some Explicit Polaroids*, pp. 310–311. Rebellato reads the scene as an expression of the nostalgia for "a time when one could write state-of-the-nation plays." Rebellato, "From the State of the Nation to Globalization," p. 255.

[17] Expounding about the historical play and history in drama in the 1970s and 1980s, Wiszniowska argues that: "The notion of history in drama was to be constantly redefined by playwrights, critics and the public. The historical play became a battleground of political and postmodern drama, consecutively dismantling traditional historical play components. "Historical" came to sanction individual presentation, sensational and timeless, allowing a-historical coupling of remote periods and seemingly diverse issues, as in [Howard Brenton's] *The Romans in Britain*, where the invasion of Britain by Caesar was linked with the British military presence in Northern Ireland." Marta Wiszniowska, *…by action dignified… British Theatre 1968–1995: Text and Context* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1997), p. 171.

[18] Mark Ravenhill, *Mother Clap's Molly House*, in *Plays: 2* (London: Methuen Drama, 2008), pp. 1–152.

[19] Howe Kritzer, *Political Theatre in Post-Thatcher Britain*, p. 140.

[20] Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 3.

not be restricted to a certain type of institution, or envisaged as constituting a specific sphere or level of society. It must be conceived as a dimension that is inherent to every human society and that determines our very ontological condition."[21] Referring to a more fundamental discussion in the humanities at the turn of the twenty-first century, this oft-quoted fragment sheds light on the discussion over political theatre as it explains the above account of how the once made-to-measure forms of political theatre broke at the seams with in-yer-face theatre.

As if grafting the dissemination of the political onto the field of theatre and performance studies, in the epilogue to his seminal *Postdramatic Theatre*, Hans-Theis Lehmann considers the relationship between dramatic representation and society.[22] He points towards a kind of paralysis of drama when it comes to representing social and political conflicts. Put crudely, Lehmann maintains that drama has been appropriated and severely depleted by mass entertainment.[23] Having endorsed this crisis of dramatic representation, in-yer-face theatre availed itself of representational strategies that hark back to the ideas of Antonin Artaud. In *The Theatre and Its Double*, a collection of essays published in 1938, he puts forward a theory of "the theatre of cruelty" – a surrealist theatre that would allow the spectators to experience the explosion of the unconscious. In a rather brilliantly terse and synthetic paragraph, Robert Brustein indulges in a comparison of Artaud to Freud and argues that "[t]o cultures which prefer sadism and masochism disguised (for example, in wars, prizefights, gangster movies, and television), the openly sado-masochistic thrust of Artaud's thought has seemed pathological and perverse. Still, Artaud's assumptions are no more unhealthy than Freud's in *Civilisation and Its Discontents*; both assume that men created neurosis when they suppressed their sex and aggression to live together in society. Artaud is less stoical than Freud about the sacrifice of these basic freedoms, and less inclined to accept such substitute gratifications as civilisation and art."[24] In other words, by "signalling through

[21] Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, p. 3.

[22] Hans-Theis Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 175–187.

[23] To give justice to Lehmann's argument, its wider context seems necessary: "The dwindling of the dramatic space of imagination in the consciousness of society and of the artists seems at any rate, indisputable and proves that something about this model is no longer in tune with our experience. The dwindling of the dramatic impulse has to be stated – no matter whether it is due to the fact that it has been exhausted and as reconciliation only ever stays 'the same'; whether it assumes a mode of 'action' that we no longer recognize anywhere; or whether it paints an obsolete image of social and personal conflict." Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, pp. 182–183.

[24] Robert Brustein, *The Theatre of Revolt* (Chicago: Elephant Paperaback, 1991), p. 369.

flames,"[25] the representational paradigm of the theatre of cruelty questions the centrality of language onstage and postulates a revival of non-verbal means of representation. Thus for Artaud, non-verbal theatrical signs can salvage what human beings have sacrificed on the altar of civilisation. Although it seems the that in-yer-face playwrights gave little or no credence to such messianic or Romantic overtones of his theory, spectacles of bodily violence in their plays, unlike the (allegedly) meaningless "represented pain" in mass media, allowed audiences to experience "pain in representation"[26] – which in an Artaudian act turned theatres into "outlet[s] for our worst instincts."[27] Referring back to the question of representational strategies of political theatre, the in-yer-face aesthetics dallies with Artaud to retain the belief in the theatre as "poison, injected into the social body."[28] Unsurprisingly, the more critical commentators, such as Vera Gottlieb, assert that repeating such gestures in the postmodern age not only seems unviable, but also turns the violent and abstract plays into "products" of what they allegedly oppose: consumerism.[29] Such criticisms, however, seem to trim down the legacy of Artaud to a yet another act of nostalgia. They play down the fact that the theatre "represents bodies and at the same time uses bodies as its main signifying material."[30] Thus the theatrical body functions simultaneously as the carrier of meaning and a stage image that causes different sensations in the audience. The gesture of Artaud consists in overriding the former: the convulsive performance "pits sense and sensation"[31] and restores the (corporeal) roots of theatre. It is the phenomenological perspective that helps to probe the supposed incommensurability of sense and perception. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty postulates that "if we try to seize 'sensation' within the perspective of the bodily phenomena which pave the way to it, we find […] a formation already […] endowed with a meaning."[32] In her article on the collision of modern drama and performance studies, Loren Kruger argues that, in political terms, Merleau-Ponty's assertion can be read as

[25] Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, p. 13. Commenting on this often cited fragment, Lehmann emphasises the non-verbal in Artaud's vision: "One does not have to take on the tragic overtones of this image in order to gain an idea decisive for the new theatre; namely, that of a signaling shooting up and crystallizing from reactive vocal, physical and visceral gestures." Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, p. 38.

[26] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, p. 166.

[27] Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, p. 76.

[28] Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, p. 31.

[29] Claire Wallace, *Suspect Cultures: Narrative, Identity and Citation in 1990s New Drama* (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2006), pp. 20–21.

[30] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, p. 162.

[31] Loren Kruger, "Making Sense of Sensation: Enlightenment, Embodiment, and the End(s) of Modern Drama," *Modern Drama*, 43 (2000), p. 545.

[32] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 9, quoted in: Kruger, "Making Sense of Sensation," p. 551.

a strong impulse to theorise experiential theatrical performances, which can consequently fend them against the risk of fetishisation or commodification.[33] The impulse finds resonance in such phenomenological studies of the theatrical body as that proposed by Stanton B. Garner, who sees "the body as a political unit, as a crucial element in the contest of subjectivity and subjection."[34] Taking on this optics, the body can no longer be considered a mere carrier of a character voicing political ideas, but rather a "site of political intervention."[35] This refashioning of the body in theatre reverberates with the lesson of Michel Foucault, who devoted much attention to studying the body and its direct connection with different systems of power and domination.[36] What is pertinent here is Foucault's insistence that subjection of individuals to power mechanisms – inherent to any forms of civilised forms of social organization – is upheld not by a grand scheme of the ruling class, but by participation in bodily practices continually rehearsed, performed and re-staged. Therefore, the glossed over philosophical causes of the proclivity on part of in-yer-face playwrights to incorporate violent images of bodily mutilation into their aesthetics have been identified here as closely related to a certain waning of the political (or the erosion of antagonism). This conclusion accords with the well-informed analysis of Rebellato, in which he concludes that violence in in-yer-face plays offer "a kind of socialist analysis […] that operates at the level of feeling and metaphor."[37]

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[33] Kruger, "Making Sense of Sensation," pp. 551–552.

[34] Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 160, quoted in: Vicky Angelaki, "Ethics Takes Centre Stage: Issues and Representation for Today's Political Theater" in *Ethical Encounter: Boundries of Theatre, Performance and Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe and Daniel Watt (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), p. 205.

[35] Garner, *Bodied Spaces*, p. 160.

[36] In one of his most succinct fragments concerning the body, Foucault argues that "[the body] is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labor power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated, and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against force, bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence; it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order. Michel Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 173.

[37] Dan Rebellato, "'Because it Feels Fucking Amazing': Recent British Drama and Bodily Mutilation," in *Cool Britannia? British Political Drama in the 1990s*, eds. Rebecca D'Monté and Graham Saunders (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 202.

That said, the historical and socio-political context of the emergence of inyer-face theatre only fostered its shared belief in the capacity of theatre to explore and, inevitably, expose what Lehmann succinctly called "the broken thread between personal experience and perception."[38] However, a better understanding of this exposition can be achieved by referring to notions of psychoanalysis and their relevance to studying the artefacts of culture. And it is psychoanalysis that gives Foucault's analyses of the body an interesting twist by expanding on the notion of masochism or, in other words, on how the pain of subjection is bound up with pleasure.

The term masochism, as problematic as it is versatile, can be understood as a felicitous metaphor or a convergent lens that brings together issues of not only psychoanalysis, but also philosophy, representation and politics. In his early works, Sigmund Freud explains that perversions derive from the functioning of the aggressive drive and thus defines masochism as "sadism turned round upon the subject's own self."[39] In sadism, the subject takes pleasure in rejecting the ego and overinvesting in the superego, which results in locating guilt in external objects of the drive. In masochism, still in its early Freudian variant, satisfaction is vicarious, as the subject "identifies with the [pleasure of the] sadist in the act."[40] Insofar as in "A Child is Being Beaten" Freud identifies the Father as the sadist in the masochist phantasy, the figure of the father is endowed with two functions: he guarantees enjoyment and occupies the place of *jouissance*.[41] Therefore, whenever the subject tries to retain the forever renounced *jouissance*, that is whenever she tries to go beyond the pleasure principle, there is a minimal distance at her disposal that allows her not to internalize paternal Law – and hence merely appease the aggressive superego by following an already written scenario or contract between the masochist and his master – but rather to employ what Slavoj Žižek calls the "masochistic deception."[42]

The Slovenian philosopher situates this deception at the centre of the fundamental fantasy of subject formation. By staging one's passive submission, or by becoming the object of the invocatory drive, the masochist internalizes not a scenario or contract of submission already established within

[38] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, p. 186.

[39] Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (London, New York: W.W. Noron & Company, 1989), p. 252.

[40] Robert A. Glick and Donald I. Meyers, introduction to *Masochism: Current Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, ed. Robert A. Glick and Donald I. Meyers (Hillsdale: The Analytic Press, 1988), p. 5.

[41] Eric Laurent, "Feminine Positions of Being," in *The Later Lacan. An Introduction*, eds. Véronique Voruz and Bogdan Wolf (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 237.

[42] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 279–290.

the symbolic order,[43] but passivity itself, which in turn thwarts the external agency in "an outburst of fantasizing."[44] There lies the subversive or liberating power of masochism, claims Žižek, but in order for it to be operative, it has to risk its own staging and appropriation. In an informative fragment of "The Ambiguity of the Masochist Social Link," Žižek expands on the performative stage of masochism: "Sadism involves a relationship of domination, while masochism is the necessary first step towards liberation. When we are subjected to a power mechanism, this subjection is always and by definition sustained by some libidinal investment: the subjection itself generates a surplus of enjoyment of its own. This subjection is embodied in a network of 'material' bodily practices, and, for this reason, we cannot get rid of our subjection through a merely intellectual reflection – our liberation has to be staged in some kind of bodily performance, and, furthermore, this performance *has* to be of an apparently 'masochistic' nature, it *has* to stage the painful process of hitting back at oneself."[45] However, Žižek hastens to add that the ambiguity of masochism resides in the fact that its efficiency is always contingent on what supplants them and defines them retroactively.

Ravenhill seems to recognize Žižek's political hopes in a redemptive masochist act. What he does expose, however, is the thwarted masochism of disconnected individuals at the stage of the Western civilisation where – to quote the character of God singing at the end of act one of *Mother Clap's Molly House* – "profit reigns supreme."[46] The liberating potential of masochism hardly ever surfaces in his plays. In *Faust is Dead* Pete accompanies Alain, a hybrid of French philosophers *à la* Foucault and Jean Baudrillard, in a journey across America. The journey could be summarised by a series of events or images: forced sex, drugs, the suicide of Donny, a masochist whom they meet on the Internet, and finally Alain's own death.[47] Donny's subjection to pain is epitomised by him saying "you take the pain, you get the gain."[48]

[43] Arguing with Judith Butler about "subversive bodily acts," Žižek elaborates that: "On the one hand she [Butler] overestimates the subversive potential of disturbing the functioning of the big Other through the practices of performative reconfiguration/displacement: such practices ultimately support what they intend to subvert, since the very field of such 'transgressions' is already taken into account, even engendered, by the hegemonic form of the big Other – *what Lacan calls 'the big Other' are symbolic norms and their codified transgressions*" [emphasis mine]. Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 264.

[44] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 283.

[45] Slavoj Žižek, "The Ambiguity of the Masochist Social Link," in *Perversion and the Social Relation*, eds. Molly Anne Rothenberg, Dennis Foster, and Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 118.

[46] Ravenhill, *Mother Clap's Molly House*, p. 56.

[47] Mark Ravenhill, *Faust is Dead*, in *Plays: 1* (New York: Methuen Drama, 2001), pp. 93–140.

[48] Ravenhill, *Faust is Dead*, p. 123.

When he first shows his mutilated body to Pete and Alain via the Internet, before they meet him in person, Alain parodies the postmodern jargon by admiring the hyperreal image of Donny: "Alain: He scars himself. He submits to a moment of intense… to a tribal agony. He creates his art. A testament of suffering upon the body […] A moment of power, of control over the self as he draws the blade through the body […] An initiation rite for the end of the twentieth century."[49] Then they decide to meet Donny, who is eager to prove that his cuts are "for real." What ensues during their encounter is a competition between Pete and Donny as to who cuts more beautifully. Pete cuts across his chest and feels "Pure. Clear. True."[50] Less fortunately, Donny cuts his jugular and collapses. This masochist spectacle and, ultimately, suicidal act produces no liberating force whatsoever. After the scene, we learn from the Chorus that Donny had spread the news about his "real experience," which immediately turned into the subject of every talk show and even a song "performed unplugged on MTV."[51] This is one of the most shocking among the play's demonstrations of how potentially liberating acts turn into media spectacles and marketable commodity. Therefore, Donny's hitting back at himself was a masochist act carried out in accordance with the formerly prepared course of action. In other words, Ravenhill thwarts the liberating force of masochism by presenting it as an "inherent transgression" or in other words as a "minimum of disidentification" that only allows power to reproduce.[52] The disintegration of the social body, combined with the crisis of fatherhood, produces "the need for violence in the Real of the body itself."[53] This problem is alluded to in *The Cut* (2006), a three-scene play about a family living in a society at a time of change, a society of waning oppression. In scene one, we learn that authority distributes power, divides or punishes its citizens by means of a surgery-like practice enigmatically referred to as the cut. Paul, representing the authorities, is called on by John, a perverse character applying for the cut. It turns out that Paul becomes hysteric after recognizing John's willingness to submit himself to the cut: "John: […] normally I see fear, anger […] but you're keen."[54] John replies that the cut means freedom for him, yet it is specifically freedom from "this body […] this history and this wanting and this busyness and this schooling and these, these ties."[55] Here the urge to dispose of all the symbolic anchorage by an individual, to hit back at himself, is an urge for a liberating passage to a void or nothingness

[49] Ravenhill, *Faust is Dead*, p. 124.
[50] Ravenhill, *Faust is Dead*, p. 131.
[51] Ravenhill, *Faust is Dead*, p. 135.
[52] See footnote 41.
[53] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 369.
[54] Mark Ravenhill, *The Cut*, in *Plays: 2* (London: Methuen Drama, 2008), p. 191.
[55] Ravenhill, *The Cut*, p. 192.

where "darkness is light."[56] The painful masochist act, which John is ready to submit to at the hands of the authorities, is represented here as liberation from sense into sensation. In scene three, we learn that there was a revolution which disposed of the cut or, in other words, erased the symbolic "theatre of cruelty" managed by the authorities, and what ensued has been a world of permanent light – a dystopian world with Orwellian connotations. In both plays, the masochist social link offers little, if any, hope for constructing political subjects capable of "joining up the stories that constitute a bigger picture."[57] Therefore, the representations of masochism are turned into a meaningless spectacle (*Faust is Dead*) or a dystopia (*The Cut*). Ravenhill tries to suggest that without such big pictures individual violence becomes meaningless. The political viability of the plays consists in a double gesture: the exposure of the meaningless and the Artaudian means of representing the masochistic spectacles. The phenomenological perspective evidences that in-yer-face theatre draws on the politics of performance or, in other words, rehabilitates the theatre's "politics of perception."[58]

It seems Ravenhill does not pin his hopes to any scenario of emancipation that would heal the miserable, political realities he represents. The fears and anxieties present in representations of masochism that plague the in-yer-face aesthetics and Ravenhill's plays can be read as attempts of rethinking political drama and theatre. The ethical and political considerations of theatre, as Angelaki rightly observers, the theatre has to resort to employing engaging and innovative techniques in negotiating its effects with the audiences.[59] To read in-yer-face as apolitical theatre is to overlook the constitutive element of political theatre – the possibility of change.

[56] Ravenhill, *The Cut*, p. 197.
[57] Wallace, *Suspect Cultures*, p. 127.
[58] Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, pp. 184–187.
[59] Angelaki, "Ethics Takes Centre Stage," p. 206.

Robert Kielawski

Masochizm, cierpiące ciała i polityka w dramatach Marka Ravenhilla

Streszczenie

Artykuł poddaje analizie masochistyczne akty w dwóch dramatach Marka Ravenhilla (*Faust is Dead* i *The Cut*), opierając się na wybranych pojęciach psychoanalitycznych i fenomenologicznych. Zwracając uwagę na związek estetyki teatru *in-yer-face* z antyhumanizmem Antonina Artauda i Sigmunda Freuda, autor wiąże krytyczny wymiar dramatów Ravenhilla z radykalnym ograniczeniem możliwości zaangażowania (politycznego) ich

postaci do aktów samookaleczania się. Cierpiące ciała postaci stają się więc ich jedynym wiarygodnym medium komunikowania (nie zawsze uświadomionego) oburzenia na porządek społeczno-polityczny. Jednak dopiero uzupełniona psychoanalizą przefiltrowaną przez polityczne idee Slavoja Žižka oraz Chantal Mouffe interpretacja masochizmu przedstawia dramaty Ravenhilla jako głosy rozpaczy związane z dewaluacją zaangażowania w ogóle.

Robert Kielawski

Masochismus, leidende Körper und Politik in Mark Ravenhills Dramen

Zusammenfassung

In Anlehnung an manche Probleme der Psychoanalyse und Phänomenologie analysiert der Verfasser die in zwei Dramen von Mark Ravenhill auftretenden masochistischen Akte. Auf den Zusammenhang zwischen der Ästhetik des *in-yer-face* Theaters und dem Antihumanismus von Antonin Artaud und Sigismund Freud hinweisend bringt der Verfasser den kritischen Ausmaß Ravenhills Dramen mit der radikalen Beschränkung des (politischen) Engagements der Figuren auf Selbstverstümmelungsakten in Verbindung. Leidende Körper von den Figuren werden also zum einzigen glaubhaften (obwohl nicht immer bewussten) Medium, um der Empörung über die gesellschaftspolitische Ordnung Ausdruck zu geben. Man muss aber die Deutung des Masochismus mit Psychoanalyse ergänzen und politische Ideen von Slavoj Žižek und Chantal Mouffe in Rücksicht nehmen, damit die Ravenhills Dramen als Stimme der Verzweiflung wegen des an Bedeutung verlierenden Engagements verstanden werden können.

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What Else Is Civilization For? Narration Overcoming Fear and Trauma in Graham Swift

Graham Swift's fairly slim body of work (eight novels and a collection of short stories) displays striking thematic consistence. Motifs of loss and crisis appear in each of his oeuvres, and most of them are narratives of people attempting to come to terms with traumatising experience. Fragmented and repetitive, the structure of Swift's texts represents the characters' sense of alienation from the world and entrapment in traumatic temporality which refuses linear development. At the same time, for many of Swift's scarred protagonists, great and personal narratives are a method of dealing with the trauma of experience and the overwhelming meaninglessness of unmediated reality. Faced with its ever elusive nature, most of Swiftian narrators learn that their efforts at overcoming fear can only be temporary and tentative. While mourning the impossibility of regaining original wholeness, Swift's novels celebrate the contingency of the human condition and question the value of absolutist narratives aiming at eradicating the uncertainty of their subjects.

The inaccessibility of the factor motivating obsessive repetition in individuals affected by trauma as well as their sense of separation from their own experience or presence in the world implies an analogy with the traumatic experience of entry into the symbolic realm, also organised by a gap between the individual and the object of his or her desire. Stephen Ross notes that trauma provokes repetition which "effectively symbolises the traumatic kernel that organises his or her symptoms without ever approaching the truth of the motivating traumatic episode" and notes the analogy of this symbolisation with the way in which the symbolic order employs "alternative signifiers as provisional substitutive compensations for the irremediable lack created in

its radical reorganisation of the world."[1] For most of Swift's narrators, the order imposed on reality by the use of the symbolic structures of language is indeed provisional. The aim of this article is to compare the way in which Swift approaches the contingency of the consolation offered by storytelling in his two early novels, *Shuttlecock* (1982) and *Waterland* (1983). The choice is motivated by the uniqueness of the position of Prentis, the narrator of the former novel, who, unlike other tormented voices of Swift's fiction, is apparently quite successful in overcoming his sense of frustration and detachment from his idealised image of the natural world and who furthermore claims to have abandoned without regret his initial desire for complete knowledge. Several critics convincingly question the credibility of the narrator and his achievement, contrasting him with the more mature figure of Tom Crick in the latter work. While Prentis assumes absolute control of the final section of his account, suggesting the reader should take its reliability for granted, Crick remains persistently hesitant, reluctantly but inevitably abandoning the comforting illusions of all-encompassing narratives.

Tamas Benyei in his article "The Novels of Graham Swift: Family Photos," specifies as one of the central themes in Swift's prose "the essential rupture between ordinary individual experience and what is referred to as history [which] is a privileged example of [...] the more general rupture between the individual psyche and experience in general."[2] The wounding character of this rupture invites a link with the notion of trauma as elaborated by Cathy Carruth on the basis of Freud's "The Pleasure Principle," which she describes as follows: "the wound of the mind [...] is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that [...] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor."[3]

In discussing the traumatic temporality experienced by the characters of Swift's first novel, *The Sweet-Shop Owner* (1980), Benyei notes how the "essentially wounded, dislocated nature of the time of the family" is represented in the narrative structure by interruptions of the protagonist's internal mono-

[1] Stephen Ross, "A Very Brief Introduction to Lacan," last modified February 6, 2002, http://web.uvic.ca/~saross/lacan.html.

[2] Tamas Benyei, "The Novels of Graham Swift. Family Photos," in *Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. Richard J. Lane, Rod Mengham and Philip Tew (Oxford: Polity, 2003), p. 42.

[3] Cathy Carruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996). Quoted in Richard Russell, "Embodiments of History and Delayed Confessions: Graham Swift's *Waterland* as Trauma Fiction," *Papers on Language & Literature* 45 (2009), accessed August 28, 2010, http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5031566878.

logue.[4] Similar stylistic devices, including disturbances of chronology, reappear throughout most other novels of the author. Richard Russell offers the example of the digressive narrative style of *Waterland* as illustrating the difficulty of coming to terms with trauma through its interweaving of personal experience with historical events both local and global, shifting between times and perspectives, or employing a variety of genres to indicate the difficulty of the task of imposing order on its material. Indeed, Russell classifies *Waterland* as "a trauma fiction" and quotes the dilemma posed by the author of the term, Anne Whitehead: "if trauma comprises an event or experience which overwhelms the individual and resists language or representation, how then can it be narrativised in fiction?" The suggested solution is "that the impact of trauma can only adequately be represented by mimicking its forms and symptoms, so that temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterized by repetition and indirection."[5] However, the collapse of the narrative and chronology is perhaps most explicitly represented in "allegorical figure[s] of silence," which Benyei points out as one extreme of linguistic responses to trauma in Swift, whose "every novel contains [...] a catatonic character [...] living in a home and embodying some mystifying secret that another character is obsessively trying to excavate [...] also embodying the element beyond language that all the novels contain within themselves like a secret centre."[6] Among examples are characters of Prentis Senior in *Shuttlecock*, who is literally in a state of a "language coma," refusing any form of explanation that his son fervently desires or the wife of *Waterland*'s narrator, Mary Crick, whose madness is displayed precisely in her inability to tell the trauma of her life. An experience of a crude abortion in her adolescence, repressed for a long time, finally disturbs the normal mental process of memory in a manner symptomatic for other trauma victims in Swift's prose: "First there is nothing; then there is happening; a state of emergency. And after the happening, only the telling of it. But sometimes the happening won't stop and let itself be turned into memory. So she's still in the midst of events... which have not ceased. Which is why it's impossible to get through. Which is why she cannot cross into the safe, sane realm of hindsight and answer the questions of the white-coated doctors: 'Now tell us, Mrs Crick, you can tell us everything, you can tell...'"[7]

One character who is liberated from traumatic memory is Mary's father in law, Henry Crick, a shell-shocked soldier who comes back from WWI as "a hospital case [who] limps and blinks and falls flat on his face at sudden

[4] Benyei, "Family Photos," pp. 45–46.

[5] Quoted in Russell, "Embodiments of History," http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5031566878.

[6] Benyei, "Family Photos," pp. 52–53.

[7] Graham Swift, *Waterland* (London: Picador, 1984), p. 284.

noises." He also finds himself helpless in the face of the atrocities he witnessed and unable to process them, turn them into a narrative: "For a long time he finds it hard to separate in his mind the familiar-but-foreign fields of the Fens and the foreign-but-familiar mudscapes he has come from … He thinks: there is only reality, there are no stories left. About his war experience he says: 'I remember nothing.'"[8] However, thanks to a "story-book romance"[9] with his nurse, he "learns, also, to tell those stories of old Flanders… which will lead on to other stories, till the pain, save for sporadic twinges in the knee, is almost gone."[10] It is Helen's story-telling which is used to reintroduce Henry into language and work through the traumatic event enabling him to overcome "the paradoxical temporality of the trauma,"[11] in which the momentous past event continues to be repeated endlessly in the victim's mind. An absence of meaning is at the centre of the repetition, since Henry is not actually haunted by the horrifying details of his experience; instead "it's oblivion he'd like to forget, it's that sense of the dizzy void he can't get away from."[12] In this, his trauma is reminiscent of Bruce Fink's presentation of "[t]he unframed real – the reality […] devoid of categories, not located in any symbolic context [which] resists … location or contextualization." Treating trauma therefore means, in Fink's terms, that language "has to be brought in ex post facto" in order to "speak those events, weave them into a fabric of meaning, and thus diffuse their impact." In *Waterland*, this is the task of Helen, who recognises the need to provide her patients precisely with "the symbolic or linguistic parameters in which the experience fits."[13] Her strategy is arguably opposite to that of Prentis, when she tells the traumatised soldiers: "No, don't forget. Don't erase it. You can't erase it. But make it into a story."[14] The therapeutic value of narrativisation allows a domestication of the inexpressible experience without denying its irreducibly traumatic character.

The other kind of response to trauma is represented by the narrators obsessing over the extralinguistic mystery, whose "loquacious, meandering, self-conscious, highly rhetorical and profoundly symptomatic filibustering"[15] constitutes an attempt to restore order in reality through language. Tom Crick, arguably the most representative of these figures, "knows about the efficacy of storytelling from his parents – his father, Henry, who descends from

[8] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 17.
[9] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 130.
[10] Swift, *Waterland*, pp. 194–195.
[11] Benyei, "Family Photos," p. 48.
[12] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 193.
[13] Bruce Fink, *Lacan to the Letter. Reading Ecrits Closely* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), pp. 171–172.
[14] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 194.
[15] Benyei, "Family Photos," p. 53.

a long line of storytellers, and his mother, Helen, whose work with veterans of the Great War teaches her that stories are 'a way of bearing what won't go away, a way of making sense of madness.'"[16] Tellingly, the narrator of *Shuttlecock* does not fit into either of these modes, since he "sings the virtues of suppressing traumatic knowledge, to dissolve – rather than to solve – the problems diagnosed by the earlier novel. The validity of this distinction is borne out by Swift's later work, starting with *Waterland*, which reveals all attempts to exorcize the problem of trauma to be doomed to backfire and takes up the search for alternative, more fruitful ways of dealing with the issue."[17] Since Prentis ends his narrative more or less at the point when the suppression takes place, he is able to insist on its completeness. However, as some critics have pointed out, the ethics as well as the effectiveness of the move are questionable.

Prentis's initial situation is that of frustration and alienation. Overwhelmed by two paternal figures – his own, idealised father, a WWII hero and a domineering, manipulative boss, a supervisor of the dead crimes division of the London police – Prentis admits being a weak man who vents his frustration by terrorizing his wife and two young sons and who is not really able to communicate with them. The narrator's sense that he lacks influence over his circumstances is evident in his relations with Prentis senior and Quinn, both of whom frustrate his desire for knowledge of his father's past. The father himself has fallen into a quasi-catatonic state, denying all possibility of communication, while Quinn deliberately hides information from Prentis and hinders his attempts at discovering the truth of cases he is working on. Prentis's increasing suspicion about his father's heroic past is fuelled by Quinn's implying the existence of evidence for Prentis senior's treason. In absence of a direct source of information, Prentis is forced to resort to rereading obsessively his father's autobiography and struggling to draw conclusions from incomplete materials submitted to him by Quinn.

The father's autobiography, whose title, identical with that of Swift's novel, invites comparisons with the son's narrative, also sets a model for the protagonist's desire to be reunited with nature. Stef Craps notes that Prentis senior, in the crucial moments of his narrative, "assumes positively 'Wordsworthian' overtones in [his] invocation of nature as a benign force responsive to man's needs and desires" and claims that in his description the "escape from the Château becomes an attempt to re-establish the harmonious relationship with nature which the war is seen to have disrupted."[18] Significantly, the narrator

[16] Irene Kacandes, *Talk Fiction* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 110.

[17] Stef Craps, *Trauma and Ethics in the Novels of Graham Swift: No Short-Cuts to Salvation* (Brighton, Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), p. 61.

[18] Craps, *Trauma and Ethics*, p. 62.

explicitly admits the conventionality of his observations: "Since then I have come to believe – a blatant case of the pathetic fallacy, no doubt – that woods and the trees are always on the side of the fugitive and the victim, never on the side of the oppressor."[19] His son, however, appears to decide finally to take them at face value. In the shortest chapter of the novel,[20] he asks his wife: "'Marian', I say (she is still talking to her plants), 'do you believe in the pathetic fallacy? That it's really a fallacy, I mean?'"[21] The subsequent account of an idyllic trip with his family to a beach and anthropomorphic descriptions of the landscape imply his own answer to the question. Stef Craps points out that Prentis "uses the Camber Sands episode to impose closure on his story," and that his narrative apparently overlooks the vague status of the unstable area between land and sea, constantly threatened by the incoming tide as well as "relics of the war that still littered the region."[22] The pathetic fallacy is employed as a valid method of conclusively overcoming the uncomfortable contingency of human existence, even while the narrator himself hints at the limitations of the strategy.

As a result of a showdown with Quinn, Prentis arrives at a similar decision concerning his approach to traumatic past. Even before he receives suggestions of any incriminating evidence, he begins to doubt his father's self-portrayal: while the descriptions of his work as a spy are detailed and factual, it is not so with "the goings on in that interrogation room, and other, sinister rooms [about which] Dad is silent, or circumspect."[23] Considering possible explanations of this vagueness, Prentis decides that it is not the result of amnesia but rather a traumatic memory, "not in the least impaired, still vivid-sharp, but the memory of something so terrible that it cannot be repeated, cannot be spoken or written of." While attempting "to discover [...] some inkling of this experience beyond words,"[24] Prentis further becomes increasingly suspicious of his impression that "[t]hese pages are more vivid, more real, more believable than any other part of the book."[25] In her discussion of conventions of realism as "talking over" and at the same time disclosing the trauma of the real, Lena Magnone observes that "[r]ealism can not really be said to mirror reality but rather the drama of our separation from it,"[26] arguing that the exaggerated representation of the world in realist

[19] Graham Swift, *Shuttlecock* (London: Picador, 1997), p. 164.
[20] Quoted here in its entirety.
[21] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, p. 215.
[22] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, p. 216.
[23] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, p. 105.
[24] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, p. 106.
[25] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, pp. 106–107.
[26] Lena Magnone, "Traumatyczny realizm," in *Rewolucja pod spodem*, ed. Przemysław Czapliński (Poznań: Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne, 2008), p. 25. My translation.

literature proves "more real than reality" and is suspicious precisely because of its excessive fidelity to detail.[27] Prentis's doubts about his father's text are supported by a suggestion of Quinn, who speculates that the book may quite literally serve as a cover for an absence of heroic past: "He starts to see the publication of his memoirs […] as a means rebutting once and for all the possibility of exposure, of presenting the hero-image in such a complete and thorough way that no one will dare challenge it." In an argument not dissimilar from Magnone's, Quinn implies that this is why the final chapters have to be more convincing than any other part of the book; after all "that's where all the urgency is. It's here that he's trying to save himself. Why does it read like a real escape? Because it is an escape, a quite real escape, of a kind."[28] The ostentatious realism of this section may therefore be seen as grounded in its function, which is to hide from the reader the inexpressible traumatic core motivating the whole narrative. By accepting Quinn's offer to burn the file possibly containing the details of his father's betrayal and consequently replacing Quinn in the role of "a disseminator and destroyer of information, a dictator of fact,"[29] Prentis performs his own escape, in turn inviting the reader's distrust of his account. However, he also dismisses it immediately before his final reflection on pathetic fallacy: "Once you have read [this book], it may be better not to peer too hard beneath the surface of what it says – or […] what it doesn't say."[30]

Craps notes that with its final chapter *Shuttlecock* inscribes itself in the convention of Bildungsroman, which requires the hero to achieve a state of harmony and maturity, "described by [Franco] Moretti in terms which call to mind the device of the pathetic fallacy and the fusion with nature to which it aspires: 'Ultimate symbolic gratification: the world speaks our language.'"[31] For Prentis, the invocation of Romantic vocabulary is a means to legitimise his claims of finally fulfilling social expectations and living up to the standards set by the idealised figure of his father. His approach, however, is questionable even in the light of its aforementioned "Wordsworthian overtones." As Elizabeth Wright argues, following Friedrich Schiller's distinction between naïve and sentimental poetry, where the former is characterised by "what he saw as unselfconscious, unmediated relation to nature in which the real and the ideal are, at least momentarily at one" while the latter by "a self-conscious distanced one in which the poet is aware of his (symbolic) alienation," Wordsworth's tendency for mourning his losses through poetry

[27] Magnone, "Traumatyczny realizm," p. 26.

[28] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, p. 187.

[29] Patrick O'Donnell, "Masterplots II: *Shuttlecock*," *The Salem Press* (January 1 1987). Quoted in Craps, *Trauma and Ethics*, p. 58.

[30] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, p. 214.

[31] Craps, *Trauma and Ethics*, p. 55.

makes him a "sentimental" poet, prepared to acknowledge the limits of his power over his linguistic medium as well as those of the medium itself.[32] The speaking voice of Wordsworth's poetry is thus arguably far more willing to embrace the tension between the attempts to symbolise experience and what resists symbolisation than Prentis, whose wish for "erasure or denial of a traumatic reality documented by the records of the dead crimes department"[33] clearly undermines the ethical validity of *Shuttlecock*'s denouement. Donald Kaczvinsky openly challenges the maturation of the protagonist: "He has not 'progressed' into a more humane and sympathetic character […] but 'created' or 'invented' a self, through a textual strategy that at the same time broadens and secures his power base."[34] In Wright's psychoanalytical terms, the narrator of *Shuttlecock* encloses himself in a fantasy of imaginary plenitude, which serves "to hide from the subject both the subject's own inadequacy within the symbolic and the symbolic's inadequacy in mapping the subject and the world."[35] Much like an infant in Lacan's mirror stage, experiencing a sense of mastery over its own unified image, Prentis ignores the precariousness of his self-image and concludes his narrative with an enforced vision of illusory completion.

While *Shuttlecock* only begins to question the validity of its protagonist's narrative strategy, Swift's next novel takes a much more definite stand on the limitations of symbolic constructs. In *Waterland*, violent overriding of reality through narration such as Prentis's would be impossible since here the symbolic order is shown as repeatedly disturbed by what the narrator calls the "attacks of the Here and Now."[36] Tom Crick's understanding of trauma is exemplified in his justification of his family's tendency to resort to story-telling as a means of overcoming a sense of fear and powerlessness. He defines the source of the threat as "[receiving] strong doses of reality. The great, flat monotony of reality; the wide, empty space of reality. […] How do you surmount reality, children? […] How did the Cricks outwit reality? By telling stories."[37] Indeed, the properties and the effects of the Fenland landscape are markedly similar to those ascribed by Slavoj Žižek to "the Real in its most terrifying imaginary dimension, as the primordial abyss that swallows everything, dissolving all identities."[38] For the Cricks, faced with the

[32] Elizabeth Wright, *Speaking Desires Can Be Dangerous* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 74–75.

[33] Craps, *Trauma and Ethics*, p. 66.

[34] Donald Kaczvinsky, "'For One Thing, There are the Gaps': History in Graham Swift's *Shuttlecock*," *Critique*, 40 (1998), p. 12.

[35] Wright, *Speaking Desires*, p. 5.

[36] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 52.

[37] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 15.

[38] Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), p. 64.

meaninglessness of the (heavily) unmediated reality of the Fenlands, covering the traumatising emptiness is part of the effort of sustaining civilisation, "a struggle to preserve an artifice. It's all a struggle to make things not seem meaningless. It's all a fight against fear."[39] However, Crick's attacks of reality may take more active forms, akin to the aspect of "the real [which] actively solicits the attention of the individual, often through an aggressive insistence on its materiality, making itself felt through the very impermeable border which prevents access to it." Malcolm Bowie uses examples of everyday events that "disrupt the imaginary and symbolic constructs within which we live" to illustrate Lacan's notion of irruptions of the real as a disturbance of order imposed on constructed reality. In his discussion of Bowie's text, Stephen Ross points to two functions of this aspect of the real: "first, it demonstrates the persistent element of contingency and outright danger that lurks in the failure of these ordering practices to be exhaustive and comprehensive [...] second, it manifests to the passer-by in a very immediate way the real of his own mortality – it insists on the contingency of human life, however well ordered it may appear."[40] For Tom Crick the traumatic experience is a series of tragic events from his youth and their present consequences – his wife's mental illness with its background of an abortion performed in their adolescence, the murder of Crick's friend by his jealous half-brother who is made to believe that the friend was the child's father and finally the brother's suicide provoked by the realisation that he himself is the result of an incestuous relationship. The real in *Waterland* may take the form of history sending people to wars, the scandal of Mary Crick kidnapping a baby, the dead body of Freddie Parr, the constant instability of the constantly drained Fenlands or the young protagonists' discovery of sexuality. Moreover, since "the sudden hallucinations of events" constitute only an exception to the predominant emptiness of reality, Tom Crick finds narratives, both personal and public, to be "the fabrication, the diversion, the reality-obscuring drama" in their "longing for presence, for feature, for purpose, for content."[41] Crick's need for explaining "the mess [he] was in" lies at the roots of his study of history and leads him to assert that even if no unambiguous explanations are arrived at through narrativising human experience, the consolation of a substitute is a value in itself: "And can I deny that what I wanted all along was not some golden nugget that history would at last yield up, but History itself, the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums, the dispeller of fears of the dark?"[42] However, unlike Prentis, Crick is painfully aware of the dangers of believing the illusion of completeness offered by

[39] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 208.
[40] Ross, *Introduction to Lacan*.
[41] Swift, *Waterland*, pp. 34–35.
[42] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 53.

human endeavours to make the contingency of reality fit the frames of narratives.

The trauma of the events from Crick's youth destroys the idyllic sense of completeness for him and marks the ending of "prehistorical, pubescent times, when we drifted instinctively without the need for prior arrangement, to our meeting place."[43] In the context of this transition, George Landow recalls Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and its Romantic convention of the narrator's imaginary return "to the landscape of thoughtless youth, [in which] he concerns himself with the losses of innocence and with the corollary fall into time, self-consciousness, and social existence." Landow stresses a significant alteration in the convention, suitable for a postmodernist text: "unlike 'Tintern Abbey,' *Waterland* bravely refuses to find solace in some Romantic revision of Milton's Fortunate Fall." It might be noted that the distinction also applies to the approach taken by Prentis, who embraces the Romantic position without reservations. The loss of the pre-pubescent sense of wholeness and unity with the world also invites a parallel with the transition from the imaginary to the symbolic order which Prentis's narrative refuses to make. While the former insists on the possibility of recovering a sense of unified, stable selfhood mastering its surroundings through narration, Crick stresses the contingency of human efforts at organising reality, presenting them as "fictional analogues of the land reclamation whose presence dominates the novel. Provisional, essential, limited as they may be, telling stories can never adequately control reality or nature or what's out there or what Tom calls the Here and Now."[44]

Awareness of this condition is precisely what does not allow Crick for a "cop-out from the problem of coming to terms with life in a disenchanted world"[45] like the one performed by Prentis. The narrator of *Waterland* discovers the limitations of symbolisation early on, when he eagerly accepts the official cause of Freddie Parr's death (accidental drowning) as erasing the trauma of knowledge that it was a murder to which he indirectly pushed his brother. His girlfriend's blatant refusal to pretend ignorance leaves him disappointed, but aware that "he was still in the same mess, after all – just as he was thinking that a neat phrase had hauled him out. Just as he was succumbing to the illusion that everything was all right, like it was before."[46] Numerous examples which he encounters in his later work as a historian, closely entwined with his interpretations of his own life, consolidate his conviction: "Negating

[43] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 44.

[44] George Landow, "History, His Story, and Stories in Graham Swift's *Waterland*," *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, vol. 23 (1990), pp. 197–211, accessed July 6, 2010, http://www.postcolonialweb.org/uk/gswift/wl/gplstories.html

[45] Craps, *Trauma and Ethics*, p. 45.

[46] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 115.

the radically disorienting impact of trauma, typically through the pursuit of an illusory ideal of wholeness or completion, is shown to have catastrophic personal and political consequences."[47]

The final scene of the novel, the suicide of Tom's mentally handicapped half-brother Dick, conceived by his grandfather with his own daughter to become the saviour of the world, serves well to illustrate the renunciation of the dangerous belief in completeness of explanations effectively masking the traumatic nature of experience. Tamas Benyei describes the scene as an "eschatological event emptied of its true eschatological content and its power to redeem historical existence. The end provides no vantage point for Crick; rather, it is a moment that makes Crick's life (and therefore history) futureless, devoid of meaning, and thus causes a compulsion in Crick to repeat and re-tell the story endlessly. Instead of conferring unity and coherence on the story, this end makes it disjunctive."[48]

Dick himself proves to be the navel of Tom's dream, unable to process or become part of the events he provokes, remaining outside the narrative he set in motion: "He's as fixed as that pike on the wall. He's made things happen. Things have happened because of him. He can't understand. He's stuck in the past."[49] Instead of becoming a saviour of the world, providing a conclusive explanation of human history, a sign of complete knowledge and redemption from fear, Dick refuses signification altogether. He is finally linked with the ineffable forces of nature when he dives into the Ouse "[in] a long, reaching, powerful arc … sufficiently reaching and powerful for us to observe his body, in its flight through the air, form a single, taut and seemingly limbless continuum, so that an expert on diving might have judged that here indeed was a natural, here indeed was a fish of a man."[50] Although the naturalising effect of this description might be seen as an attempt at "covering over" the inexpressible trauma of reality, Crick has to be credited for recognising this in the apology he makes to his brother for the inadequacy of the "succinct fabrication" of his – and indeed any – narrative.[51]

Graham Swift's reworking of the theme of overcoming fear and trauma through narration presents a variety of approaches tending towards a quite consistent emphasis of both the significance and the limitations of the process. Telling stories of their experience allows Swift's characters to organise the chaos of traumatic events of their lives but never from "some privileged outside

[47] Craps, *Trauma and Ethics*, p. 3.

[48] Tamas Benyei, "Narrative and Repetition in *Waterland*," *British and American Studies* 1.1 (1996), p. 115. Quoted in Russell, "Embodiments of History," http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5031566878

[49] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 275.

[50] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 309.

[51] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 304.

point"[52] which would enable them to see the world as a whole. Instead of offering the enlightenment that Prentis claims to have achieved, story-telling in most of Swift's novels performs a function analogous to that assigned by Tom Crick to reclamation of land (in itself an analogy of progress): "Which is repeatedly, never-endingly retrieving what is lost. A dogged and vigilant business. A dull yet valuable business. A hard, inglorious business." Much as reclamation of land is not to be mistaken "for the building of empires,"[53] the consolation of symbolic constructs, while seen by Swift as the only available defence against fear, by no means allows liberation from the terrifying contingency of the human condition.

[52] Fink, *Lacan to the Letter*, p. 153.
[53] Swift, *Waterland*, p. 291.

Sławomir Konkol

„Od czego w końcu jest cywilizacja?" – narracja jako metoda przezwyciężania lęku i traumy w prozie Grahama Swifta

Streszczenie

Tom Crick, narrator najpopularniejszej powieści Grahama Swifta *Kraina Wód*, uważa opowiadanie historii za metodę łagodzenia dziecięcego lęku przed ciemnością, w potrzebie narracji dostrzegając wyraz typowo ludzkiego dążenia do porządkowania rzeczywistości. Fragmentaryczny i repetytywny styl narracji większości książek Swifta odzwierciedla charakterystyczne dla jego postaci poczucie separacji od świata i uwięzienia w momencie traumy, które uniemożliwia linearne rozwinięcie opowieści. Opłakując niemożliwość odzyskania pierwotnej pełni, powieści Swifta jednocześnie afirmują przypadkowość kondycji ludzkiej, jako że wysiłki protagonistów zmierzające do przezwyciężenia strachu można uznać jedynie za prowizoryczne. Jednocześnie autor kwestionuje status samej narracji jako moralnie niejednoznacznej, potencjalnie nacechowanej przemocą i odpowiedzialnej za nieodwracalne zanurzenie podmiotu w czasie. Niniejszy artykuł stanowi analizę obu podejść do narracji jako metody racjonalnego wyjaśniania rzeczywistości w powieściach *Shuttlecock* (1982) oraz *Kraina wód* (1984) Grahama Swifta.

Sławomir Konkol

„Wozu denn ist die Zivilisation?“ – Narration als die in Graham Swifts Prosawerken angewandte Methode, Angst und Trauma zu überwältigen

Zusammenfassung

Tom Crick, ein Erzähler in dem populärsten Roman Graham Swifts, *Wasserland* (engl. *Waterland*), hält die Geschichte für eine gute Methode, die kindliche Angst vor Finsternis zu lindern; in dem Bedarf an Erzählen sieht er ein für den Menschen typisches Streben danach, die Wirklichkeit in Ordnung zu bringen. Fragmentarischer und repetitiver Erzählungsstil von den meisten Swifts Büchern spiegelt das für alle seinen Figuren charakteristische traumatische Gefühl der Isolation von der Außenwelt wider, das eine lineare Entwicklung der Erzählung unmöglich macht. Swifts Romane beklagen die Unmöglichkeit, eine primäre Fülle zu erreichen und gleichzeitig heben sie die ganze Zufälligkeit der menschlichen Verfassung hervor; die Bemühungen von Swifts Protagonisten, die Angst zu überwinden, müssen zwar lediglich als provisorisch und vorläufig betrachtet werden.

Gleichermaßen zweifelt der Verfasser an, dass die Narration selbst ethisch mehrdeutig, durch Gewalt gekennzeichnet und für einen irreversiblen Tiefgang des Subjektes in der Welt verantwortlich ist. Der vorliegende Artikel bezweckt, die beiden Betrachtungsweisen von der Narration als einer Methode der rationellen Erklärung der Wirklichkeit in Graham Swifts Romanen *Alias Federball* (engl.: *Shuttlecock*) (1982) und *Wasserland* (engl.: *Waterland*) (1984) zu untersuchen.

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"Seek and Ye Shall Mind": Conspiracy Theories and the Mechanisms of Online Exposure

> [T]he most dangerous conspiracies and conspiracy theories flow from the center of American government, not from the margins of society.[1]

Introduction

While examining factors contributing to the creation and dissemination of conspiracy theories (CT), scholars representing various disciplines and methodological approaches have often insisted that conspiracy-related paranoid thinking predominantly reflects societies' and individuals' fears. The first decade of the new millennium saw, among other things, an increased presence and popularity of conspiracy theories on a global scale, with the corresponding growth of confusion, mistrust and anxiety. "Our fears have gotten the better of us, and the twenty-first century begins to look like a new age of paranoia," David Freeman and Jason Freeman claim: "At any one time, around a *quarter* of the population are having regular paranoid thoughts, with lots more people probably experiencing them occasionally."[2]

However, the current paranoia-friendly mood has itself been provoking a proportionately intense, fear-ridden reaction. Therefore, in my discussion

[1] Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 239.

[2] Daniel Freeman and Jason Freeman, *Paranoia. The Twenty-First Century Fear* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 154, 153.

of the content of a few American blogs which deal with conspiracy theories and attract the attention of thousands of online users worldwide, I will occasionally rely on a twofold, fear-related perspective. On the one hand, I will be addressing the specific fears fuelling the existence of online conspiracy thinking. On the other hand, of great interest to me will be the fear of conspiracy theories themselves: the attitude which makes it easy to routinely dismiss the conspiracist frame of mind and/or accuse it of disrupting the currently prevailing social order. Finally, while commenting on the samples of American CT, I will demonstrate how both of these fears may be considered legitimate.

Numerous hypotheses have been proposed in order to account for the popularity and often uncritical endorsement of conspiracy theories. Scholars tend to link conspiracy theories with the wish to find a rational explanation for a weird and/or intensely traumatic event (Melley, Fenster), with the sense of powerlessness or the general disappointment in the functioning of institutions, corporations, and with the paranoid aspects of human personality (Goertzel).[3] The moral aspect, namely Michael Barkun's notion that the main goal of conspiracy theories is "to delineate and explain evil" is touched upon less frequently. For instance, Barkun observes how conspiracy theories are "both frightening and reassuring": although evil forces are allowed to operate, at least tragic events can be explained as a result of their malevolence, rather than as something random or, worse still, of the workings of cruel providence.[4]

The proliferation of conspiracy theories at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries can certainly be linked with the development of the Internet, whose more interactive, Web 2.0 features greatly facilitate dissemination of conspiracy theories and self-validation of various types of knowledge. Online, time and space are definitely shrinking, and the archive of knowledge about the world is available instantly and all the time. In short, it is a triumph of synchrony and synchronicities. Conversely, although many supporters of CT stress how carefully they have done research in order to back up their findings, in reality little effort seems to be made to thoroughly explore and understand historical processes, influences and dependencies.

From the point of view of sociological transformations, one should certainly take into account the "*restricted opportunities* for the meaningful par-

[3] See Timothy Melley, "Agency, Panic and the Culture of Conspiracy," in *Conspiracy Nation: The Politics of Paranoia in Postwar America*, ed. P. Knight (New York: New York University Press, 2002), pp. 57–81; Mark Fenster, *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); T. Goertzel, "Belief In Conspiracy Theories," *Political Psychology*, vol. 15 (1994), pp. 731–742.

[4] Michael Barkun, *Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (Ewing, NJ: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 3, 4.

ticipation of individuals in a technocratically reduced democracy."[5] What individuals and communities perceive as a debilitating loss of human agency is partly connected with the functioning of the media. Within this general media context, trends and discourses clash, producing even more chaos and diffusion, e.g. access to information is controlled by media monopolies, encouraging cultural blandness, yet at the same time citizen journalism constitutes an important, if less evenly distributed and easily available, counter-reaction to the commercially viable uniformity and mediocrity. Additional conspiracy-friendly factors worth mentioning include the weakening of hierarchies in the information industry and its drive to simplify and sensationalize news items. As Volker Heins aptly remarks, "[i]n contemporary culture, the truth 'behind the appearances' has assumed the character of a commodity since nothing sells as well as the exposure of scandals and revelations about actual or imagined secrets. Conspiracy theories manufacture secrets as well as their solutions which are then made available in all media formats."[6]

Wendy Chun, alongside various other scholars, treats the end of Cold War as the most significant landmark in the popular CT discourse, claiming that the new, post-1989 political situation "has not dispelled paranoia but rather spread it everywhere: invisibility and uncertainty – of the enemy, of technology – has invalidated deterrence and moved paranoia from the pathological to the logical."[7] Taking advantage of (relative) anonymity, people openly and shamelessly admit they are being paranoid about various issues and, as Timothy Melley points out, even well known politicians increasingly mention conspiracy theories in order to explain their failures.[8] Even more interestingly, in her analysis of paranoid narratives Chun refers to the Deleuzian paradigm of control societies which, allegedly, are currently replacing the Foucaldian disciplinary societies, and suggests that the modern-day power relations should be scrutinized predominantly in terms of (total) freedom and control.[9] It is also possible to look at conspiracy theories from the post-modernist perspective, which presupposes fragmentation and multiplicity of viewpoints and diagnoses:

> This postmodern metanarrative – if there can be such a thing – contains within it a utopian desire to reconfigure meaning within

[5] Volker Heins, "Critical Theory and the Traps of Conspiracy Thinking," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 33.7 (2007), p. 797, accessed October 11, 2010, doi: 10.1177/0191453707081675.

[6] Heins, "Critical Theory," p. 796.

[7] Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), p. 1.

[8] Timothy Melley, "Paranoid Modernity and the Diagnostics of Cultural Theory," May 18, 2008, accessed November 7, 2010, http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/fictionspresent/connectivist.

[9] Chun, *Control and Freedom*, pp. 6–11.

> a discombobulated world where linearity, rationality, and causality have fallen into a postmodern black hole leaving citizens to fend for themselves in an often times perplexing cacophony of media simulations, cultural implosions, and political fluctuations. [...] we see such narratives, when read as imaginary allusions/illusions to material relations, as constructing novel and evolving networks of signifying chains that can in fact contain within them a potentially empowering form of political agency.[10]

Lech Zdybel points out that the process of creating the conspirator-enemy is not random; rather, it is very obviously correlated with the current social, political and economic events.[11] There is, then, a considerable degree of rationality in choosing a particular subject of conspiracy, even if the conspiracy theorist's imagination functions as an a priori framing mechanism. Yet at the same time it is possible to look at conspiracy theories as quasi-myths, understood not necessarily as the opposite of truth, science and rationality, but rather as *narratives*, or more specifically, apophenic fantasies. In other words, even if CT is not exactly a myth, it bears resemblance to myths in the sense that it reveals certain truths about human nature, in particular, the need to form a coherent vision of the world. The psychological duality of this need is quite striking: people fear the phenomena they theorize about, but nevertheless they relentlessly produce more and more CT narratives, because an absence of those narratives would very likely only augment the already existing fear.

Conspiracy Theories and Cultural Studies: Internalization

Barkun defines conspiracy belief as the "belief that an organization made up of individuals or groups was or is acting covertly to achieve some malevolent end."[12] The fairly general description has been made more specific by the author of the Wikipedia entry for "conspiracy theory," who points out that the term was "originally a neutral descriptor for any claim of civil, criminal, or political conspiracy," but "has become largely pejorative" and nowadays

[10] Tyson Lewis and Richard Kahn, "The Reptoid Hypothesis: Utopian and Dystopian Representational Motifs in David Icke's Alien Conspiracy Theory," *Utopian Studies*, vol. 16.2 (2005), p. 15.

[11] Lech Zdybel, *Idea spisku i teorie spiskowe w świetle analiz krytycznych i badań historycznych* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2002), p. 256.

[12] Barkun, *Culture of Conspiracy*, p. 3.

denotes "any *fringe* theory which explains a historical or current event as the result of a secret plot by conspirators of almost superhuman power and cunning."[13] The latter definition is cetainly problematic. Having observed how the conspiracist outlook proliferated and gained increased support from online users and communities at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, one is tempted to argue that the words "fringe" and "pejorative" do not accurately reflect the current status and importance of CT.

More than three decades after the publication of Richard Hofstadter's seminal text, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, Elaine Showalter proposed that conspiracy theories be referred to as "hysterical narratives" and argued they prove something is definitely wrong with the society.[14] From a journalistic point of view, Jamie Bartlett goes even further in his negative assessment of the CT discourse. He blames the laziness and passivity of the society for the expansion of conspiracism.[15] At the same time, he rather conveniently glosses over the political factor, namely the sense of disenfranchisement in the rapidly changing world, in which angry, disillusioned voters embrace conspiracy theories all too willingly, and not necessarily because they are motivated by what Bartlett terms "kneejerk, lazy cynicism." It seems more accurate to perceive CT as a compensatory, liberating mechanism of defense against the governments which specialize in elaborate cover-ups and whose policies are neither clearly explained nor trustworthy. In this sense, fantasizing about the hidden reality becomes internalized as a legitimate truth-seeking strategy.

In an exchange with Mark Fenster, Jack Bratich suggested that people show symptoms of conspiracy theory panics too frequently and dismiss conspiracy theories too easily.[16] Similar points were raised by Heins, who argues that the critical attitude towards conspiracy theories "suffers from its inability to distinguish between rationally unacceptable conspiracy theories and rational hypotheses about actual conspiracies."[17] The mechanism of dismissal has been neatly summed up by Ginna Husting and Martin Orr, who stress that in ridiculing conspiracy theories society wishes to reduce the level of anxiety and mistrust resulting from the perceived loss of control over events:

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[13] The entry is available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conspiracy_theory. Emphasis mine.

[14] Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 81.

[15] Jamie Bartlett, "Conspiracy Theories Are Corroding Our Society," *Guardian*, September 3, 2010, accessed December 29, 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/sep/03/conspiracy-theories-corroding-society? showallcomments=true#start-of-comments.

[16] Mark Fenster and Jack Z. Bratich, "Dialogues in Communication Research," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 33 (2009), p. 278, accessed September 17, 2010, doi: 10.1177/0196859909335425.

[17] Heins, "Critical Theory," p. 788.

> Our findings suggest that authors use the conspiracy theorist label as (1) a routine strategy of exclusion; (2) a reframing mechanism that deflects questions or concerns about power, corruption, and motive; and (3) an attack upon the personhood and competence of the questioner [...]. The mechanism allows those who use it to sidestep sound scholarly and journalistic practice, avoiding the examination of evidence, often in [favour] of one of the most important errors in logic and rhetoric – the ad hominem attack.[18]

In her analysis of conspiracism and its legitimacy, Clare Birchall could not help noticing parallels with the heavily contested scholarly status of a much broader discipline, namely cultural studies. In fact, the juxtaposition of conspiracy theories and cultural studies made it possible for Birchall to argue that the two areas of knowledge share a disquietingly great number of similarities. Like CT, cultural studies began "as a marginal discipline of somewhat uncertain status," but is "unable to acknowledge any possible resemblance on its part to conspiracy theory. Instead, cultural studies has to maintain its critical distance from the conspiracies text that nevertheless interests it as a form of culture."[19] While arguing this principal point, Birchall recalled the remark made by Slavoj Žižek, according to whom cultural studies "has *already* subsumed these conspiratorial elements," because its practitioners enjoy the subversive potential of their discipline: "in fact, cultural studies reads like a conspiracy theory."[20]

Birchall's observations and doubts are extremely important because they concern the very rules of constructing discourses and selecting views which become widely accepted, and ultimately dominant and exclusionary. Who decides that a conspiracy theory is just that, a conspiracy theory? What are the determining factors that make it possible to clearly distinguish the conspiratorial mode of thinking and the seemingly more neutral, cultural studies approach? And finally, when cultural studies scholars apply the usual regime of disqualification in their analyses of the phenomenon of CT, might they not be replacing one discursive bias with another? The answers to the above questions are rarely obvious and simple.

On the other hand, when confronted with Birchall's suggestion that conspiracy theory "as a form of (albeit popular) interpretation and knowledge" theoretically should have "implications for how we interpret and produce

[18] Ginna Husting and Martin Orr, "Dangerous Machinery: 'Conspiracy Theorist' As a Transpersonal Strategy of Exclusion," *Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 30 (2007), pp. 127, 147, accessed March 11, 2001, doi: 10.1525/si.2007.30.2.127.

[19] Clare Birchall, *Knowledge Goes Pop: From Conspiracy Theory to Gossip* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2006), p. 85.

[20] Quoted in Birchall, *Knowledge Goes Pop*, p. 89.

knowledge about it,"[21] one feels like inquiring into the scholarliness of the CT discourse from the opposite vantage point. Characteristically enough, online CT practices make it possible to remark that the supporters of CT do not seem vitally interested in questioning its legitimacy as an area of knowledge and the conditions in which the cosnpiracist discourse was/is being formed. The besieged fortress mentality, coupled with a decisively binarist outlook, effectively discourages any act of self-questioning. The paradoxical similarity of Conspiracy Theories and Cultural Studies has important implications for the present text, helping to set up its modest goal. Rather than eliminating critical distance and evaluating the conspiracy theories themselves, i.e. usurping what is essentially the job of a historian/archivist, I will focus on specific examples of conspiracy theory websites and try to establish whether they exhibit similar ways of identifying and exposing conspiracies.

Madness to the Method

Popular Anglo-American blogs and portals whose content revolves around conspiracy theories are preoccupied with similar thematic obsessions and share a limited, though temptingly coherent, vision of the postdemocratic, authoritarian world in which societies are incapable of controlling and influencing those in power. Broadly speaking, their contributors seem to be focused on the "hidden agenda" of the U.S. authorities, at the local level, and of the cosmopolitan (i.e. European) elites, globally. Postings on conspiracist sites touch upon issues such as global warming research, the collapse of the world financial system, government-imposed vaccination programs, diabolical pacts allegedly made by global elites concerning mind and population control, techniques of surveillance, the influence of the Illuminati and all things occult, etc.

While claiming that "most Americans agree that the scenario posed by at least one conspiracy theory is very likely or somewhat likely,"[22] the authors of *Conspiracy Watch* blog enumerate ten most popular conspiracy theories. Seven items on this list are related to the United States: JFK assassination, aliens at Roswell, "9/11 was an inside job, the moon landings never happened, Elvis Presley is still alive, Franklin Delano Roosevelt knew about the impending attack on Pearl Harbour, and Barack Obama was not born in the United States."

[21] Birchall, *Knowledge Goes Pop*, p. 65.

[22] "The 10 Most Popular Conspiracies," *ConspiracyWatch.net*, December 18, 2010, accessed December 21, 2010, http://www.conspiracywatch.net/2010/12/10-most-popular-conspiracy-theories-of.html.

However, even though online repositories of CT knowledge sometimes differ significantly in terms of what they emphasize, who they blame and how they handle their content rhetorically, their functioning seems to be based upon a common premise, namely that there exists a monolithic evil entity which threatens the mental and physical well-being of the human population. The degree of conspiracist convictions will, of course, vary significantly, depend on the background and agenda embraced by the authors themselves, ranging from total hatred for and mistrust of literally every government institution, especially in the United States, to relatively mild suggestions of federal/corporate inefficiency and secret dealings at the expense of the honest, hard-working citizens.

Even a perfunctory reading of the introductory descriptions of CT pages, which often sound like mission statements on corporate websites, makes it obvious that their rhetoric and line of reasoning preclude a standard discussion of the texts themselves and a meaningful response to them. The message on the website tellingly named *illuminatimatrix* is a fairly representative example of how irrational the conspiracist discourse can be, and of convoluted logic that goes nowhere:

> For those with a general understanding of this site, and the hypnotic/subliminal nature of this 3D illusory reality, continue to observe the events unfolding all around us, and know for certain that all things are relating to the luciferian agenda. Interpret everything from a subliminal perspective, using the information on this site as a guide, and continue to watch and wait [...] DO NOT RESIST or REACT, [...] for everything is simply an illusion designed to manipulate us to REACT. Do not believe the notion that we must react, resist, or retaliate, for this is the purpose of the elite doing the bidding of the luciferian Mindset, further establishing the Trance State and the ultimate fabricated Day of Judgment. Do not believe anyone who is urging the population to get up and take a stand against the elite, for this too, *is the very goal of the elite.* The elite, acting upon the inspiration of the Thought Process, who manipulate even those who believe they recognize the dream state and manipulation, who unwittingly do the bidding of the elite through ignorance, but who nonetheless serve diligently, the gods of intellectualism and the luciferian Thought Process.[23]

Like various other CT websites, *illuminatimatrix* creates a vision of the world which has entered an exceptional, groundbreaking moment in its histo-

[23] The full name, as featured on the website, is: *IlluminatiMatrix: the unveiling and revelation of the war on humanity*, and it is located at http://illuminatimatrix.wordpress.com/, accessed February 23, 2010.

ry: a stage immediately preceding the Judgment Day. References to "luciferian Mindset" and "luciferian Thought Process" seem to confirm the initial impression that the text simply expands on St. John's Apocalypse, both stylistically and contentwise, in order to encourage the readers to be vigilant and oppose the evil agenda. Yet the numerous imperatives destabilize not only its inferred message, but also the familiar Biblical notions. The call to "watch and wait" instead of resisting the alleged evil elites could easily be interpreted as an instance of pro-elite passivity. Described as both "ultimate" and "fabricated," the Judgment Day becomes a self-contradictory enigma: an event orchestrated by the bearers of the luciferian light which, oddly enough, will indeed be the last one in the history of the human race, thus questioning God's involvement in the affairs of the mortals and his (?) power to control them. All in all, it would seem that in his/her ardent wish to expose the fallen angels' sinister project, the author of the above quoted manifesto created a logical paradox, in which the mind-controlled citizens of the unreal, Matrix-like "Trance State" are effectively discouraged from resisting the disempowering policies of evil elites, yet by embracing this passive stance they are, in all likelihood, even more vulnerable to the workings of the overarching satanic conspiracy.

Many examples could be offered concerning the sweeping, poorly researched and/or mind-boggling generalizations on CT websites. In the following excerpt Texe Marrs, a well known American conspiracy theorist, asks a lot of questions concerning the identity of the alleged evildoers in the history of the United States, only to find one unifying answer which, to some extent, at least, echoes David Icke's famous theory of humans' reptilian ancestors,[24] and ascribes to the evil powers a cosmic dimension:

> What was missing was the ingredient of who "*They*" are. Who really was behind the assassination of President John F. Kennedy? Who got America deep in the mire of the unwinnable Vietnam War? Surely, a shadowy mastermind named Osama Bin Laden with 19 inept Arab cohorts did not carry out 9/11, so… who did? Who was responsible for the Great Depression of the 1930s and 40s, and the Great Recession of the 21st Century? […]. After careful consideration, I realized that "*They*" are of human origin but also are led and inspired by devil powers. The ongoing conspiracy, then, is a combination of human and supernatural.[25]

Even if one accepts the initial assumption that "conspiracism straddles a blurred and shifting boundary between pathology and normalcy," neverthe-

[24] See Lewis and Kahn, "The Reptoid Hypothesis."

[25] Marrs's homepage is available at http://www.texemarrs.com/, accessed March 17, 2010.

less the fine line exists somewhere there and by propagating sweeping, virtually untestable statements the supporters of CT provoke unexpected consequences.[26] It is, for instance, hardly surprising that some of the sites demystifying the "hidden agenda" are occasionally accused of being vehicles for planting evil ideas and normalizing the ideology of the ruling classes: "the proliferation of particularly outlandish conspiracy theories is itself a conspiracy to induce conspiracy fatigue and scepticism about the real conspiracies that are going on under our noses."[27] The very suggestion might strike the reader as a futile exercise in circular logic, yet, judging by the commercial ingredients of some of the websites under discussion, it is no less legitimate than the wild speculations embraced by the proponents of CT.

The Vigilant Citizen: Enjoying the Symptoms

In the recent years, a significant increase could be observed concerning the number of blogs devoted to secret societies allegedly running the world. The focus of these sites seems to be firmly on demystifying the hidden agenda of the New World Order, Illuminati and Freemasons, elitist organizations which supposedly manipulate governments all over the world in order to fully subjugate the masses and maybe even destroy our planet. Various artifacts, such as video clips, films, comic books, photographs, paintings, and even murals turn out to be a useful point of departure in examining the extent of manipulation affecting the consumers of popular culture. Among the many blogs whose authors are interested predominantly in exposing masonic elements in music videos and films, *The Vigilant Citizen* deserves particular attention since it became one of the most popular and heavily commented CT websites in the pop culture category.[28] While it can certainly be argued that *The Vigilant Citizen* is neither particularly original nor thorough in its interpretive efforts, it does, indeed, stand out in the conspiracist genre with its uncompromising stance and, accordingly, provokes ridicule and admiration in equal measure.[29]

[26] Barkun, *Culture of Conspiracy*, p. 8.

[27] A comment posted by rahdiwaberl, September 3, 2010, in connection with Bartlett's "Conspiracy Theories" article.

[28] The full name of the blog is as follows: *The Vigilant Citizen: Symbols Rule the World, Not Words Nor Laws*. The website is available at http://vigilantcitizen.com/.

[29] For comparison, http://pseudoccultmedia.blogspot.com/ offers a much more exhaustive, if equally narrow-minded analysis of mass entertainment, usually accompanied by meticulously selected, rich visual material. The last entry in this blog was posted on November 5, 2010, which probably means that the blog is no longer active.

More interestingly, the blog provides a representative example of how certain conspiracy axioms are produced and unquestioningly accepted by its readers.

In the "About Vigilant Citizen" section of the blog we learn that the author's ambition has always been to "understand the forces governing the world," and that it was his "thirst for truth" that encouraged him to study the esoterica and the occult. In addition, the self-proclaimed "genuine seeker of truth" claims his principal goal is to reveal the esoteric meaning of symbols in pop culture, and, admittedly, the content of the blog lives up to this premise.[30] Furthermore, VC recommends his/her approach as uncompromising and authentic, as opposed to the conspiracy of silence practiced by the cowardly mass media: "I've only selected well-documented videos from credible sources that will give you some real insight on the powers that be in this day and age. They're all available at no cost and they provide a wealth of information that is totally nonexistent in mainstream media."[31]

Most analyses conducted by VC follow the same pattern. Alleged references to Baphomet and the occult are picked up, e.g. checkered boards, animal prints on clothes, hand gestures, one eye-covered, in the videos of bestselling artists and a conviction is expressed that, taking into account the disturbing visual content, these young, successful, pretty Hollywood stars are either an active part of evil conspiracy or merely illuminati puppets who do not even realize they are being used to glorify Satan. The overall conclusion seems to be that mass entertainment is vile and serves as a vehicle for complete, irreversible indoctrination of the young consumers.

Hilariously enough, by scrolling the "About" section of the blog, one can easily find and access links to commercial websites selling occult and masonic paraphernalia, e.g. "quality masonic ties, rings and talismans" – a pretty convincing proof that the allegedly groundbreaking conspiracist content might not be as edgy or subversive as its author claims. Nevertheless, its impact can be measured by those online users who deem it valuable to comment upon *The Vigilant Citizen*'s entries. The responses are predominantly enthusiastic and the author is usually thanked for being such an eye-opener. Visitors of the VC blog enjoy expressing their incredulity at how blatant, "hidden in plain view" the entertainment agenda is, and indignance or condescension towards those few posters who think the theories are completely implausible or at least exaggerated. Anyone who disagrees with VC's fans in the comments section is accused of being on government payroll or told to educate themselves.

Although *The Vigilant Citizen* specializes in analysing various occult aspects of music videos and films, nevertheless the site also updates the readers on the political and economic events both in the U.S. and worldwide, pro-

[30] http://vigilantcitizen.com/?page_id=2.

[31] See the "Educate Yourself" section of the website, at http://vigilantcitizen.com/?page_id=109.

vided that they can be subsumed under the "conspiracy" rubric. Its forum section very much resembles other CT forums and exemplifies the trend to describe a particular event in great detail, not shying away even from utterly far-fetched theories. Most recently, the shooting rampage typically referred to as the Tucson massacre proved to be no exception to the rule that when a shocking event takes place, CT practitioners are never satisfied with rational inferences and simple explanations.

The reactions on *The Vigilant Citizen* and other CT websites to the dramatic events of January 8, 2011, in which a 22-year old Jared Lee Loghner attempted to assassinate Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, killed six people and wounded thirteen others, provides ample evidence of a regular, and rather disturbing pattern of online paranoia. Admittedly, the conspiracist template was greatly helped by shoddy reporting from channels such as NPR, KVOA, Sky News, and many others. Confusing and sometimes mutually exclusive tidbits concerning the number of casualties, the circumstances and the aftermath of the massacre spread via Twitter, Facebook and other Web 2.0 inventions, certainly contributed to the information chaos and encouraged conspiracy theory thinking. Moreover, Giffords's centrist policies and allegiances greatly complicated the search for an obvious motivation behind the attack, even though commenters initially concentrated on the vitriolic rhetoric of the political debates in the country. Yet if the above ambiguities forced cautious assessments among the majority of mainstream politicians and journalists, they certainly did not discourage conspiracy theorists from offering sweeping statements on the "real" significance of the massacre.

On several CT websites and forums, the news of shooting almost immediately got classified as a numerology event.[32] Using principles of Biblical numerology and Hebrew and English gematria, CT-friendly posters analysed names, dates and locations, in particular the date of birth of the late Christina Taylor Green, a 9-year old girl born on September 11, 2001, in order to claim that the massacre may have been an illuminati-controlled event, rather than a work of a lone gunman with psychotic tendencies and a conspiracist outlook.[33] The principal numerological hypothesis suggested that a ritual sacrifice of the youngest victim took place (the calculation of her date of birth and date of death serving as the ultimate proof). To further advance the hypothesis, the geographical coordinates of Tucson were specified and the ages of the dead

[32] See the "Direct 9/11 Sync with Arizona Shooting" thread started by Christophereugene707 on *Synchromysticism forum* the day after the Tucson massacre. Fifty-three posts were published in the discussion which, however, quickly turned into bizarre ramblings. The thread is available at http://synchromysticismforum.com/ viewtopic.php?f=5&t=2088&sid=1df4bc94c6e6628d616a70ccf1969908&start=50.

[33] See the "Breaking News: AZ Shooter Psy Op" thread at http://vigilantcitizen.com/boards/viewtopic. php?f=8&t=10259.

victims were added to show that most of these numbers are a variation on 3, 9, and 33, or reflect the 119/911 combination. Also, Loughner has been presented as a victim of mind control and programming, based on several bizarre YouTube clips that he allegedly uploaded.

The massacre was also construed in terms of a sinister conspiracy specifically targeted against the Congresswoman and interpreted as either the work of the Republicans and/or Tea Party members (she did her job well and knew too much, so she had to be eliminated) or the work of the Democrats (who wanted to postpone voting on health care issues), the work of President Obama (whose idea was to divert attention from the tough economic situation), or the work of the usual suspects (Illuminati or some other secret cabal). Finally, and to some extent perhaps as a result of Giffords' miraculously fast recovery during the first two weeks after the attack, several posters suggested a messianic interpretation of the event, suggesting that the Congresswoman is an angelic figure (Gabrielle = Gabriel) and that she might be symbolizing the second coming of Christ. Ironically enough, at the other extreme pole, and in the so-called real life, Westboro Baptist Church representatives were also heavily invested in the religious explanation, except that they expressed their delight with the shooting, which, according to them, had to happen because God enjoys punishing liberals. Most bizarrely, a poster on the tremendously popular white nationalistic board *Stormfront.org* put forward the suggestion that Giffords was not shot at all and the whole event was staged in order to improve Obama's ratings and prepare the ground for an anti-American coup, but it should be stressed that even the regular posters on the message board criticized the idea as completely "out there" and the post was promptly removed.[34] Yet the idea that the shooting was faked was picked up again by other conspiratorial venues, for whom the fact that no pictures of the wounded Congresswoman's face were released served as the principal argument that the "false flag" event was merely a pretext for the US government to limit gun rights.[35]

Here one arrives at the central problem or regularity related to conspiratorial thinking. No matter how outrageous or preposterous a given theory is, it very rarely gets contested, questioned or at least corrected. The stark absurdity and randomness of some of the claims made on *The Vigilant Citizen* and other CT forums concerning the Tucson shooting and other strange events is disquieting not necessarily because such claims are made, but because of

[34] The post was published at http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t774708/ and subsequently deleted.

[35] „[W]here the Hell is the REAL Gabby Giffords, and why are we not allowed to see her?" asked, rather dramatically, Charles Haber III, one of the contributors to *The AlienPet13* blog ("The Invisible Gabrielle Giffords!," January 31, 2011, accessed February 1, 2011, http://alienpet13.com/2011/01/31/the-invisible-gabrielle-giffords/#).

how uncritical the CT community turns out to be in its preference for information that merely confirms its preconceived ideas. Criticisms of the bias demonstrated on most CT websites are rare and usually come from those who are against conspiratorial thinking on principle. For instance, the above mentioned idea that the Tucson shooter must have been a mind-controlled assassin inspired the following hilarious comment from an unabashedly skeptic reader: "Definitely inspired, MK-ed, planned, created, staged, produced & directed by all the groups: Kaballa, Mormons, Jesuits, Roman Catholics, Merovingians, Illuminati, Medici, Sabbateans, Frankists, House of Rothschild, Zionists & the Synagogue of Satan. This is just one of their many clever plans which span over a period of thousands of years. Guess what? They all work together! Go, team, go!"[36] Various authors debunked CT concerning the gunman using the argument that he was, in fact, a typical conspiracy nerd, for whom "someone like Gabrielle Giffords is not viewed in terms of whether she is a Democrat or a Republican: she is fundamentally a *governmental agent of the conspiracy*."[37]

The Secret Sun: Searching for Synchronicities

The second website which will be discussed in greater detail is Christopher Knowles's *The Secret Sun*. It is not a CT site in the strict sense of the word. Rather, it deals with more or less the same realm of occurrences, but with the focus firmly on reexamining some popular cultural memes. The author of the blog characterizes it as aiming "at establishing cosmo-mythological convergences," while at the same time he declares it "hews to no political, religious or philosophical agenda." His blog is neither strongly antiestablishment, nor typically New Ageist. On the contrary, it offers a more diachronic perspective than many of its esoteric counterparts online, even if its principal task is to "deal with the power of the archetypes to tell their own stories, regardless of conscious intent."[38]

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[36] The ironic retort was published by member nicknamed Gift Of Wisdom on January 10, 2011, merely two days after the massacre, in response to VC's post titled "MK ULTRA at work in Tucson attack?" at http://vigilantcitizen.com/?p=6215.

[37] Alex Knepper, "Inside the Minds of Conspiracy Theorists: Why Jared Loughner Shot Gabrielle Giffords," *The Re-examiner: fresh commentary on politics & culture, left & right. No orthodoxy, no dogma*, January 9, 2011, accessed January 11, 2011, http://reexaminer.com/2011/01/09/inside-the-minds-of-conspiracy-theorists/.

[38] All quotes come from the homepage, which is located at http://secretsun.blogspot.com/.

What makes *The Secret Sun* decisively different from other, more typical CT websites is its refusal to accept simplified, ahistoric explanations of the unexplained. For instance, when asked by Terry Melanson, author of *ConspiracyArchive.com*, whether the idea that followers of ancient secret societies (specifically, Followers of Horus) might be pulling the strings even nowadays is plausible, Knowles confirmed his belief in the possibility of such unbroken continuities and justified his answer in the following words:

> The question of *compelling force* is why so many other conspiracy "master theories" fall apart for me. If 9/11 really was meant as a pretext to institute an American Imperium, why is the dollar dying, why is the Army falling apart and why are huge swathes of the American economy being snapped up at fire sale prices by the Europeans and the Russians and the Chinese? What power do small groups like the Jews or the Jesuits or the British have over a billion plus Chinese, or oil-rich Russia, or the rising powers in the Persian Gulf or industrial giants like Japan? For that matter, what possible power would Freemasonry have? What could be compelling all of these countries to join in this emerging "global community?" (don't you love how the media picked up on that phrase when "New World Order" didn't do well with the focus groups?)
>
> There's something else at work here. Abstractions like nature worship or occultism or fancy aprons cannot possibly be the driving force behind all of this, they just can't.[39]

At first sight, Knowles's response seems ludicrous or at least vague and a tad eccentric. Even more disappointingly, the author of the blog is simply incapable of offering straight-forward answers to the questions he himself posed. Yet the line of reasoning he employs in order to arrive at the conclusion whose part is quoted above does not sound ludicrous at all. For instance, in order to make his point Knowles enumerates three major alternative religious movements in the nineteenth century America, namely Christian Science, Mormonism and Transcendentalism, and elaborates on their links to Freemasonry. All in all, the most striking characteristic of *The Secret Sun* blog is that although it deals primarily with esoterica, the arguments used here are very often down to earth and based on established facts.

If one were to raise a serious objection concerning the blog, it would concern the very principle informing Knowles's research, namely unabashed, downright excessive apophenia: a line of reasoning which too often relies on

[39] "Astronaut Theology: Following the Followers," April 11, 2008, accessed May 25, 2010, http:// secretsun.blogspot.com/2008/04/astronaut-theology-following-followers.html.

very personal obsessions and free associations, instead of a more rigorous pursuit of the sources and factors influencing modern-day popular culture. On the other hand, it is precisely this passionate lack of distance that opens up research possibilities. Knowles does not content himself with narrative closures and finite statements on the evil agendas of those in power. In the interest of intellectual freedom, he seems to be pointing to the more aporetic points in his broad generalizations: to loopholes that make his system of beliefs more inclusive, expansive and, oddly enough, more convincing as an interpretive challenge. Rather than imposing a single-minded version of the external reality, in which evil elites control the mindless "sheeple," Knowles proposes a much less fearful but better researched voyage through the visual landscape of symbols and motifs which continue to recur despite the passage of time, in different contexts and transgressing the customary limitations of CT.

Conclusion, or Agency in Distress

In direct correlation with more or less subjective vantage points, research agendas and political affiliations, the CT discourse has been identified as a logical stage in the history of mankind, a natural consequence of embracing the postmodern, and, more recently, as a byproduct of the development of the Internet, or the last refuge from the excesses of uncontrollable corporations and their profit-driven model of globalization. On a more individual, personality-related level, conspiracy theories have also been conceived in terms of a desperate defense mechanism against the heavily manipulated, mediatized and confusing reality people experience on a regular basis. In other words, the content of the most popular conspiracy theories helps to understand, however imperfectly, the present cultural and sociopolitical moment, even if the process involves toying with the readers and viewers' sound judgment. Finally, as a form of pessimistic diagnosis, conspiracism continues to be treated as a form of resistance against the dominant ideologies and agendas, yet, judging by the current overload of conspiracy theories in public debates, one feels tempted to ask what exactly happens to its subversive potential once it becomes or is on the verge of becoming the dominant paradigm.

Bearing in mind the caveat made by Heins and Barkun that most conspiracy theories are non-falsifiable, one can draw the conclusion that only the passage of time can verify some of them irrefutably.[40] Unfortunately, time is not always a sufficient factor, especially in the case of more complex phe-

[40] See Heins, "Critical Theory," p. 792; Barkun, *Culture of Conspiracy*, p. 7.

nomena and conspiracy theories accompanying them. To give the most striking example, in the case of the JFK assassination the passage of time only helped to mythologize the event and cemented the public opinion's distrust towards its official version. The above considerations and reservations make it possible to contend that a rigorous and credible analysis of CT is possible only from the historian's point of view. And therein lies the greatest problem, but also a challenge for bloggers and citizen journalists who will continue to translate symbols into facts, and empirical data into larger generalizations. If scholars and communities are to grant conspiracism a status of a more legitimate field of knowledge, then perhaps the principal way to make this recognition scenario feasible is through a more rigorous approach on the part of those supporters of CT who claim to be interested solely in the pursuit of truth. As is the case with any scholarly discipline, including cultural studies, a truly responsible research is simply incompatible with offering rash assumptions, establishing obvious cause and effect relationships and generating an all-encompassing narrative of the evil-ridden world and the lack of real human agency in it.

Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska

„Szukajcie, a zgubicie" – o teoriach spiskowych i mechanizmach demaskacji online

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest wzmożonej aktywności stron internetowych, które zajmują się propagowaniem teorii spiskowych i wyszukiwaniem tzw. synchroniczności. Wykorzystując obawy, jakie w pierwszych dekadach nowego tysiąclecia wzbudza terroryzm, inwigilacja czy załamanie globalnego systemu finansowego, osoby piszące na tego rodzaju blogach czy forach dyskusyjnych podejrzliwie, a nawet wrogo odnoszą się do takich kwestii, jak badania naukowe dotyczące globalnego ocieplenia, obowiązkowe programy szczepień, diaboliczne pakty rzekomo zawierane przez światowe elity w kwestii kontroli umysłów i populacji, działalność tajnych stowarzyszeń czy przenikanie rozmaitych aspektów okultyzmu do kultury masowej. Wśród omawianych przeze mnie blogów znalazł się *The Vigilant Citizen* („Czujny Obywatel"), znany przede wszystkim z analiz symboli zawartych w popularnych wideoklipach i filmach pełnometrażowych, oraz *The Secret Sun* („Tajemne Słońce"), którego główną misją jest wykrywanie „kosmo-mitologicznych" konwergencji. Analiza stosowanych przez nie metod interpretacji historii, polityki lub artefaktów kultury pozwala wysunąć paradoksalną tezę, że lęk przed zniewoleniem i chęć demaskowania zakulisowych poczynań wzmagają podatność amatorów teorii spiskowych na manipulację, a ponadto skłania do pytań o naukowe podstawy tak rozumianego dążenia do prawdy.

Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska

„Wer sucht, der verliert" – zu verschwörerischen Theorien und Mechanismen deren online – Aufdeckung

Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Artikel ist der erhöhten Aktivität der Webseiten gewidmet, die sich mit der Verbreitung von verschwörerischen Theorien befassen und nach der sog. Synchronie suchen. Die in den ersten Dekaden des neuen Jahrhunderts bestehenden Fürchte vor dem Terrorismus, der Überwachung oder dem totalen Zusammenbruch des Finanzsystems ausnutzend äußern sich die in den Blogs oder auf Diskussionsforen schreibenden Personen sehr verdächtig oder sogar feindlich zu solchen Problemen, wie: die Forschungen über globale Erwärmung, pflichtige Schutzimpfungen, die angeblich von Welteliten geschlossenen und die Überwachung von Geistern und Populationen betreffenden diabolischen Pakte, die Tätigkeit von geheimen Vereinen oder das Durchdringen von verschiedenerlei Aspekten des Okkultismus in die Massenkultur. Unter den von der Verfasserin besprochenen Blogs sind auch: der „aufmerksame Bürger" (*The Vigilant Citizen*), der v.a. dafür bekannt ist, dass er die in populären Videoclips und abendfüllenden Filmen enthaltenen Symbole analysiert, und „geheime Sonne" (*The Secret Sun*), deren Hauptaufgabe ist, „kosmologisch-mythologische" Konvergenzen zu enthüllen. Die von den Bloggern angewandten Maßnahmen zur Deutung von Geschichte, Politik oder Kulturartefakten lässt eine widersinnige These aufstellen, dass die Angst vor Unterdrückung und die Absicht, geheime Unternehmen aufzudecken, verursachen, dass die Liebhaber von verschwörerischen Theorien für Manipulation anfällig sind; man müsste auch überlegen, ob solche Methoden, die Wahrheit zu ergründen suchen, überhaupt wissenschaftliche Grundlage haben.

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Civilization Renewal Project – the Ultimate Solution of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

"Science is really just a way of describing the world" – said Margaret Atwood directly after the publication of *Oryx and Crake*.[1] – "What it is not, is something that can give us the answer to essentially metaphysical and religious questions, such as why are we here?" In the novel from 2003, she tells the story of Jimmy/Snowman, an apocalypse survivor recounting the events of the years directly before a biological catastrophe, picturing at the same time the dystopian technocracy of the near future. Since his teenage years in the Compounds, a highly modern and strictly guarded area inhabited by the elite of society, Jimmy has a close friend named Crake, a brilliant scientist disgusted by the decadent, brutality-driven and overpopulated world he is living in. That is why Crake, at that time a literary incarnation of a mad scientist, decides to put an end to this mess by destroying the old order of things and proposing a totally new version. He manages to achieve his first goal by inventing a fatal virus, and the latter by creating a biologically enhanced human species, noble savages perfect in every aspect, that were to replace the already annihilated people. Atwood's dystopian novel proves that biotechnology and genetic engineering, two main branches of the whole universum of science that she seems to be mostly interested in, can move human life forward and improve it in innumerable ways, but the ethics of

[1] Christopher Bantick, "Atwood tackles future FEARS," *Sunday Tasmanian* (16 November 2003), accessed November 6, 2010, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=6&hid=12&sid=18781792-68d1-4fb2-b87e-6334d485d426%40sessionmgr113&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=nfh&AN=200311161029355214.

such procedures can be also equally questionable as something violating the natural status quo. Importantly enough, according to the author, such a kind of literature is not science fiction, but speculative fiction, "based on an accumulation of well-documented research,"[2] since everything she is writing about in *Oryx and Crake* is already happening (or almost happening). In other words, Atwood's concept of speculative fiction is based on discussing the hard facts of contemporary life while only pretending to write about the future. As she once stated: "Nobody can really predict the future, all you can do is look at trends, and that could change at any moment."[3] This is what *Oryx and Crake* really is: a profound insight into the fears of our present as well as of the fast approaching future.

A writer, a philosopher and an environmentalist, Atwood is undeniably familiar with science, as it has been a vital part of her life from early childhood: "Her late father, Carl, was a zoologist. A man she describes warmly as 'very remarkable,' he came from the backwoods of Nova Scotia, put himslef through school by correspondence course and went on to gain a PhD in entomology […]. Eventually he became a professor in Toronto."[4] No wonder her literary vision of science is naturally detailed enough and highly credible; as she stated in a radio interview with Ira Flatow:

> […] this particular [time], we accumulated clippings for every little factoid in the book, in our big, brown research box in the cellar, and we got so many of them we actually had to go to two big, brown research boxes. So all of the things in the book that people may think are weird, and they may think I just made them up – some of them already existed when I was writing the book. For instance, […] the spider goat, that's been up and running in Montreal for some years; it makes silk in its milk, very good for bullet-proof vests. And a number of the other things have either been made already, or people are working very hard to make them.[5]

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[2] Coral Ann Howells, *Margaret Atwood* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 173.

[3] Kenneth Whyte, "Payback Time," *Maclean's*, vol. 121, no. 40 (13 October 2008), accessed November 6, 2010, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=8&hid=12&sid=18781792-68d1-4fb2-b87e-6334d485d426%40sessionmgr113&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=34803776.

[4] Peter Kemp, "Visions of the Future's Darkness," *The Sunday Times* (20 April 2003), p. 6, accessed November 6, 2010, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=10&hid=12&sid=18781792-68d1-4fb2-b87e-6334d485d426%40sessionmgr113&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=nfh&AN=7EH3957877096.

[5] Ira Flatow, "Interview: Margaret Atwood discusses science concepts used in the various novels she's authored," *Talk of the Nation – Science Friday* (30 April 2004), accessed November 6, 2010, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=112&sid=18781792

However, despite giving credit to science, Atwood strongly believes in and advocates the so-called intuitive factor, as well. That dichotomy can be easily noticed in the two opening epigraphs of the novel: one being a quotation from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the other one from Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. This choice of sources, besides contrasting a female point of view with a male one, clearly emphasizes the binary opposition between Swift's objectivity and Woolf's emotionality, as Coral Ann Howells states: "Reason versus imagination, science versus art, but do such binaries really exist (especially when we remember that *Gulliver's Travels* is both a fantasy and a satire)?"[6] Consequently, Atwood's novel's reality visibly consists of two separate realms, which seem to complement each other. As Howells notices: "[…] the most striking feature of *Oryx and Crake* is the way everything is doubled, not only the title and the epigraphs but also the narrative structure, while not surprisingly there are two dystopian visions – one a bioengineered wilderness nightmare and the other a savagely satirical vision of the late capitalist Western society."[7] Since the method of the double seems absolutely crucial in Atwood's vision of the fears leading to the civilization renewal project, let us see on what exemplary surface this technique may operate.

Atwood's double vision becomes most vivid when the two cental characters of the novel are discussed:[8] Crake, an amoral scientific genius, and Jimmy (later also known as Snowman), a man of words, i.e. a representative of the dying realm of language and art, for which there is no room in the new reality: "'When any civilization is dust and ashes,' [Jimmy] said, 'art is all that's left over. Images, words, music. Imaginative structures. Meaning – human meaning, that is – is defined by them. You have to admit it.'"[9] Maybe a bit pathetically, Jimmy tries to defend the old values. Nevertheless, Crake's opinion on art is cold, sober and sarcastic at the same time:

> People can amuse themselves any way they like. If they want to play with themselves in public, whack off over doodling, scribbling, and fiddling, it's fine with me. Anyway it serves a biological purpose […]. The male frog, in mating season […] makes as much noise as it can.

-68d1-4fb2-b87e-6334d485d426%40sessionmgr113&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl-2ZQ%3d%3d#db=nfh&AN=6XN200404301502#db=nfh&AN=6XN200404301502.

[6] Howells, *Margaret Atwood*, p. 172.

[7] Howells, *Margaret Atwood*, pp. 171–172.

[8] Of course, one cannot forget about the title Oryx: the only main female protagonist in this surprisingly male novel. However, Oryx's role is seemingly marginal, as she acts more as a stereotypical and compound vision of a woman than a real round character. In that way she symbolizes an object of men's desires (with the stress on the word object), which helps Atwood in her harsh criticism of such an attitude. Nonetheless, that theme, as too broad and not relevant to the main topic, is not going to be discussed here.

[9] Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), p. 167.

> The females are attracted to the male frog with the biggest, deepest voice because it suggests a more powerful frog, one with superior genes. Small male frogs – it's been documented – discover that if they position themselves in empty drainpipes, the pipe acts as a voice amplifier, and the small frog appears much larger than it really is. […] So that's what art is, for the artist […]. An empty drainpipe. An emplifier. A stab at getting laid.[10]

The differences between those two are then clearly drawn: generally speaking, Jimmy represents the past and morality, Crake stands for the unscrupulous, "perfect" future; Jimmy does not understand science at all, whereas Crake embodies its utility and power. However, to understand their opposing, and yet, in a way, similar standpoints, as well as to comprehend the forecoming concept of the renewed world, one has to visualise the reality they live in, with all its high-tech threats and anxieties, since it is the reason for Atwood's ironic moralistic tract, her harsh criticism of the mechanisms of science.

Atwood's dystopian vision is quite typical for this literary genre, i.e. dystopia and in a broader meaning – speculative fiction, at least in the sense that it is built upon the totalitarian assumption that society is divided into those possessing the power, here represented by the post-capitalistic corporations, and those being exploited by it. What the author adds to this formula is her conscious ecological way of thinking: "It is a world of accelerating environmental degeneration, where devastating droughts and floods have wiped out much of the east coast of America as well as the orchards and the Everglades in Florida within one generation. Human beings have become radically separated from their natural environment, and that condition of alienation finds its parallel in patterns of social breakdown."[11] Thus, faced with mass pollution, the priviliged (i.e. mainly scientists who are simply useful for the corporal government) dwell in the so-called Compounds, where they are provided with everything from clean air to the latest technological gadgets, but all at the cost of personal freedom. In a far too optimistic manner this division can be explained in the way Jimmy's father describes it to his then young son: "Long time ago, in the days of knights and dragons, the kings and dukes had lived in castles, with high walls and drawbridges and slots on the ramparts so you could pour hot pitch on your enemies […], and the Compounds were the same idea. Castles for keeping you and your buddies nice and safe inside, and for keeping everybody else outside."[12] This applies to the priviliged ones; the rest of society live in the polluted and brutality-driven pleeblands: "[…] vacant warehouses, burnt-out tenements, empty parking lots. Here and

[10] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, pp. 167–168.
[11] Howells, *Margaret Atwood*, p. 174.
[12] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 28.

there were sheds and huts put together from scavenged materials – sheets of tin, slabs of plywood – and inhabited no doubt by squatters. How did such people exist?"[13]

Nonetheless, for the Compounds' inhabitants – and the book's main characters come from that class of society – pleeblands represent a sort of forbidden fruit, some kind of missing reality. Reality that, if not acquired physically – which is almost completely impossible because the very idea of technocracy is based on perfect safeguarding of its greatest treasure – can be only experienced virtually, i.e. on-line. And here rises the question of moral indifference, so relentlessly stigmatised by Atwood not only in this novel, here taking the form of widespread mixture of mechanical sexuality and blind violence, since what teenage Crake and Jimmy do is spend whole days surfing the net and visiting websites showing human torture and hard pornography: "Then they went to HottTotts, a global sex-trotting site. 'The next best thing to being there,' was how it was advertised. It claimed to show real sex tourists, filmed while doing things they'd be put in jail for back in their home countries. Their faces weren't visible, their names weren't used […]. The locations were supposed to be countries where life was cheap and kids were plentiful, and where you could buy anything you wanted."[14] For Crake and Jimmy, as we may assume the typical representatives of the future intelligentsia, it was just an artificial counterpart, a clone-like reality. No wonder cloning constitutes the peak point of Atwood's satirical criticism of the American, or Western, Dream.

Bioengineering of the near future seems the greatest menace in the novel. The pages of the book are full of strange transgenic splices, from pet-like rakunks (a hybrid of raccoons and skunks), to more dangerous ones, like wolvogs (vicious wolves that look like friendly, domestic dogs). However, what interests Atwood the most is the direct interdependence between science and mankind, and the first sign of it appears with a completely new creature called a pigoon.

> The goal of the pigoon project was to grow an assortment of fullproof human-tissue organs in a transgenic knockout pig host – organs that transplant smoothly and avoid rejection, but would also be able to fend off attacks by opportunistic microbes and viruses, of which there were more strains every year. A rapid-maturity gene was spliced in so the pigoon kidneys and livers and hearts would be ready sooner, and now they were perfecting a pigoon that could grow five or six kidneys at a time. Such a host animal could be reaped of its extra

[13] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 185.
[14] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, pp. 89–90.

> kidneys; then, rather than being destroyed, it could keep on living and grow more organs […].[15]

As Atwood stated in the interview with Danielle Groen: "As far as inventing new animals, or using pigs to grow kidneys – that's starting to happen now. They've broken the code. Whereas when I wrote *Oryx and Crake*, they hadn't quite figured out how to get past the rejection factor. So 'What next?' I say."[16] What she does in *Oryx and Crake* is to move her prose a bit further just to display this very "next" phase, i.e. a complete renewal of the old, or present from our perspective, civilization.

Obviously, the key factor in the new apocalypse is Crake: "[…] a demonic figure perhaps, like H.G. Wells's Dr Moreau, but also a failed visionary like Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, whose utopian project results in the near extinction of the human race."[17] As Richard Gerber describes the general notion of a mad scientist: "The sinister powerful insane scientist has become a favourite theme of popular imagination, and the utopian fantasies are full of them. They may not be insane from the 'scientific' point of view, of course, but from the merely human one […]. Just like the devil, the sorcerer, and the witch in former ages, nowadays the scientist, preferably the insane scientist, lurks behind everything."[18] From the moment Crake appears in the novel as a teenager, he distinguishes himself: "[…] Crake was different. More like an adult […]; in fact more adult than a lot of adults. You could have an objective conversation with him, a conversation in which events and hypotheses were followed through to their logical conclusions."[19] Logical objectivity is one side of the coin, the other one being an insatiable appetite for knowledge of all kinds. Atwood herself proposes here a vital trail: "[…] create-an-animal was so much fun, said the guys doing it; it made you feel like God,"[20] and this feeling definitely stands behind Crake's actions. Interestingly, Crake's direct inspiration seems to derive from the "free" virtual world: an on-line interactive game called Extinctathon, whose main goal is, in brief, to challenge other players by enumerating the bigger number of extinct species: "'Adam named the living animals, MaddAddam names the dead one. Do you want to

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[15] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 22.

[16] Danielle Groen, "Margaret Atwood Gets Her Payback," *Chatelaine*, vol. 82, no. 10 (October 2009), accessed November 6, 2010, http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=12&hid=12&sid=18781792-68d1-4fb2-b87e-6334d485d426%40sessionmgr113&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=f5h&AN=44098532.

[17] Howells, *Margaret Atwood*, p. 172.

[18] Richard Gerber, *Utopian Fantasy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1973), p. 57.

[19] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 69.

[20] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 51.

play?'"[21] It is worth mentioning here that however challenging such a game is, it is not impossible to play it, especially when one realizes that in Atwood's vision of the future killing (and eating) endangered species is one of the most trendy crazes, and thus their number decreases dramatically. Coming back to the mysterious game, it was only later, in the protagonist's adult years, that it became transparent Extinctathon's administrators constituted a kind of alterglobalist sabotage group which Crake became familiar with and later on it played a very important role in his final showdown. Nevertheless, it was definitely during his formative years that the idea of extinction – both past and future – materialized in his mind. Its mature outcome was the "Paradice" project: Crake's concept of an instant and ultimate remedy for mankind ("As a species we're in deep trouble, worse than anyone's saying. […] take it from me, we're running out of space-time,"[22] he used to say), a complete annihilation of our species and its replacement by the enhanced version, version 2.0, as we could say.

The improved human beings, in the book often referred to as the Crakers – another reminder that Crake, their creator, is a kind of a postmodern Doctor Frankenstein – are a peculiar visualization of pure perfection; in the interview with Ira Flatow, Atwood explains it in the simplest and the most ironic possible way, saying:

> They're genetically engineered to be better than we. For instance, they've got built-in sunblock – that would be a plus. They've got built-in mosquito repellant – another plus. They're completely vegetarian, and they can eat grass and leaves, unlike us. […]. But best of all, they will never have any sexual jealousy because, unlike us – we're serially monogamous – they are seasonal like lots of other animals and fish and birds. Think how useful that would be. There will never be any more "no means yes." […]. But, mind you, these people will never write *Othello*, they'll never write Shakespeare's sonnets, they'll never write *Wuthering Heights* because they can't write. Think of what an improvement that would be.[23]

Obviously, Atwood uses the word "improvement" in a highly sarcastic way so as to show that perfection always comes at a certain cost, and that better does not necessarily mean good. These words find their direct counterpart and, at the same time, reason in the scene when Jimmy sees the Crakers for the first time:

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[21] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, pp. 80–81.
[22] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 295.
[23] Flatow, "Interview: Margaret Atwood discusses science."

> They were naked, but not like the Noodie News: there was no self-consciousness, none at all. At first he couldn't believe them, they were so beautiful. Black, yellow, white, brown, all available skin colours. Each individual was exquisite. "Are they robots, or what?" he said.
> "You know how they've got floor models, in furniture stores?" said Crake.
> "Yeah?"
> "These are the floor models."[24]

Being too perfect, too overwhelmingly exquisite, Crakes simply seem to be unreal. Importantly, all those improvements of the new race of people are not restricted just to the breeding and feeding field; Crake also works on such things as racism, hierarchy amongst the group, and the like: "What had been altered was nothing less than the ancient brain. Gone were its destructive features, the features responsible for the world's current illnesses."[25] Obviously, the genetically-modified characteristics possessed by this completely new human species are just a means to achieve what appears to be Crake's *idée fixe*, i.e. immortality. However, his cunning conception of immortality is based on the unawareness of mortality, i.e. he simply eliminates the fear of death making his Crakers die painlessly and without any cause at the age of 35: "'Immortality,' said Crake, 'is a concept. If you take "mortality" as being, not death, but the foreknowledge of it and the fear of it, then "immortality" is the absence of such fear. Babies are immortal. Edit out the fear, and you'll be…',"[26] as he once told Jimmy, suggestively not finishing his utterance. In other words, what Crake generates, is a breed of surrogates, quasi-people deprived of typically human vices but also emotionally barren, with neither vivid imagination, nor artistic drive. It is easy to see here the parallel between Atwood's criticism of the contemporary trends in bioengineering and Jean Baudrillard's concept of clones and cloning; as the French philosopher critically states: "Cloning is […] the last stage of the history and modeling of the body, the one at which, reduced to its abstract and genetic formula, the individual is destined to serial propagation. […]. What is lost in the work that is serially reproduced, is its *aura*, its singular quality of the here and now […]. What is lost is the original, which only a history itself nostalgic and retrospective can reconstitute as 'authentic'."[27] Similarly, Atwood's opinion on Crake's clones is rather ambiguous: noticing both their positive and negative

[24] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 302.
[25] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 305.
[26] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 303.
[27] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 99.

aspects, she tries to avoid any direct judgments; strangely enough, the same policy seems to apply to Crake himself.

Nevertheless, being "[…] a genetic materialist, [who] practices science minus any dimension of ethical responsibility […]," [28] Crake is doomed to lose this game, and there are at least two prognoses of his defeat. Let us start from the very name of his god-like venture, i.e. the "Paradice" project, as Coral Ann Howells states, "[…] as the name 'Paradice' is itself a parody, with suggestions of trickery coded into its spelling, so Crake's atheistic definition of immortality is nothing but advertising hype." [29] As we shall see later on, this binary opposition of atheistic-religious ideas of immortality will resonate in the most unexpected way on the last pages of the novel. However, when it comes to Crake's new people, in the already quoted interview, enumerating Crakers' vices that their creator tried to dispose of – "all the things that drive us nuts" – Atwood also points at the features he did not manage to do so, like dreams, where the word "dream" stands for the whole set of imaginative powers so characteristic of human nature: "He could not get rid of music; that seems to be very deep in us. And he may have been unable to get rid of ultimate theology of some kind because we are a species that asks questions, and he couldn't get rid of the desire to ask questions. And sooner or later, we're going to ask, 'Where did we come from?'." [30] Obviously, it reflects Atwood's idea that there is a number of quite specific concepts that seem to be genetically built in our nature, art and religion, being the hardest to uproot ones; however, its also worth underlining here that Atwood does not assess those features: for her it simply acts like a scientific act.

The second main reason for Crake's defeat is what Coral Ann Howells identifies as his complete subjection to virtual reality: "[…] he never stops playing computer games […]. Grandmaster Red-necked Crake plays out Extinctathon to its end, when virtual reality suddenly shifts into the dimensions of the real and causes a worldwide catastrophe." [31] In other words, the critic's suggestion that it is only a boy's silly game seems quite clear, which would be true if one agrees with Baudrillard's concept of simulacra replacing what we call in a rather old-fashioned "reality." Nonetheless, Atwood herself neither seems to believe in such a kind of estrangement (her whole concept of speculative fiction is pointed at the contemporariness), nor is she that harsh with her protagonist: again, she mainly blames human nature that Crake could not dispose of in his perfect creatures. In the final chapters of the novel Jimmy/Snowman, who survives the bio-apocalypse and becomes a kind of a blind guide for the Crakers – something that was probably minutely

[28] Howells, *Margaret Atwood*, p. 178.
[29] Howells, *Margaret Atwood*, p. 178.
[30] Flatow, "Interview: Margaret Atwood discusses science."
[31] Howells, *Margaret Atwood*, p. 176.

planned by his then late friend Crake – discovers that the new people made an idol depicting him. What is more, he catches them chanting his nickname, which turns out to be a primitive version of a prayer; as one of the Crakers explains to Jimmy: "We made a picture of you, to help us send out our voices to you."[32] Definitely, this act of pre-religious consciousness is not something that Crake had in mind while engineering the enhanced species: imagination and creative thinking that more or less stand behind idolizing, art and a sense of humor were to be deleted: "'Watch out for art,' Crake used to say. 'As soon as they start doing art, we're in trouble.' Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, in Crake's view. Next they'd be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave goods, and the afterlife, and sin, and Linear B, and kings, and then slavery and war."[33] That was the factor he obviously either neglected or underestimated.

In *Oryx and Crake*, as well as in her other books, Atwood is perverse: her protagonist's defeat becomes the victory of all human nature as we tend to define it. What is crucial here, science proves to be only a tool that cannot overcome the typical features of our species: "Well, technology never goes nutty by itself. You know, it doesn't sit in a room going nutty yet,"[34] as the writer once stated. It is then human beings themselves that the cause and effect both come from. Simultaneously, it is also human nature that is the greatest source of all civilization fears and anxieties, which means that the latter ones cannot be eliminated by the total annihilation of human beings. The sad conclusion may then be that Crake's games concerning the better future are not silly, but absolutely pointless.

[32] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 361.
[33] Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, p. 361.
[34] Flatow, "Interview: Margaret Atwood discusses science."

Sławomir Kuźnicki

Project odnowy cywilizacji – Margaret Atwood wizja ostatecznego rozwiązania w powieści *Oryks i Derkacz*

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł koncentruje się wokół zagadnienia biotechnologii oraz jego zastosowania w antyutopii Margaret Atwood pt. *Oryks i Derkacz*. Dostrzegając niejeden problem dotyczący komercjalizacji życia (m.in. wszechogarniający konsumpcjonizm, różnice w statusie finansowym różnych grup społecznych, zalew internetowej pornografii), kanadyjska pisarka przede wszystkim zadaje pytania o moralną stronę inżynierii genetycznej. Wyni-

kiem tych pytań jest iście rewolucyjny zwrot, apokalipsa, w następstwie której stary porządek przestaje istnieć i zastępuje go niebo na ziemi. Jednakże wizja Atwood przesiąknięta jest ironią, jako że jej postapokaliptyczny świat przedstawiony jest jako daleki od wizji utopijnej: stare problemy, jak efekt cieplarniany i jego skutki, pozostają; dodatkowo pojawiają się nowe zagrożenia, bezpośrednio wynikające z eksperymentów genetycznych zapoczątkowanych przez wcześniejszą, naszą cywilizację. Tym samym, niniejszy artykuł koncentruje się na powodach unicestwienia obecnej cywilizacji oraz stara się ukazać, dlaczego nowa wersja świata, jakkolwiek uważnie przemyślana i logicznie zaprojektowana, nie ma realnych szans powodzenia.

Sławomir Kuźnicki

Das Projekt zur Erneuerung der Zivilisation – Margaret Atwoods Vorstellung von einer definitiven Lösung in dem Roman *Oryx und Crake*

Zusammenfassung

In seinem Artikel konzentriert sich der Verfasser auf das Problem der Biotechnologie und deren Anwendung in der Antiutopie *Oryx und Crake* von Margaret Atwood. Zahlreiche Anzeichen der Lebenskommerzialisierung (u.a.: allumfassender Konsumerismus, unterschiedliche finanzielle Lage von verschiedenen Gesellschaftsgruppen, Internetpornografie) wahrnehmend, fragt die kanadische Schriftstellerin nach ethischer Seite der Gentechnologie. Die Antwort findet sie in einer revolutionären Wendung, der Apokalypse, in deren Folge alte Ordnung zerstört und durch Himmel auf der Erde ersetzt wird. Atwoods Vorstellung ist jedoch ironisch gefärbt, denn ihre postapokalyptische Welt ist weit davon entfernt, utopisch zu werden: alte Probleme, wie z.B. Treibhauseffekt und dessen Folgen sind immer noch aktuell, und es erscheinen auch neue aus den von der früheren (unseren) Zivilisation eingeleiteten genetischen Experimenten folgende Bedrohungen. Der vorliegende Artikel bezweckt, die Ursachen für Zerstörung unserer gegenwärtiger Zivilisation zu schildern und darzulegen, warum die neue Version der Welt, wenn auch wohl durchdachte und logisch entworfene, keine Chancen auf einen Erfolg hat.

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Indulging a Terrorist's Fears: A Critical Evaluation of Theodore Kaczynski's *Industrial Society and Its Future*

In mid-September of 1995 the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* published *Industrial Society and Its Future*, a 35,000-word dissertation that decried the effects of technological advancement on mankind and the planet. Its author was Theodore John Kaczynski (1942–), a neo-Luddite terrorist dubbed the "Unabomber," who was responsible for an eighteen-year-long series of mail bombings across the United States that had taken three lives and resulted in twenty-three injuries. He had earned his nickname due to his preference for targeting university faculty and his failed attempt to explode an American Airlines plane – "Unabomber" became shorthand for university and airline bomber.[1] Kaczynski threatened that if *Industrial Society and Its Future* were not published more bombings would ensue, simultaneously promising to desist in his lethal activities once his views were made public.[2] The manifesto expressed a multitude of fears concerning modern civilization, stating that "[t]he Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race," and designating the current "industrial-technological system" culpable for the continuing annihilation of human free-

[1] Alston Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber," *Atlantic Monthly* (June 2000), accessed June 14, 2010, http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/2000/06/chase.htm.

[2] Bettina Boxall, Rich Connell, and David Ferrell, "Unabomber Sends New Warnings," *Los Angeles Times* (30 June 1995), accessed June 14, 2010, http://articles.latimes.com/1995-06-30/news/mn-18891_1_los-angeles-international-airport.

dom.[3] In essence, Kaczynski called for a revolution against the modern world, and the propagation of an ideology that would ensure that "its remnants will be smashed beyond repair, so that the system cannot be reconstituted."[4] When it appeared, *Industrial Society and Its Future* garnered a surprisingly positive reception in the American media.[5] Since that time the work's reputation has grown among academics and radical environmentalists, who have indulged its author and his fears, and created a mini-cult around what is perhaps America's favourite terrorist. A critical evaluation of Kaczynski's claim to be taken seriously is therefore long overdue. Though the "Unabomber Manifesto" certainly expresses some rational fears (disregarding the fact that they inspired deadly insanity), its importance as an ideological tract has been overestimated by readers drawn to Kaczynski's bizarre charisma, strong pro-environmentalist stances, and ability to tap into the frustration of those disenchanted with modernity.

Theodore Kaczynski was no ordinary madman. A child mathematics prodigy, he was admitted to Harvard at age sixteen, and later became the youngest professor ever hired at the University of California, Berkeley. Despite his brilliant academic success, a deep anti-social streak defined his personality. At six months, baby Ted was hospitalized for an allergic reaction and denied human contact for months. Upon return home his mother wrote in her diary: "Baby home from hospital and is healthy but quite unresponsive after his experience."[6] Kaczynski grew into an introverted boy who would shut down emotionally in times of social stress. In fifth grade he scored 167 on an IQ test, but avoided contact with other children and spent most of junior high school correcting his algebra teacher. Meanwhile, he immersed himself in classical music and academics.[7] It was at Harvard that Kaczynski began to fantasize about disconnecting himself from modern society and leading a primitive lifestyle, influenced by a curriculum drawn up in the shadow of the Atom bomb, which understandably stressed the hazardous aspects of technological advancement.[8] Nonetheless, he graduated in 1962 and earned a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Michigan. The subsequent years at Berkeley were not happy. Though he was promoted to assistant pro-

[3] Theodore Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*, 1995, accessed June 15, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/unabomber/manifesto.text.htm.

[4] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

[5] Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber."

[6] Paul Ferguson, "Ted Kaczynski: Evil Man or Tortured Soul?" CNNfyi, accessed June 8, 2010, http://edition.cnn.com/fyi/school.tools/profiles/kaczynski/index.story.html.

[7] Robert K. Elder, "A Brother Lost, a Brotherhood Found," *Chicago Tribune* (17 May 2008), accessed June 8, 2010, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-unabomber-story.0.7970571.story.

[8] Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber."

fessor in his second year (1968) and published several important articles, his shyness alienated students and he grew disillusioned with the university system, worried he was helping to train a new generation of faceless engineers and technocrats. Kaczynski summarily quit at age twenty-seven, at the time offering no explanation to his colleagues or family.[9] In his diary, however, the young man confided that he took the Berkeley position only to earn money to buy an isolated piece of land. The disturbing passage also expressed his growing misanthropy: "If it doesn't work and if I can get back to civilization before I starve then I will come back […] and kill someone I hate."[10]

In 1971, after holding down a series of low-level jobs, Kaczynski fulfilled his dream of moving to a remote cabin in Montana with no electricity or running water, where he intended to live self-sufficiently in the unspoiled wild.[11] Though already convinced of technology's destructiveness, when his favourite spot in the forest was cut down to build a highway he finally snapped. Kaczynski later recorded in an interview: "You just can't imagine how upset I was. It was from that point on I decided that, rather than trying to acquire further wilderness skills, I would work on getting back at the system. Revenge."[12] Thus began a sporadic bombing campaign, beginning with a mail bomb addressed to a materials engineering professor at Northwestern University. Later victims included a computer scientist, military official, and geneticist.[13] By the mid-1990s Kaczyski's activities began to receive widespread national attention, aided by his own letter-writing campaign in which he explained his motives. In 1994 one of his mail bombs killed public relations executive Thomas J. Mosser, head of the controversial firm Burson-Marsteller, known for representing corporations responsible for natural disasters and assisting third-world dictators in promoting their countries for tourism and investment. In a terse missive to *The New York Times* Kaczynski explained that he targeted Mosser for helping Exxon "clean up its public image" after the Valdez oil spill in Alaska, and "manipulating people's attitudes" in general.[14] Shortly after, Kaczynski sent *Industrial Society and its Future* out for public consumption under the guise of a terrorist organization called the "Freedom Club."

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[9] Robert McFadden, "Prisoner of Rage: From a Child of Promise to the Unabomb Suspect," *New York Times* (26 May 1996), accessed June 8, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/1996/05/26/us/prisoner-of-rage-a-special-report-from-a-child-of-promise-to-the-unabom-suspect.html?pagewanted=all.

[10] Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber."

[11] Ferguson, "Ted Kaczynski: Evil Man or Tortured Soul?"

[12] "Interview with Ted Kaczynski." *Earth First! Journal* (June 1999), accessed June 12, 2010, http://www.primitivism.com/kaczynski.htm.

[13] McFadden, "Prisoner of Rage: From a Child of Promise to the Unabomb Suspect."

[14] Pierre Thomas and Benjamin Weiser, "Reputed 'Manifesto' Recovered," *Washington Post* (13 April 1996), A01.

Despite his unusual bio, professor Kaczynski's treatise offers some legitimate social criticism – however tempered by a final apocalyptic vision of societal destruction worthy of murderer. Its opening salvo is direct and unequivocal: "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life-expectancy of those of us who live in 'advanced' countries, but they have destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world."[15] In addition, any "continued development of technology will worsen the situation," subjecting human beings to "greater social disruption."[16] Kaczynski's main culprit, and indeed target, is the "industrial-technological system," whose erection has come at "the cost of permanently reducing human beings and many other living organisms to engineered products and mere cogs in the social machine."[17] His solution and only hope for ameliorating human existence is a revolution aimed at the "economic and technological basis of the present society," accompanied by a complete return to pre-industrial modes of life – as there exists "no way of reforming or modifying the system so as to prevent it from depriving people of dignity and autonomy."[18] If this revolution fails, *Industrial Society and Its Future* ominously warns, human freedom will cease to exist, and people will fall into greater dependency on technology and further frustrated mental imprisonment at the hands of modern bureaucratic structures.

Kaczynski initially frames his manifesto around the psychological dangers of the contemporary world. He claims that modern civilization is marked by a mindset he calls "leftism," which is largely exemplified by America's liberal establishment within academia and politics, and its struggles to achieve equality regardless of race, class or gender. Leftism in particular affects: "socialists, collectivists, 'politically correct' types, feminists, gay and disability activists, animal rights activists and the like."[19] According to Kaczynski, two particular tendencies characterize the leftist: "feelings of inferiority" and "oversocialization."[20] The first is shared across the board, primarily among those from "from privileged strata of society," who are nonetheless marked by a "spectrum of related traits [such as] low self-esteem, feelings of powerlessness, depressive tendencies, defeatism, guilt, self-hatred, etc." – all brought on, he argues, by the status of the individual in industrial society.[21] The result is

[15] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[16] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[17] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[18] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[19] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[20] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[21] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

"an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak (women), defeated (American Indians), repellent (homosexuals), or otherwise inferior."[22] Kaczynski charges that such leftists truly believe such groups to be worse, but are unable to admit this to themselves.[23] As an illustration, he writes: "Feminists are desperately anxious to prove that women are as strong as capable as men. Clearly they are nagged by a fear that women may *not* be as strong and as capable as men" [emphasis in original].[24] Because these feelings of inferiority are internalized, Kaczynski observes that: "Leftists tend to hate anything that has an image of being strong, good and successful. They hate America, they hate Western civilization, [and] they hate white males."[25] As such, the leftist "is anti-individualistic, pro-collectivist. He wants society to solve everyone's needs for them [and] take care of them."[26] Herein lies a bitter irony, as leftists turns to massive organizations and movements in a futile effort to reform the very society that has afflicted their psychology. Those who lead, meanwhile, are found among the group's "oversocialized" vanguard.

Kaczynski states that individuals suffering from "oversocialization" often make up the most vocal and influential part of the leftist establishment, motivated not by principle, but shame. In modern liberal society hypersensitive political correctness, or the "moral code of our society," creates an onerous burden.[27] Specifically, those who are oversocialized "cannot even experience, without guilt, thoughts or feelings that are contrary to the accepted morality; [they] cannot think 'unclean' thoughts."[28] This limiting of mental discourse constitutes "a psychological leash" that "results in a sense of constraint and powerlessness that can be a severe hardship."[29] The only release available to oversocialized leftists is a fatuous rebellion against a society that in principle shares their values. Kaczynski charges that "the left takes an accepted moral principle, adopts it as its own, and then accuses mainstream society of violating that principle," citing examples such as "racial equality, equality of the sexes, helping poor people, peace as opposed to war, nonviolence generally, freedom of expression, [and] kindness to animals."[30] He points out that the above issues actually constitute widely accepted ideals, valuable to the leftists only because they can justify "their hostility to society by claiming (with some

[22] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[23] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[24] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[25] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[26] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[27] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[28] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[29] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*
[30] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future.*

degree of truth) that society is not living up to these principles."[31] Though some might view left-wing criticisms of the United States as legitimate attacks on hypocrisy that are directed towards empowerment, Kaczynski precludes this possibility, insisting instead that such redundant protests are provoked by a restrictive and coercive environment that renders the individual powerless – "We are even told by experts how to eat, how to exercise, how to make love, [and] how to raise our kids and so forth."[32] Rebellion, he argues, is a natural recourse stemming from a mode of life that denies autonomy and the capacity to stand entirely on one's own two feet. Granting for a moment this leap of logic, Kaczynski holds the bureaucratized and autocratic industrial-technological system responsible such psychological encumbrances, which ensure leftism becomes "a kind of religion" in that it "plays a psychological role much like that which religion plays for some people."[33] He continues on to describe leftism's evangelical qualities:

> The leftist *needs* to believe in leftism; it plays a vital role in his psychological economy [emphasis in original]. His beliefs are not easily modified by logic or facts. He has a deep conviction that leftism is morally Right with a capital R, and that he has not only a right but a duty to impose leftist morality on everyone.[34]

These impulses, meanwhile, would be nonexistent were present conditions not so far removed from, and indeed contradictory to, those that formed mankind's behaviour and psychological character in the pre-industrial past, when, writes Kaczynski, fulfilling physical needs was paramount, and defined something he calls "the power process."

Simply put, the power process consists of human beings designating goals and independently achieving them through considerable effort. Kaczynski sees it as a biological need that cannot be suppressed or substituted. But because "[i]n modern industrial society only minimal effort is necessary to satisfy one's physical needs," people inevitably descend into foggy existence devoid of purposeful direction.[35] In an excellent example of Kaczynskian argumentation, he explains:

> Consider the hypothetical case of a man who can have anything he wants just by wishing for it. Such a man has power, but he will develop serious psychological problems. At first he will have a lot of

[31] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[32] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[33] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[34] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[35] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

> fun, but by and by he will become acutely bored and demoralized. Eventually he may become clinically depressed. History shows that leisured aristocracies tend to become decadent. This is not true of fighting aristocracies that have to struggle to maintain their power. But leisured, secure aristocracies that have no need to exert themselves usually become bored, hedonistic and demoralized, even though they have power. This shows that power is not enough. One must have goals toward which to exercise one's power.[36]

As the possibility of achieving "real goals" is denied by advanced technology, Kaczynski states people must find a "surrogate activity" – an artificial goal linked to one's career or hobby – that can hopefully provide "fulfillment."[37] To mankind's misfortune, such diversions are a poor substitute, as autonomy is inevitably quashed by a system that issues "rigid orders […] from above."[38] Importantly, Kaczynski designates science as the most dangerous of surrogate activities. He writes that the motive of the average scientist "is neither curiosity nor a desire to benefit humanity but the need to go through the power process."[39] The dangerous outcome is that "science marches on blindly, without regard to the real welfare of the human race or to any other standard, obedient only to the psychological needs of the scientists and of the government officials and corporation executives who provide the funds for research."[40] Yet at the same time, Kaczynski asserts (in apparent contradiction to his imposing framework of technology-based institutions) that "people generally have a great deal of autonomy in pursuing their surrogate activities," and though he confesses some people claim to derive true satisfaction from career or others pursuits, they are in fact living in bad faith. Only fulfilling biological needs, Kaczynski insists, can endanger "self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of power," begging the question of why catching a fish for dinner necessarily provides more satisfaction than, for example, more advanced endeavours such as curing polio.[41]

Regardless of any potential value to surrogate activities, assuming for the moment the legitimacy of their characterization, Kaczynski is adamant that the baleful costs of the disruption of the power process are rife within contemporary society, listed as: "boredom, demoralization, low self-esteem, inferiority feelings, defeatism, depression, anxiety, guilt, frustration, hostility, spouse or child abuse, insatiable hedonism, abnormal sexual behavior, sleep disorders,

[36] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[37] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[38] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[39] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[40] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[41] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

[and] eating disorders, etc."[42] Whether these problems are exclusively consequences of industrialization, and not merely dangers that sporadically befall humans of any era, is addressed by Kaczynski, who begrudgingly admits:

> Any of the foregoing symptoms can occur in any society, but in modern industrial society they are present on a massive scale. We aren't the first to mention that the world today seems to be going crazy. This sort of thing is not normal for human societies. There is good reason to believe that primitive man suffered from less stress and frustration and was better satisfied with his way of life than modern man is. It is true that not all was sweetness and light in primitive societies. Abuse of women and common among the Australian aborigines, transexuality was fairly common among some of the American Indian tribes. But it does appear that *generally speaking* the kinds of problems that we have listed in the preceding paragraph were far less common among primitive peoples than they are in modern society [emphasis in original].[43]

Perhaps sensing that the idea of destroying society as we know it for the possibility that some of those who survive, *generally speaking*, might encounter fewer psychological burdens will not strike many readers as a strong incentive for action, Kaczynski adds more factors to his equation. Modernity, he further argues, has crowded humans together under unnatural conditions, increasing "stress and aggression" and isolating man from nature.[44] Also, Kaczynski writes that, "a technological society *has to* weaken family ties and local communities if it is to function efficiently" [emphasis in original].[45] This is so because the system demands the individual's primary loyalty, as the community's needs are contradictory. In contrast to the more stable natural world, where change occurs slowly, the advanced corporate structure induces people to move to new locations, undermining the formation of cohesive small-scale groups and traditional values. The system as well demands that human behaviour be regulated: "At work, people have to do what they are

[42] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

[43] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

[44] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

[45] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*. It is at this point, incidentaly, that Kaczynski makes his only reference to conservative politics: "The conservatives are fools: They whine about the decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological progress and economic growth. Apparently it never occurs to them that you can't make rapid, drastic changes in the technology and the economy of a society without causing rapid changes in all other aspects of the society as well, and that such rapid changes inevitably break down traditional values."

told to do, otherwise production would be thrown into chaos."[46] Obedience is imperative, he correctly observes, because "[industrial] society *must* be highly organized and decisions *have to* be made that affect very large numbers of people" [emphasis in original].[47] This dynamic effectively erases autonomy:

> When a decision affects, say, a million people, then each of the affected individuals has, on the average, only a one-millionth share in making the decision… The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system.[48]

As examples Kaczynski cites the push for a more science-based curriculum in schools, regardless of what students want to study, and workers who are constantly retrained to keep up with technological progress, regardless of whether they want to or not. "If human needs were put before technical necessity," he points out, "there would be economic problems, unemployment, shortages or worse."[49]

The system also takes a further psychological toll, quite apart from the evils of leftism, in setting artificial yet strict standards of personal conduct. In a personally relevant observation, Kaczynski states that the nature of the system defines the concept of mental health in society "by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress."[50] He writes: "our society tends to regard as a 'sickness' any mode of thought or behavior that is inconvenient for the system, and this is plausible because when an individual doesn't fit into the system it causes pain to the individual as well as problems for the system. Thus the manipulation of an individual to adjust him to the system is seen as a 'cure' for a 'sickness' and therefore as good."[51] Kaczynski subsequently ruminates on how conformity is maintained: "Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them the drugs to take away their unhappiness. Science fiction? It is already happening to some extent in our own society."[52] Citing the rising rates of clinical depression, which he attributes to the disturbance in the power process, Kaczynski states that "antidepressants are a means of modifying an individual's internal state in such a way as to enable him to tolerate social

[46] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[47] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[48] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[49] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[50] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[51] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[52] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

conditions that he would otherwise find intolerable."[53] The system, however, declares this option more suitable than simply removing the conditions that create human malaise. Another primary opiate is the entertainment industry, which "serves as an important psychological tool of the system," providing "modern man with an essential means of escape [from] stress, anxiety, frustration, [and] dissatisfaction."[54] This need did not arise in earlier epochs, Kaczynski maintains, when people at leisure could supposedly "sit for hours at a time doing nothing at all, because they [were] at peace with themselves and their world."[55]

Determined to show that modern technology is in all forms harmful, Kaczynski tackles the advances of medicine, which in his estimation appear helpful but pose long term problems of a Darwinian nature. He posits that if a cure for diabetes is discovered people with the disease will be able to reproduce, hampering natural selection and spreading the affliction throughout the population. The same will occur with other diseases, requiring "some sort of eugenics program or extensive genetic engineering of human beings, so that man in the future will no longer be a creation of nature, or of chance, or of God (depending on your religious or philosophical opinions), but a manufactured product."[56] With a dash of rhetoric apparently aimed at paranoid Southern militiamen, Kaczynski adds: "If you think that big government interferes in your life too much *now*, just wait till the government starts regulating the genetic constitution of your children" [emphasis in original].[57] Deferring to answer the question of whether there is "an immaterial human soul," Kaczynski warns that such governmental controls may extend to the biological manipulation of humans with "electrical currents," all in the name of perpetuating the onslaught of technology.[58] There is, however surprisingly, a degree of technical advancement Kaczynski will tolerate, described as "good" technology, and encompassing only the low-level handicraft skills that allowed people to survive after the fall of the Roman Empire and the consequent disintegration of water systems, roads, and cities. The technological systems that now govern the modern world, however, have gone too far (for Kaczynski's taste), and "gotten the human race into a fix from which there is not likely to be any easy escape."[59]

The need for a radical break from technology appears all the more pressing when examining *Industrial Society and It Future's* predictions for the future,

[53] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[54] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[55] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[56] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[57] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[58] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[59] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

in which man is entirely subordinated to machine. With no apparent obstacle to the greater industrialization save its concertized destruction, Kaczynski augers that technology will "advance toward its logical conclusion, which is complete control over everything on Earth, including human beings and all other important organisms."[60] This is a world where freedom has vanished, and single people and small communities are powerless against "organizations armed with super technology and an arsenal of advanced psychological and biological tools for manipulating human beings, besides instruments of surveillance and physical coercion."[61] Power would be concentrated in the hands of a few political and corporate leaders, who themselves would be enslaved by narrow codes of behavior demanded by their peers and the system they help perpetuate. Kaczynski is clear about how this order, in which "the fate of the human race would be at the mercy of the machines," will arise.[62] He does not suggest that humans will consciously cede their power, or that machines will violently take control of society. Instead, the process will be insidious. Such predictions seem alarmist and hyperbolic, but as Kaczynski stresses, few people realize the extent of modern humans' addiction to machines. He further explains that technological progress is so powerful and dangerous a force because it "marches in only one direction [and] can never be reversed," creating new dependencies with every advance.[63] A situation has been created where people need machines like cars to live their lives, and indeed, few can perform basic tasks such as gathering food from the wild or even starting a fire. Hence as society becomes more technologically complex, humans will simply "drift into a position of such dependence on the machines that it would have no practical choice but to accept all of the machines' decisions."[64]

Industrial Society and its Future concedes the enormity of the task facing the Freedom Club. Kaczynski stresses that the revolution they seek to foment "must be international and worldwide," for if technology exists in one country, it may seek control over others.[65] Yet the first obstacle that must be overcome is the true-believing leftist, who in the final part of *Industrial Society and Its Future* is abruptly elevated from ineffectual victim of industrial society to its totalitarian master, bent on world domination. No longer individuals who hate America and western civilization, they are now its controllers, suddenly described as "ruthless," "power-hungry," and "Machiavellian" individuals led by a "quasi-religious" belief in leftism, and determined to "build themselves

[60] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[61] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[62] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[63] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[64] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[65] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

a strong power base" that presumably has its footing in technology.[66] Here Kaczynski presents a choice: totalitarian leftism and its slavish existence under the system, or his own vision, which offers a concept of pre-industrial freedom defined by the power process:

> By "freedom" we mean the opportunity to go through the power process, with real goals, not the artificial goals of surrogate activities, and without interference, manipulation or supervision from anyone, especially from any large organization. Freedom means being in control (either as an individual or as a member of a *small* group) of the life-and-death issues of one's existence; food, clothing, shelter and defense against whatever threats there may be in one's environment [emphasis in original].[67]

Despite the primitive character of this definition, it is only this kind of freedom that can resurrect harmonious relations with nature and restore sanity to humankind's existence.

According to Kaczynski, achieving real freedom is worth taking the most extreme of actions, no matter what suffering occurs as a side effect. His manifesto offers little consolation to potential converts. "We have no illusions about the feasibility of creating a new, ideal form of society," Kaczynski openly admits, as the demolition of the system will undoubtedly have "negative consequences."[68] But, as he artfully puts it: "you can't eat your cake and have it too."[69] Kaczynski further grants that if the breakdown comes quickly, mass starvation will occur due to overpopulation and the inability of humans to feed themselves without advanced technology. A gradual approach to de-industrialization, however, will also "be very chaotic and involve much suffering."[70] Pondering whether advancing the destruction of the system is perhaps cruel, Kaczynski answers perfunctorily: "Maybe, but maybe not."[71] For him the test lies in the balance between "struggle and death" and "the loss of freedom and dignity."[72] It is therefore a question of one's priorities. "To many of us," he explains, "freedom and dignity are more important than a long life or avoidance of physical pain. Besides, we all have to die some time, and it may be better to die fighting for survival, or for a cause, than to live a long but empty and purposeless life."[73] Hence the final answer

[66] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[67] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[68] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[69] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[70] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[71] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[72] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[73] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

is obvious: "It would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences."[74]

While the pain of the system's demise may be great for some, Kaczynski foresees an idyllic future among wild nature, whose promises to outweigh any bothersome reservations. He writes:

> Nature (that which is outside the power of the system) is the opposite of technology (which seeks to expand indefinitely the power of the system). Most people will agree that nature is beautiful; certainly it has tremendous popular appeal. The radical environmentalists *already* hold an ideology that exalts nature and opposes technology [emphasis in original]. It is not necessary for the sake of nature to set up some chimerical utopia or any new kind of social order. Nature takes care of itself: It was a spontaneous creation that existed long before any human society, and for countless centuries many different kinds of human societies coexisted with nature without doing it an excessive amount of damage.[75]

Nature holds such a powerful influence that Kaczynski briefly expresses the hope that it can inspire a new religion that will replace leftism. Here he shows a manipulative streak in seeking to fill what he calls the "religious vacuum" in western society for his own revolutionary purposes.[76] Kaczynski argues that "nature inspires the kind of reverence that is associated with religion, so that nature could perhaps be idealized on a religious basis," and thus serve a platform for his rebellion.[77] He goes on to reflect on the shallow state of contemporary religion, which is "either […] is used as cheap and transparent support for narrow, short-sighted selfishness (some conservatives use it this way), or even is cynically exploited to make easy money (by many evangelists), or has degenerated into crude irrationalism (fundamentalist Protestant sects, "cults"), or is simply stagnant (Catholicism, main-line Protestantism)."[78] Apparently equally unimpressed and agnostic, but ultimately unwilling to dirty his hands in such contemptuous ploys, Kaczynski quickly abandons his idea of an "invented religion" out of a mixture of ideological purity and practicality, concluding that it would likely be "a failure" unless "you [can] *really* believe in that religion yourself and find that it arouses a deep, strong, genuine response in many other people," [emphasis in original].[79] Nothing, it seems,

[74] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[75] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[76] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[77] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[78] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[79] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

must pollute Kaczynski's resurrection of the natural world. Everything, even ideals social justice that would seem important to his critique of industrialization's imposition of suffering, are to be subordinated to nature. Such ideas are not part of his program, as "to feed and clothe poor people [we] would have to use agricultural and manufacturing technology."[80] This being part of the system, concepts of justice and technical means of achieving them must not interfere with nature. Modern technology must be thoroughly eliminated, machines must be broken and technical manuals burned, while only "good" small-scale crafts necessary for basic survival may be allowed to survive, lest the machines rise again. To Kaczynski, the need to return to Eden justifies all actions. He points out that if the Freedom Club had merely sent its manifesto to a publisher it would likely have been ignored. And even if it had been published few would have noticed. Therefore, to make the Freedom Club's views known, "with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people."[81]

Despite its disquieting means and disturbing ends, *Industrial Society and Its Future* garnered a highly respectable reception from journalists. In *The Nation*, environmentalist Kirkpatrick Sale judged the work's opening sentence "absolutely crucial for the American public to understand," and even argued that it "ought to be on the forefront of the nation's political agenda."[82] Likewise, a *New Yorker* article by Cynthia Ozick portrayed Kaczynski as a "philosophical criminal of exceptional intelligence and humanitarian purpose, who is driven to commit murder out of an uncompromising idealism."[83] Soon after the monograph's release, the University of Colorado held a discussion entitled "The Unabomber Had a Point."[84] Perhaps ironically, the widespread attention led directly to Kaczynski's loss of freedom. His younger brother, David, recognized the beliefs and the writing style in the manifesto, and informed the FBI. Capture came in 1996 and the subsequent "Unabomber" trial devolved into a gruesome farce. Kaczynski insisted on acting as his own counsel after his lawyers submitted an insanity plea in order to evade the death penalty, and he then attempted to hang himself shortly before the trial's conclusion. He avoided capital punishment only after pleading guilty to all charges.[85] The judge sentenced Kaczynski to life imprisonment without possibility of parole, and he now resides in a maximum-security federal

[80] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[81] Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future*.
[82] Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber."
[83] Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber."
[84] Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber."
[85] William Glaberson, "Kaczynski Pleads Guilt to All Charges Against the Unabomber," *New York Times* (23 January 1998), accessed June 15, 2010, http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/012398unabomb-trial.html.

prison in Colorado, where he tries to keep his recollections of the Montana wilderness alive.[86] He said in an interview: "I am afraid that as the years go by that I may forget, I may begin to lose my memories of the mountains and the woods and that's what really worries me, that I might lose those memories, and lose that sense of contact with wild nature in general."[87] The cabin in which he spent his happiest years, meanwhile, is now on display in the Newseum in Washington, DC – despite his vigorous protests.[88] To make matters worse, the plot of Montana land where it once stood has now gone up for sale, described as "very secluded" in the real estate listing.[89] And finally, Kaczynski's personal effects have recently been put up for auction by the federal government. The items included several pairs of sunglasses, personal photos, homemade tool kits, and the original draft of his beloved manifesto. In what is no doubt an additional irritation for the once feared terrorist, the auction was carried out online.[90] His items fetched an impressive $232,246,[91] with the manifesto going for $20,053. The money will be distributed among Kaczynski's victims.[92]

Trial, imprisonment and auction aside, Kaczynski continues to attract admirers. Building on the American media's peculiar praise for his manifesto, Stanford professor Jean-Marie Apostolidès has become enamored of the terrorist's anti-technology philosophy, and is currently working on a book entitled *Of Ink and Blood: The Writings of Theodore Kaczynski*. Apostolidès argues, following his intellectual mentor, that: "Technology transformed humanity into something different than it was before, into a new creation – flesh and *technè* […] We are mutants now. What will come out of it nobody knows.

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[86] David Johnston, "Unabomber Sentenced to 4 Life Sentences," *New York Times* (5 May 1998), accessed June 14, 2010, http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/050598unabomb-sentence.html.

[87] "Interview with Ted Kaczynski," *Earth First! Journal*.

[88] Jacqueline Trescott, "Unabomber Objects to Newseum's Exhibit," *Washington Post* (13 August 2008), accessed June 16, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2008/08/12/AR2008081202660.html.

[89] "Unabomber Ted Kaczynski's Land For Sale: 'Very Secluded,'" *Huffington Post* (5 December 2010), accessed May 17, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/12/05/unabomber-land-for-sale-montana_n_792232.html.

[90] Ashley Hayes, "Bidding Underway for Unabomber Personal Effects," CNN, May 18, 2011, accessed May 20, 2011, http://edition.cnn.com/2011/CRIME/05/18/us.unabomber.auction/index.html?eref=rss_us.

[91] Alex Dobuzinskis, "Unabomber Raises over $232,000," Reuters, June 3, 2011, accessed June 13, 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/06/03/us-unabomber-auction-idUSTRE7522UX20110603.

[92] "Bidders Spend Nearly 190K to Snatch Up Hoodie, Manifesto, Typewriters in Unabomber Auction," *Washington Post* (2 June 2011), accessed June 13, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/auction-of-unabombers-mementos-wraps-up-sale-of-hoodie-sunglasses-more-to-benefit-victims/2011/06/02/AGjvISHH_story.html.

It's something unprecedented – and scary."[93] In another twist, Kaczynski has become an icon for radical green activists who congregate around the environmental journal *Earth First!* Following in his footsteps the group has, among other things, burned down a Colorado ski resort. Such acts have gained Kaczynski's approbation, and the journal is the only publication that he has allowed interview him in prison. In gratitude, they passionately propagate his writings and views on the Internet (with no sense of irony), painting his life as the model for resisting technology.[94]

Yet one must question whether Kaczynski really merits so much attention. Yes, the Unabomber "had a point" here and there, but did he really present a viable solution to modern society's ills, or even a coherent critique? His exhaustive, repetitive and erratic critique of leftism, for example, hardly persuades, sounding like little more than a conservative rant on bleeding-heart liberalism. Kaczynski's obsessive explication of oversocialization, meanwhile, is primarily an expression of irritated dismay at the preponderance of political correctness, devoid of any penetrating scientific analysis. And what of Kaczynski's environmentalist cause (which could certainly be categorized as leftist in nature as part of the liberal agenda)? It is certainly ironic that his main enthusiasts populate academia, the media, and environmentalist groups, all leftist organizations in his estimation, to be sure. Arguably, Kaczynski also exhibits leftist tendencies himself in his efforts to impose morality, and in anchoring himself to a cause (however idiosyncratic in its anti-technology basis) whose goal of nature's greater preservation is, like leftist goals of women's rights or racial equality, uncontroversial. Indeed, his manifesto often seems to echo the ineffectual whining of his hated leftists, serving his own need for psychological rebellion. Kaczynski's only remotely political and cultural counter to liberalism, meanwhile, is a fleeting set of allusions to the "traditional" values of family and small communities. Otherwise, he treats the right as equally misguided and advocates a stated quest so impossible that it can hardly be entertained: Can we really believe that humans would stifle technology and only keep small crafts in the very natural surroundings that mankind has sought to master since time immemorial? While this desire to eliminate all technology through revolution might appear novel, little Kaczynski has to say is actually original. It cannot be denied that technology brings with it inherent problems, or that human will is at times subordinated to the systems that make up society, or that science poses certain dangers. However, many earlier writers have put forth Kaczynski's various criticisms of modernity, and invariably with greater insight, nuance, and humanity. In *The Technological*

[93] Cynthia Haven, "Unabomber's Writings Raise Uneasy Ethnical Questions for Stanford Scholar," *Stanford Report* (1 February 2010), accessed June 14, 2010, http://news.stanford.edu/news/2010/february1/unabomber-ethics-question-020110.html.

[94] Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber."

Society (1964) Jacques Ellul set out similar objections to technology, but with painstaking coherence and much greater respect for the human being. David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* dealt with similar fears of over-bureaucratization and loss of autonomy as far back as 1950, while Dwight Macdonald's incisive and plaintive essays on the amorality of science and dehumanization of modern life from the 1940s put *Industrial Society and Its Future* to shame.

In the final analysis, what Kaczynski mainly presents is a nostalgia for the unknowable and fantastical myth of an unencumbered life of noble savagery in wild nature, punctuated with small waves of rational critique within a contradictory sea of insane and ultimately inhumane prescriptions. Protection of nature is virtuous and necessary, but Kaczynski's description of the high price of doing away with technology, which appears predicated on nothing less than an apocalypse of human suffering and death, leaves most readers a bit cold. Of course there was a time when technology was destroyed and humanity fell backward after the fall of the Roman Empire. Kaczynski even references it in his discussion of "good" technology. But recreating the Dark Ages, that time of lingering pestilence, brutality and superstition, has little appeal. Meanwhile, Kaczynski's insistence that life in technological society is by nature purposeless discounts the various forces that drive so many, from love of family and friends to intellectual curiosity and social justice. *Industrial Society and Its Future's* entire approach is also exceedingly reductionist, as it blames technology for every visible wrong while ignoring the multitude of factors that stoke man's unique ability to make himself and others miserable, and the many liberating effects technologies offer. It is even unclear whether Kaczynski puts any value on human life, as his philosophy seems awash with incongruities between his survival-of-the-fittest mentality and willingness to allow great suffering, and his expressed desire to ameliorate the human condition through revolution.

The question that remains is why Kaczynski has been the focus of so much respect, even awe. Undoubtedly his background in mathematics impresses, as does his willingness to kill for his beliefs, giving him the status of a mad genius. Kaczynski is now a celebrity, exuding a charisma that murderers sometimes possess after having been incarcerated. Such men often receive love letters in prison from misguided women entranced by their bad-boy image.[95] The editors at *Earth First!*, who see in Kaczynski some environmental ideal that speaks to their dissatisfaction with the contemporary world, fill this role, while professor Apostolidès contributes to Kaczynski's growing standing by granting him academia's lofty stamp of approval. Indeed, the Unabomber and his fears have been indulged, and oddly so in the light Kaczynski's own

[95] Rachel Pickett, "Why Women Love Men Behind Bars," Associated Content, February 2, 2007, accessed September 14, 2011, http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/132195/why_women_love_men_behind_bars.html.

reservations about his manifesto. The "final note" to *Industrial Society and Its Future* reads:

> Throughout this article we've made imprecise statements and statements that ought to have had all sorts of qualifications and reservations attached to them; and some of our statements may be flatly false. Lack of sufficient information and the need for brevity made it impossible for us to formulate our assertions more precisely or add all the necessary qualifications. And of course in a discussion of this kind one must rely heavily on intuitive judgment, and that can sometimes be wrong. So we don't claim that this article expresses more than a crude approximation to the truth.

Crude indeed, and hardly a recommendation for bestowing admiration on Kaczynski and his ideology. But perhaps the final matter is whether wild man Theodore John Kaczynski, for all his bluster, really adhered strictly to his own anti-technology philosophy. His brother David relates a telling anecdote. During a visit to the infamous Montana cabin he was shocked to see a radio in the corner. When questioned about the device Ted sheepishly replied it was not for entertainment, but "just the weather."[96] Naturally, nobody is perfect. But the idea of the Unabomber – rugged and murderous symbol of principled hatred of technology – having his cake and eating it too, can only invite a sarcastic if bemused smirk.

[96] McFadden, "Prisoner of Rage: From a Child of Promise to the Unabomb Suspect."

Tadeusz Lewandowski

Lęki terrorysty
Krytyczna analiza *Industrial Society and Its Future*
Theodore'a Kaczynskiego

Streszczenie

W połowie września 1995 r. „New York Times" i „Washington Post" opublikowały *Industrial Society and Its Future* [*Społeczeństwo industrialne i jego przyszłość*], obszerny esej, który piętnował skutki rozwoju technologii dla człowieka i świata przyrody. Autor eseju Theodore Kaczynski (1942–) to mizantrop i samotnik odpowiedzialny za całą serię zamachów bombowych na terenie Stanów Zjednoczonych. Jego manifest spotkał się z zaskakująco pozytywnym odbiorem w amerykańskich mediach. Od momentu jego publikacji stale wzrasta popularność tekstu zarówno wśród naukowców, jak i ekologów, a sam Kaczynski stał się ulubionym terrorystą Ameryki i cieszy się swoistym kultem. Wynika to jednak

z tego, że do tej pory nie podjęto próby poważnej, krytycznej oceny jego postulatów. Mimo że *Industrial Society and Its Future* daje wyraz pewnym racjonalnym lękom (inna sprawa, że stanowiły one inspirację do śmiercionośnego obłędu), niniejszy artykuł stawia tezę, że waga eseju Kaczynskiego jako traktatu ideologicznego jest przeceniana przez czytelników, których fascynuje specyficzna charyzma autora, jego zdecydowana postawa pro-ekologiczna i umiejętne wykorzystanie frustracji osób rozczarowanych wszystkim, co nosi znamiona nowoczesności.

Tadeusz Lewandowski

Die Furcht eines Terroristen
Kritische Analyse des Manifestes *Industrial Society and Its Future* von Theodore Kaczynski

Zusammenfassung

Mitte des Septembers 1995 haben New York Times und Washington Post *Industrial Society and Ist Future* (*Industrielle Gesellschaft und deren Zukunft*), ein ausführliches Essay veröffentlicht, in dem die Folgen der technologischen Entwicklung für Menschen und Umwelt angeprangert werden. Sein Autor, Theodore Kaczynski (1942) ist ein Misanthrop und Einzelgänger, der für eine ganze Reihe von Bombenanschlägen in den USA verantwortlich ist. Sein Manifest wurde in amerikanischen Massenmedien überraschend positiv bewertet. Seit der Publikation erfreut sich der Text immer größerer Beliebtheit sowohl unter den Wissenschaftlern wie auch Ökologen, und der Kaczynski selbst ist zu einem beliebten amerikanischen Terroristen geworden und ist viel bewundert. Es folgt jedoch daraus, dass seine Postulate bis jetzt noch nicht ernst beurteilt wurden. Obwohl *Industrielle Gesellschaft und deren Zukunft* bestimmte begründete Furcht zum Ausdruck bringt (es ist etwas anderes, wenn sie eine Inspirationsquelle für tödlichen Wahnsinn war), stellt der Verfasser im vorliegenden Artikel eine These auf, dass Kaczynskis Essay als eine ideologische Abhandlung von den Lesern überschätzt ist. Die Leser sind entzückt von spezifischer Ausstrahlung des Autors, dessen kategorischer umweltbewusster Einstellung und geschickter Ausnutzung von der Frustration der von allerlei Fortschrittlichkeit enttäuschten Personen.

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"The Gently Budding Rose": Greeks and Fear in Teodor Parnicki's Historical Novel *The End of "The Concord of Nations"*

> "What can you make out of half-castes?"
> "You want to say: what can a half-caste do that could not be done either by a pure Greek, or a pure Jew, or a Brahmin or a Shudra? I'll tell you: he can create such a community that has never been anywhere in the world. Not just one half-caste, but a whole class of us."
> "A community happier than any other?"[1]

Teodor Parnicki's novel *The End of "The Concord of Nations"* (Polish *Koniec „Zgody Narodów"*) was published in Paris in 1955.[2] It was the author's first historical novel completed after ten years of living in Mexico City,[3] where he

[1] Teodor Parnicki, *Koniec „Zgody Narodów"* (Warszawa: Pax, 1968), p. 485. All quotations from the Parnicki's novel and from critical analyses by Teresa Cieślikowska translated by Tomasz Markiewka.

[2] The novel *Koniec „Zgody Narodów"* [*The End of "The Concord of Nations"*] was written in Mexico City in spring 1954, then the manuscript was sent to London where it was prepared for publication. The first edition was published in the Parisian series *Biblioteka „Kultury,"* and subsequently republished in Poland in 1957 by the Publishing Institute PAX. The manuscript of the second volume is kept in the archives of the Polish Library in London (no. 395).

[3] Teodor Parnicki (1908–1988) left London in summer 1944 and headed for Mexico where he was to become a cultural *attaché* in the Mexican Embassy of the Polish Government in Exile. He held the position until July 1945.

devoted himself almost exclusively to the study of historical sources and the political history and culture of antiquity. It was the author's third historical novel (the previous one, *The Silver Eagles* (Polish *Srebrne orły*), being published in Jerusalem in 1944–1945), and it marked a turning point in Parnicki's oeuvre, showing the transition from the relatively conservative poetics of the early novels to the extremely complex, intellectually sophisticated and artistically challenging form of the author's mature and late works.

Developing both the style of his novels and their intellectual and historical background Parnicki introduced into his works many elements which so far had not been normally associated with the genre – *The End of "The Concord of Nations"* made use of the elements of psychological novels (with some strong Freudian undertones) and the stream of consciousness technique combined with the poetics of a political thriller or an intricate detective story. For the first time also the author introduced elements which, although clearly inspired by his own autobiography, were transformed into the experiences of the novel's main protagonist, a Greek youth Leptines.[4] The readers of that novel could also get acquainted with the literary form which was to become one of the hallmarks of Parnicki's prose – "imaginary dialogues" which were in fact polyphonic monologues or soliloquies, heavily influenced by the technique of Platonic dialogues.[5] *The End of "The Concord of Nations"* also became a kind of Parnicki's intellectual manifesto, presenting the author's original philosophy of history, which was partly inspired by the first volumes of Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History*,[6] but in fact defined the original focal point of the majority of later novels – the hybrid subjectivity of very intelligent yet fragile "half-caste" protagonists, facing complex mechanisms of politics, nationalisms, religions, cultures and civilizations.[7]

[4] Leptines was the first of a series of self-conscious "half-caste" protagonists of Parnicki's novels and to a certain extent represented the experiences of the author himself. Teodor Panicki was the only member of his family who acquired Polish as the first language in China at the age of 12. The family traditions comprised mainly of Russian and German cultural influences. Repressed heritage of the writer's Jewish mother was first expressed in the literary form in *The End of "The Concord of Nations."*

[5] According to one of the protagonists, Platonic dialogues were in fact polyphonic monologues of a suffering subject. Hence imaginary dialogue, which resembles the technique of Platonic dialogues fulfils a therapeutic function and is a soliloquial form of Freudian "talking cure." See Parnicki, *Koniec „Zgody Narodów,"* p. 115.

[6] Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) published his twelve-volume *A Study of History* between 1934–1961. The history of the world was presented from the global perspective according to the universal rhythm of rises and falls of civilizations. Parnicki's philosophy of history presented in the novel seems to have been inspired by the pessimism and religious spirit of Toynbee's meta-historical thought.

[7] The first edition of the novel included the author's note describing it as the first part of series entitled "The worlds of half-castes." Although none of the subsequent novels were identified as the following volumes, many of the novels refer to the concept of

The novel was written in the times of gradual post-war decline of the colonial world, and even though it was never conceived as a statement in the post-colonial discourse, it was and still can be perceived as an argument in discussing civilisations in the process of transition and decline. Despite the fact that historical perspectives and intellectual contexts are different, both geographical framework and the types of questions that are being posed suggest that the novel might still be inspiring, if perceived in the context of contemporary post-colonial discourse.

Geography of Fear

The End of "The Concord of Nations" presents a lesser known part of the history of the Hellenistic world. After the collapse of the Alexandrian empire the Hellenistic world was divided into three political and geographical domains: the first one, covering the countries west of the Euphrates, Syrian desert, Asia Minor and Syria, was dominated by the Graeco-Roman civilisation. The second division consisted of the countries between the Euphrates and the Persian desert, and formed the Greek "Middle East." The third division, which consisted of the territories of today's east Iran, Afghanistan and northern India, constituted the so-called Greek "Farther East."[8] Politically speaking, the Hellenistic world was divided among three dynasties: Ptolemaic dynasty in the "West," Seleucid dynasty in the "Middle East" and the Euthydemid dynasty in the "Farther East." Both western and eastern worlds preserved numerous written documents that formed the basis for detailed accounts of the political and cultural histories of the western and middle parts of the Hellenistic domain. Contrary to that, the Farther East of the Greek world in Asia is relatively less known, since only few written accounts were produced and preserved for the future. Hence the historians of Bactria, the Greek kingdom in the "heart of Asia" have to rely mostly on the numismatic sources which enable them to reconstruct the political history of the Bactrian kingdom and its lost dynasty.[9]

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a "half-caste." Later re-editions of the novel, according to the author's wish, did not include the note referring to a novelistic cycle.

[8] See William Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. xix–xx.

[9] What is interesting, Teodor Parnicki most probably heard about St Petersburg collections of Bactrian coins when the future author of the novel lived in China in the 1920s. His mentor at the time, a Polish diplomat and orientalist Konstanty Symonolewicz (1884–1952) worked in St Petersburg Hermitage between 1908 and 1912 where he scientifically

The independent Greek kingdom in the heart of Asia existed only for a short time (250–125 BC), but since it was a scene of a "rather extraordinary experiment" (W. Tarn)[10] in the sphere of politics and culture, it provided material for interesting historical analyses and, what is important for us, the historical canvas of Teodor Parnicki's novel. The action of Parnicki's book takes place in the year 179 BC and is located on the board of the main ship of the dynasty, floating on the Oxus[11] river. The ship, isolated from the outside world, is a scene of the "great adventure" of the two main protagonists: Heliodor, the old top agent of the dynasty's secret service and his wife, Dionea. The immense ship, whose name was recently converted to the current watchword of the dynasty, "The Concord of Nations of the Heart of Asia," becomes a peculiar microcosm, in which the complex political play slowly unveils deeper layers of the cultural melting pot of the Central Asia as well as the religious and philosophical motivations of protagonists' activities. Anxiety and fear permeate "The Concord of Nations" and the main characters, isolated and forcefully engaged in a complicated interplay of a political investigation are bound to slowly unravel the mystery of each other's identity, and discover carefully hidden secrets of their past. All five main characters of the novel – three top secret agents, Heliodor, Theophilus, and Mankuras (a Hindu agent of King Demetrius), Dionea (Heliodor's wife) and a mysterious Greek adolescent Laptines – engage in the series of interrogations, narrative accounts and questionings, slowly unveiling the complexity of the Hellenistic mosaic of the Greek kingdom in Asia.

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described the collection of Bactrian and Indian Greek coins. Because of the references to the Bactrian coins the novel can be perceived as the author's tribute to his Chinese mentor.

[10] According to W. Tarn, the experiment was an attempt to create multinational and multicultural universal state. See Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. xix–xx. In his letter to a friend, Andrzej Piotrowski, from 28 September 1956, Teodor Parnicki made a general reference to Tarn's inspirations, saying: "So first of all the major stimulus to write this book [*The End of "The Concord of Nations"*] was almost accidental acquaintance with an amazing work by a British Hellenist W.W. Tarn *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (1938). […] I found this work in 1951, while I was searching for information regarding Parthians which was related to my work on *Word and Flesh* [Polish *Słowo i ciało*]. What I was looking for – I did not find there, but a brand new world opened before me, the world that fascinated me from the first sight – the Greeks in Asia in the 2nd century before Christ." (trans. T. Markiewka). See Teresa Cieślikowska, *Pisarstwo Teodora Parnickiego* (Warszawa: Pax, 1965), p. 103.

[11] Parnicki uses the Greek version of the river's name (Oxos). The river Amu Darya (Persian *Āmūdaryā*) was in ancient times treated as a boundary between Iran and the central Asia. Tarn says: "Bactria almost *was* the Oxux, in the sense that Egypt was the Nile." (Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 102). The statement is echoed in Parnicki's novel: "That river was for the Greek kingdom in the heart of Asia what the Nile was for Egypt [...]". See Parnicki, *Koniec „Zgody Narodów*," p. 7.

The novel is divided into two parts – the first volume gradually reveals the political plot and the historical background of the action. Slowly but consistently it shows the growing sense of anxiety as it becomes clear that the protagonist, Heliodor, the closest ally and the top secret agent of the dynasty might be suspected of being a part of conspiracy that led to the mysterious death of one of the king's sons. The second volume presents the main part of the novel's plot – the long and exhausting interrogations of Leptines,[12] a Greek adolescent who embarked on "The Concord of Nations" claiming to be the son of the ship's designer and a great engineer and statue-maker, Orestes. As the plot develops, we can observe a slow but steady emergence of a specific "geography of fear" of the Greek conquerors of "the heart of Asia."

The Greek Kingdom of Bactria had a unique position in the Hellenistic world, hence the problems it faced and the ways to cope with them were bound to be original and creative.[13] Despite being the flourishing centre of Greek civilisation and culture, the Bactrian kingdom suffered the consequences of a peculiar isolation. Being the most eastern province of the Hellenistic world, it had lost contact with the metropolis. In fact, the metropolis in the basic sense of the term (the place of birth of the "classic" Greek civilisation with Pericles's and Plato's Athens often referred to by the novel's characters as a spiritual "centre"), no longer existed. The Greek world perceived from the Bactrian perspective was mainly associated with the Seleucid Empire west from Bactria and the Egyptian Ptolemaic Empire in the farther west. Political complexity of the relationships with the western Greek empires led to the situation in which for the novel's protagonists the most direct "others" were actually the Greeks from the west, not the native people from the Central Asia. Betrayals, ambitions, and conflict of loyalties define the relationships within the Greek universe, and the sense of separation, distance and suspiciousness seem to be inevitable elements of the political mosaic. As one of the characters puts it: "since our great grandfathers went out to the world from the hen-house called Greece" (KZN, p. 298)[14] the political situation changed completely, and what once was the heart of the civilisation – the metropolis in

[12] Leptines, as the majority of the novel's characters is a historical person. He was mentioned by a Roman historian Appianus of Alexandria (95–165) in his *Historia Romana*. The episode from the *History* (Leptines murdering Octavian's envoy as a reaction to killing elephants) was developed in Parnicki's later novel (*Koła na piasku* [Polish *Circles in the Sand*], 1966); *The End of "The Concord of Nations"* attempts to reconstruct the early stages of Leptines's life. See Cieślikowska, *Pisarstwo Teodora Parnickiego*, p. 108.

[13] The major challenge the Greek kingdom was faced with was the cultural syncretism and the threat from the "barbarian" tribes and hostile neighbouring countries which surrounded the kingdom.

[14] All quotations translated by T. Markiewka. The abbreviated title (KZN) and the pages refer to the Polish edition of the novel – Parnicki, *Koniec „Zgody Narodów"* (Warszawa: Pax, 1968).

the continental Greece – no longer belonged to the Greeks themselves. We are here faced with an interesting paradox: for the descendants of the successful nation of conquerors (under the Macedonian Alexander) the Greek homeland remained, due to geographical and political distance, just a fading memory. Yet all the Greeks in Asia realised that they have reached the point of no return. Not only could the western homeland not be regained, but even the Asian territories were constantly under the threat of the barbarian Romans from the "wild west." The danger, still unclear and vague, was expressed and narrativised by those of the Greeks who still had some contacts with the West. This fear is clearly voiced during the questioning of Leptines:

> "Do the Romans defeat everyone in the world?" Heliodor sneered, yet with slowly decreasing conviction. "They do," Theophilus gave Leptines a nod. "Leave the boy alone. He's not lying." […] "The Romans defeated Philip in Europe, they went to Libya and defeated Hannibal, they went to Asia Minor and defeated Antioch. And all that because of fear. When that fear grows they will come here and they will defeat us. And when that fear crosses all borders of human imagination, they will go as far as to Sien Yang." (KZN, p. 208)

Two types of profound fear seem to be voiced here: the fear of the former conquerors, whose empires are dramatically shrinking in the territories where their civilisation was born, and the fear of the aggressive, western "barbarians," who are to become the new rulers of the western world, but whose victories and conquests are only fear-driven.[15]

The novel, however, focuses on the dynamics of the Greek "heart of Asia" rather than on the "Roman dark cloud" in the western margins of the Hellenistic world. The Greeks of Bactria treat the neighbours from the Seleucid Empire as "the others," yet it is obvious that in the first place they have to cope with the "otherness" of the conquered people. This is probably the biggest identity clash that the Asian Greeks experienced. Even though they try to reinforce their Greekness by all available means, it becomes clear that it is the heart of Asia that has transformed the Greeks rather than the other way round. "What has the heart of Asia done to the Greek people?" is a sentence constantly repeated in the novel, and usually uttered by Dionea, who, like Leptines, represents the young generation of Asian Greeks. After Heliodor dropped a hint about homosexuality, Dionea reacted angrily:

[15] Fear, from the psychological point of view, is often perceived as one of the motivations of aggression, yet for the novel's characters such a discovery is almost paradoxical in nature and by dismantling the enemy's motives and strategies the statement leads to more universal analysis of power relations in the sphere of politics.

> "Poor are the Greeks. Asia crushes them, it crushes, weakens, stupefies, and they, incomparable actors indeed, still cry: We are ourselves, always and everywhere! We are here the same as our forefathers in Corinth, in old Argos or in Athens." (KZN, p. 213)

Yet the Greeks are not the same anymore. The names of their gods multiply, the Greek, Iranian and Babylonian goddesses and gods amalgamate, the customs and dress codes change, religions and philosophies proliferate. The most influential non-Greek religion is probably the Iranian cult of Ahura Mazda, but the theological discourses of the novel's characters refer to numerous religious teachings – including Hinduism, Buddhism as well as frequent though veiled references to the supposedly almighty tribal god of the Jews from the far West. The result of the multiplicity of cultures, religions and traditions is the gradual, yet fundamental change of attitude of the Greeks towards all forms of "otherness." Being in fact a minority, they move towards religious and cultural syncretism, slowly incorporating and engaging the conquered "others" into the society that is being shaped according to new standards. This process of gradual transcending of cultural borderlines makes the Greeks embrace "otherness" in order to create and defend a new, more universal form of society that is not based on sheer national or racial principles. A dialogue between Heliodor and his young wife states it clearly:

> "We are moving ahead, still ahead. Once the people of Iran seemed offensive to us, yet they ceased to when we saw the people of India, still, they have ceased to be offensive to us either ever since we heard of those from Tsin." "Where is the end of this journey?" "On the shores of Okeanos, they say." "Sometimes I think [...] that Okeanos is just an invention of poets." (KZN, p. 211)

The religious, literary and political discussions of the novel, the sometimes obsessive and passionate search for truth or spiritual liberation of the characters are accompanied by the attempts to cope with the biggest political, geographical and military threat that the kingdom faces. In terms of the political vision of the Bactrian dynasty, the biggest challenge and the source of profound fear is the danger lurking in the North. In fact, Parnicki defines the binary opposition which identifies the most terrifying borderline of fear. The political project of the Bactrian state has to defend itself against the attacks of the nomadic tribes from the North. This is an opposition between civilization and barbarianism, or, as the novel defines it, an opposition between "the field under the plough" and "a steppe." All advanced technological resources available are used to construct an immense dam on the river Oxus, which, like the Great Wall of China, should protect the state from the life-threatening

danger. It is worth noting, however, that in the novel one can find enough arguments that make the binary opposition at least relative, even though not less valid. The explanation of the reasons of nomadic threat never leads to simple justification; at most, it shows the relativity of historical mechanisms, as well as the economical or material motivations of the demographic and civilisation shifts. Mankuras states it clearly:

> "Massagetae[16] and Chorasmii[17] are not guilty of breaking into fertile Sogdiana and Bactria, since they want to live, and they cannot live anymore on their pastures, because they are shrinking and turning from steppes into deserts due to the lack of rain."

Leptines's reply is striking:

> "In the same way, one could call us, the Greeks, guilty, because we, who couldn't all live on the stony and barren land of our forefathers, broke into the heart of Asia together with Alexander." (KZN, p. 473)

What then seems to be purely economical motivation of the search for *Lebensraum* is in fact an attempt to describe more universal mechanism which links nature and culture and eventually leads to the rise and decline of civilisations.

Nevertheless, the Bactrian project presented in the novel is not purely defensive. Quite the contrary. Teodor Parnicki based his literary reconstruction on the study by a British historian William Tarn (1938), and thus recreated a fascinating cultural and political project of the forgotten Greek kingdom in Asia. The political principle of the Euthydemid dynasty was the fundamental equality of all nations and tribes living in their territory. Thus, the "otherness," which for the Greeks had always justified their separation from "barbarians" was consciously embraced, leading to the creation of a universal, multinational and diverse political unit that was different from the states in other parts of the Hellenistic world. The idealistic vision was expressed in the novel's title, "The concord of nations of the heart of Asia," and was epitomised in the immense ship on which the action of the novel takes place. This vision was also being realised during the conquest of India carried out by king Demetrius. The political goal of the Indian conquest (started in 180 BC) was to support Buddhism in the country and to establish a multinational, pluralist kingdom inhabited by equal people of various nations who live in

[16] Massagetae were the Iranian nomadic confederation, they lived in the southern deserts of today's Uzbekistan and are known mainly from the works of Herodotus.

[17] Chorasmii were the people living in the delta of the Oxux (Amu-Darya) river. Chorasmia was the most powerful kingdom northwest of Amu Darya.

concord and peace. The material expression of that vision was a unique bilingual tetradrachm, a coin of the great king of Bactria and India, Maharaja Demetrius.[18] Facing the barbarian threat from the North the Bactrian Kingdom started a unique political experiment. The state based its policy on a single principle: a fundamental equality of all nations, cultures and religions. A policy of "the concord of nations."

Psychology of Fear

The political context of the novel, however, has to be carefully reconstructed. What the reader is faced with are only vague suggestions, veiled hints and unclear accounts of dynastic affairs, and the mysterious attempt to assassinate the king's son. Heliodor, though once the most trusted agent of the king, becomes one of the suspects and is no longer sure what to expect from the investigation conducted on the board of the immense ship. Yet the real starting point of the novel's plot is the mysterious appearance of a Greek adolescent, Leptines. The case of Heliodor suddenly turns out to be a case of the eighteen-year-old Greek boy, whose true identity has to be discovered. Although the boy claims to be the son of Orestes, the famous statue maker, visionary mechanic, and the creator of the ship, he might be accused of being Massagetae's spy, and what is actually at stake, is the boy's life. The action of the novel is the series of interrogations that have one aim: to find out who the boy really is. All protagonists engage in the detailed and exhausting questioning that last for five days or, to be precise, five long nights. What can be observed during that process are complex and constantly shifting power relations between the secret agents. One cannot be sure whose prerogatives are still valid, or whether Heliodor is still an investigator or already a suspect who is being controlled by the super-agent Mankuras, a former Buddhist monk and a Hindu envoy of the Greek king Demetrius.

All investigators seem to be filled with fear. "The Concord of Nations" turns out to be a sophisticated, isolated prison with a complicated system eavesdropping devices allowing constant invigilation of the passengers. In this environment Leptines is forced to present his defence. His gradually developing narrative is carefully examined by Theophilus, Heliodor, Mankuras and Dionea, and step by step the panorama of the boy's life and the Hellenistic world in which he spent his childhood is slowly unveiled. Yet the narrative seems questionable and Mankuras states his doubts clearly:

[18] See Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 563.

> "Yet how do we know that all? Leptines, your life is – at least for me – like a disassembled, tile by tile, tile by tile – mosaic floor. On the tiles I can see fractions of images – here a man's ear, there a heel, there a tail of some animal, still somewhere else a shred of hair or a shred of clouds; I can judge the value of the image, its colour, sometimes even its configuration, but if you ask me what the whole mosaic presents, I'll tell you: I don't know." (KZN, p. 235)

This almost Lacanian statement[19] characterises Leptines's narrative: when the *history* becomes *story*, when the protagonist transfers his painful experiences into a narrative, the representation of his history in language is fragmented, partial and unconvincing. It is worth noting that, as Stefan Szymutko suggested,[20] this is a strategy of the whole novel, in which two spheres, *the text of history* and *the text of the story* constitute two separate epistemological philosophies. Yet it is only the narrative that is available for the investigators and the purpose of the storytelling and interrogating is rather Freudian than Lacanian in nature. Where there was chaos, the truth about the self should be revealed.[21] The lengthy interrogations resemble the process of psy-

[19] The decomposition of the real-life experience in Leptines's narrative seems to share some affinity with Jacques Lacan's understanding of the role of language (symbolization), which decomposes and alienates the subject from the self. Thus, Leptines's fragmented narrative (linguistic "mosaic") would confirm the Lacanian statement, rejecting the possibility of being/becoming whole: "In any case, man cannot aim at being whole [...] while ever the play of displacement and condensation to which he is doomed in the exercise of his functions marks his relation as a subject to the signifier." See Jacques Lacan, *The Signification of the Phallus*, in: *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York, London: W.W. Norton, 2001), p. 1308. Yet, on the other hand, it is quite clear, that Leptines's narrative strategy is not only fragmented as a result of transferring the experience into a linguistic (symbolic) representation but also it is a result of 1) psychological repression (in Freud's understanding) of his traumatic experiences (rendering them partly inaccessible for the conscious sphere and being reconstructed in the process of secondary revision) and 2) a conscious, rational and rhetorical strategy of interrogation aiming at convincing the interlocutor to Leptines's version of the "story."

[20] Stefan Szymutko presented his precise analysis of Parnicki's novel in his book *Zrozumieć Parnickiego* (Katowice: Gnome, 1992). His practice of careful *close-reading* leads him to the conclusion that the novel's text or texture is a consciously created mask, or, to use a different metaphor, a fragmented mosaic, that covers the real, invisible plot. The process of reading is thus the process of decoding and recoding, and the first phase of interpretation is the recreation of the "real" *history*. Extremely complex narrative strategy turns the reader into an eager puzzle-solver who attempts to perceive *the real* lurking beneath the narrativised *symbolic*. The symbolic (narrative) order seems to be "always already" falling apart, yet, being the only mode of representation available to the reader it is the only texture in which the traces of meaning (*history*) reside.

[21] Freudian inspirations in *The End of "The Concord of Nations"* are quite obvious. The interrogations resemble the therapeutic process that is supposed to establish a stable,

choanalysis which goes deeper and deeper to reveal the layers of repressed suffering, pain and desires. That process embraces all – the Greek boy and the investigators themselves. As the narrative develops, Leptines reveals the Oedipal relationship with his stepmother, castration anxiety that was not just a metaphorical fear but a real, physical threat which he faced on the border between the lands of barbarians and the kingdom of Tsin (China). But the investigation, or the process of unmasking, slowly unveils the repressed or masked fears of the investigators too. Everyone hides some secrets which, if revealed, could be destructive for the characters. Obsessive fear is in fact dangerous: Heliodor desperately tries to conceal the betrayal of his Father, Bolis of Crete, since if it was revealed, it could endanger his political position and destroy his marriage. Theophilus desperately tries to conceal his castration, yet he does not realise that this fact is known to everyone. The fear becomes obsession – and in the case of Theophilus it leads to a theatrical, carefully arranged suicide.

Liberation?

The grand narrative of Leptines is very impressive. As a young boy he was sent out of the father's house and travelled to various cities and towns up to the farther east borders of the Asian Greek world and to the lands of nomads and barbarians. Suspiciously shy, he never got naked in front of other boys, and was always prepared to provide a lengthy, philosophical, Platonic explanations of such weird behaviour.[22] After falling in love with a false princess from China, he found a real mission in his life: to lead his nation, the Greeks in Asia and to connect two great civilisations which were so far isolated: the western world of the Greeks and the Eastern world of unknown Chinese civi-

conscious subject. Freudian principle, *Wo es war soll ich werden*, seems to underlie the narrative strategy of the novel.

[22] Many of the experiences of the protagonist actually reflect the author's childhood experiences. Teodor Parnicki, born in Berlin, bred in Moscow, at the age of 11 was forced by his stepmother to leave his home. He travelled through Asia (from Ufa and Omsk to Vladivostok), and he ended up in Chinese city of Harbin (1920), where he lived until he moved to Poland in 1928. He was looking for his father (who remained in the Soviet Union at the time), but did not manage to meet him. A metaphorical comment to both Parnicki's and Leptines's experiences is a paraphrased line from Parnicki's favourite Polish poet, Juliusz Słowacki: the protagonist is described as "the wanderer who toils on his way, not even knowing his own home" (KZN, p. 527). This sort of experience is quite similar to the post-colonial sense of losing home, language and identity and the process of re-creating some sort of (hybrid) identity.

lisation.[23] The great union, as Leptines puts it, should be the "union of the fields under the plough against the steppes." In that way Leptines seems to become a visionary who would like to bridge the gap between two, isolated civilisations in order to defend them from the chaos of the nomadic wilderness. He would like to serve his community and become its leader. The best Greek among the Greeks, the son of the visionary artist and mechanic, the perfect embodiment of the Greek culture, philosophy and civilisation. The author of a grand narrative.

Yet, the picture is far from fullness. Presenting himself as the perfect Greek, Letpines was in fact a victim of Greekness itself. Physically faint and unable to become an ephebos, he was in fact rejected by his peers and his community, and though he needed acceptance, he became an outcast, channelling his frustration and humiliation in the visionary narrative activity. The profound castration anxiety is just a mask of even worse repressed experience. The climax of the novel is the moment of the biggest humiliation of Leptines, when the boy, just before sexual intercourse, gets naked in front of Dionea. The secret is revealed. Castration anxiety was just a mask of the real source of humiliation – the sign of the Jewish tribal god, a circumcision. Dionea's derision informed by Greek anti-Semitism causes the biggest humiliation in the moment which was supposed to give the greatest sexual pleasure. Leptines's grand narrative turns out to be a vision, or just an illusion of the repressed feeling of humiliation and rejection. The dream of a half-Greek, half-Jew, the naïve dream of a "half-caste."

The novel's climax is followed by a fascinating discussion between Leptines and Mankuras. For Parnicki this seems to be a good occasion to present his own intellectual manifesto: when the civilisation is in danger, it has to find ways to overcome fear and find the ways of coping with the menace. Yet only the creative minority can envision the solution or the development of the higher, better, more humane form of civilisation. The policy of the Bactrian dynasty, the "concord of nations in the heart of Asia" was the step in the right direction. Yet, it was just the first step. The only person who understands the Greek-Jewish "half-caste" is the Hindu agent of the Greek king Demetrius. Mankuras – the most intelligent secret agent on board of "The Concord of Nations" is himself a "half-caste" and an outcast of the Hindu world. Unlike Leptines, he is a social "half-caste," a "half-caste" of spirit. Like Leptines, however, he was on the way to liberation leading him to Buddhism, which, like the policy of the Bactrian dynasty, was just a first step in the right direction. The ultimate goal, the final step in the process

[23] In reconstructing Leptines's experiences Parnicki refers to suggestions made by Tarn about possible Greek penetration in Chinese Turkestan before 180 BC. The traces of that can be found, Tarn claims, in some of Chinese histories which contain few words of Greek origin. See Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, pp. 85–87.

would be the creation of the ideal republic of "half-castes," the world of true liberation from all forms of racial, social and economic oppression, rejection and suffering. In Mankuras's terms, only those who suffered a lot, only the "half-castes," are able to transcend all borderlines of fear and bridge the gaps between civilisations, races and social classes.

Conclusions

Teodor Parnicki wrote his novel nine years after the end of the Second World War. The first half of the twentieth century was the time of falls and rises of various political units (British Empire, Third Reich, Soviet Union and the USA as the new superpowers of the binary cold-war world). The world was changing again. Parnicki, however, did not attempt to comment on the current political processes. Quite the contrary. His perspective took into account centuries, if not millennia, not just decades. Having incredible scholarly competence in the field of history he was gradually building his literary universe. Utilising his own multicultural biography (he lived in Berlin, Moscow, Ufa, Vladivostok, Chinese Harbin, Polish Lwów, Teheran, Jerusalem, London and Mexico City; he fluently spoke four languages) and extensive historical knowledge, in the solitude of the Mexican mega-city, the writer "forged history into literature"[24] trying to identify universal mechanisms of civilisations and their fears.

The ideology of *The End of "The Concord of Nations"* seems to be very optimistic, visionary and profoundly humanistic. The tense relationship between Greekness and "otherness," although presented in the historical context of an exotic Hellenistic kingdom, in fact defines a radical formulation of the approach to the "otherness" as such. In Parnicki's terms "the Other" is never someone from the outside. The true "Other" is both: outside and inside the community, he is somewhere in between, and that is why he is forced to take the position of a social, cultural or religious scapegoat. Yet, Parnicki's proposal is not superficially humanistic. He does not suggest that "otherness" should be tolerated or embraced in some form of an inclusive discourse. Quite the contrary. It is the Other, the hybrid, the "half-caste" of race, nationality, religion or spirit, that can lay the foundation of a new, universalistic civilisa-

[24] The phrase was coined by Parnicki and it was later used as a title of the series of his lectures delivered and the Warsaw University 1972/1973. The lectures were later published. See Teodor Parnicki, *Historia w literaturę przekuwana* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1980).

tion of real liberation and human dignity.[25] Civilisation which could survive the attacks from "the steppes." In the Kingdom of Bactria such a civilisation was a combination of the western traditions of Greek philosophy and Buddhist way of liberation.

As it was mentioned before, the direct source of inspiration for writing the novel was the study *The Greeks in Bactria and India* by William Tarn (1938). The British historian treated the Bactrian policy as an interesting intellectual and cultural experiment. However, it is worth mentioning that the writer's vision of rises and falls of civilisations was visibly under the influence of Arnold Toynbee's philosophy of history. The policy of the Euthydemid dynasty, based on the principle of "the concord of nations," could be perceived, in Toynbeean terms, as the reaction of a creative minority to the external threat and danger. Yet, according to the famous statement of the British philosopher of history: "Civilizations die from suicide, not by murder."[26] Such was the end of "the concord of nations." The Buddhist way of liberation from fear and suffering masked/awoke murderous instincts and suicidal obsessions of the protagonists. Princess Agathocleia arranged a sophisticated political murder of her brother, the heir of the throne. Other brothers were bound to be liberated from suffering in the same way too.[27] Theophilus and Theodora committed a carefully arranged, theatrical suicide. The immense ship of the dynasty which was the scene of the investigation and search for Leptines's identity, the ship which was a technologically advanced mechanism of the dynasty to promote the policy of concord, is eventually drowned in the river Oxus, creating a theatrical and surreal show. Last but not least, Leptines, who eventually proved his identity, set off westward to Pergamon, where his father, the famous statue-maker was creating the immense altar of victory. Yet the boy, paralysed with fear, was unable to arrange the meeting with his father. His grand narrative of the union of civilisations remained just a dream.

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[25] It is worth noting, that one of the most important sources of intellectual inspirations was for Parnicki the philosophy of Catholic personalism with its concept of essential dignity of every individual and universalistic rather than nationalistic perspective of history and civilisation.

[26] The statement was used by Toynbee in his essay "Christianity and Civilization," in: *Civilization on Trial* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948) in a polemical analysis of Gibbon's criticism of Christianity from *The Decline and Fall of Roman Empire* (1776–1788). See http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/toynbee.html; http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/arnoldjto165737.html.

[27] As Teresa Cieślikowska suggests, Acathocleia is masking her political goals by referring to the Buddhist doctrine of liberation from suffering. In fact, she plays the role of Greek Danaides (daughters of Danaus), murderers of their husbands and in her case the consecutive murders of her brothers are supposed to enable her to regain the Demetrius's kingdom to her and Menander. See Cieślikowska, *Pisarstwo Teodora Parnickiego*, p. 113.

Teodor Parnicki's literary commentary to his Bactrian story suggests a specific universalism of the dynamics of history. The rises and declines of civilisations are, as Toynbee claimed, natural and inevitable processes. Sometimes they reveal traces of visionary humanism, but every civilisation, even in the moment of its birth, is "always already" falling apart. The motto of the novel taken from Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* seems to reflect that sense of profound sadness:

> "The gently budding rose," quoth she, "behold,
> That first scant peeping forth with virgin beams,
> Half ope, half shut, her beauties doth upfold
> In their dear leaves, and less seen, fairer seems,
> And after spreads them forth more broad and bold,
> Then languisheth and dies in last extremes,
> Nor seems the same, that decked bed and bower
> Of many a lady late, and paramour;
>
> So, in the passing of a day, doth pass
> The bud and blossom of the life of man,
> Nor e'er doth flourish more, but like the grass
> Cut down, becometh withered, pale and wan."[28]

[28] Torquato Tasso, *Gierusalemme Liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*), Book XVI, (XIV–XV), trans. by Edward Fairfax, London, 1600. See http://omacl.org/Tasso/16book.html. Parnicki uses the Polish translation of the text by Piotr Kochanowski (published in 1618).

Tomasz Markiewka

„Widzicie różą, co wpół wychylona"
Grecy i lęk w powieści historycznej Teodora Parnickiego
Koniec „Zgody Narodów"

Streszczenie

Koniec „Zgody Narodów" (Paryż 1955) stanowi punkt zwrotny w twórczości Teodora Parnickiego. Zainspirowana pracami Wiliama Tarna (głównie *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1938) powieść prezentuje post-hellenistyczne królestwo Baktrii w stanie schyłku i rozpadu. Państwo baktryjskie stanowi wielonarodowy i wielokulturowy tygiel, w którym sami Grecy, świadomi procesu stopniowego tracenia własnej tożsamości, starają się na różne sposoby wzmocnić własną cywilizację i dziedzictwo kulturowe, wystawione na działanie kultur Iranu, Indii i Chin, a dodatkowo zagrożone przez barbarzyńskie plemiona ze stepów północy. W świecie przepełnionym nieustannym, głębokim lękiem pojawia się

główny bohater – pół-Żyd, pół-Grek Leptynes, który zostaje złapany w sieci tajnych służb i, w czasie wielogodzinnych przesłuchań, podejmuje próby odkrycia własnej tożsamości. Przedmiotem refleksji w niniejszym artykule jest zderzenie cywilizacji, udramatyzowane i zinternalizowane w postaci Leptynesa, ucieleśniającego sytuację, w której granica pomiędzy JA (greckością) a INNYM znajduje się wewnątrz świadomości samego protagonisty.

Tomasz Markiewka

„Seht ihr die halbgeöffnete Rose?" Die Griechen und die Furcht im historischen Roman *Das Ende des „Friedens der Nationen"* von Teodor Parnicki

Zusammenfassung

Das Werk *Das Ende des „Friedens der Nationen"* (Paris 1955) ist ein Wendepunkt in der literarischen Tätigkeit von Theodor Parnicki. Von William Woodthorpe Tarns Werken (v.a.: *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1938) inspirierter Roman stellt das Ende und den Untergang von einem posthellenistischen Königreich, Baktria, dar. Der baktrische Staat ist ein Vielvölker- u. Multikulturschmelztiegel, in dem die Griechen, die dessen bewusst sind, dass sie ihre eigene Identität allmählich verlieren, auf verschiedene Art und Weise versuchen, ihre Zivilisation und Kultur, die der Einwirkung von den Kulturen Irans, Indiens und Chinas ausgesetzt und mit barbarischen Nordsteppenstämmen bedroht sind, zu verstärken. In der von ständiger, tiefer Angst erfüllten Welt erscheint der Protagonist – Halbjude, Halbgrieche Leptynes, der ins Netz des Geheimdienstes gefangen und stundenlang verhört versucht, eigene Identität zu entdecken. Zum Gegenstand des vorliegenden Artikels ist das Zusammenstoßen von Zivilisationen; es wird dramatisiert und internalisiert in der Gestalt von Leptynes, die solche Situation zum Ausdruck bringt, in der die Grenze zwischen ICH (griechische Wesensart) und dem (den) ANDEREN im Bewusstsein des Protagonisten selbst steckt.

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"Fetch Me My Feathers and Amber": Gary Snyder on Civilization and the Primitive

All together elsewhere, vast
Herds of reindeer move across
Miles and miles of golden moss,
Silently and stay fast.
W.H. Auden, from "The Fall of Rome"

 [1]

Gary Snyder, one of the most eminent and influential poets and thinkers in the American literary world, has claimed that "human culture is rooted in the primitive and the Paleolithic," adding that "our body is a vertebrate mammal being – and our souls are out in the wilderness."[2] These words best fit

[1] The Hump-backed Flute Player. "The hump-backed flute player / walks all over. / Sits on the boulders around the Great Basin / his hump is a pack." An image used by Snyder throughout his Pulitzer-prize winning book of poems entitled *Turtle Island* (1975). "Ancient rock art – petroglyphs – of a walking flute-playing figure, sometimes with a hump on his back, are found widely in the Southwest and into Mexico. These images are several thousand years old. There is a Hopi secret society that takes the Flute-player as its emblem. Some of the figures have an erect penis, and some have feelers on their heads that look like insect antennae. It has been suggested that the hump is possibly a pack, and that the figure may represent Aztec or Toltec wandering traders, who once came up into the Southwest with trade items. In Peru even today you can see young men with a sort of sling-pack on their backs, carrying a load and playing the flute while walking." For a more detailed study see: Gary Snyder, *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1996), pp. 81, 162–163.

[2] Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (New York: North Point Press, 1999), p. 182.

with the poetry of archeology – "hunting among stones," human search for lost origins, which has been a growing mode, an oft-taken path in the U.S. poetry throughout the seventies and eighties; a descent – not to the mythical underworld, but to the land, underground. Exploring and investigating the detritus pathways of the American Northwest, Snyder goes down Native myths and legends, leaves off names imposed by strangers to scratch the surface and to descend to the long-forgotten layers of human existence on earth, and in his case, on the continent. Conversely, the Whitmanian poem that America was meant to be appears as just another layer with myriads of other layers covered with ashes of neglect and oppression spread over the lines on the land made forty thousand years ago when:

> human people came with basket hats and nets
> winter-houses underground
> yew bows painted green,
> feasts and dances for the boys and girls
> songs and stories in the smoky dark.[3]

The Snyderian metaphor for the continent is that of the palimpsest, whose porous structure is being gradually inscribed with different lines imposed by different social orders turning the land bruised and beaten, but it is only then that "the image becomes clear; we are part of an immense palimpsest; the U.S.A. is but a superficial layer, the most recent (and damaging) inscription over a series of earlier texts."[4] "The land," Snyder says "is also a living being – at another pace."[5] Due to the plurality of points of intersection between the human and the more-than-human world, "civilizations east and west have long been on a collision course with wild nature."[6] Only when we allow ourselves to know that "wildness is not just the "preservation of the world," as Snyder says, but "it *is* the world,"[7] can we afford to think what civilization we actually need, namely, the one that can "live fully and creatively together with wildness,"[8] for much information is taken from deep inside civilization, from wildness, the biological and social sciences. By this very act Snyder leaves off the concept of the frontier, thus re-energizing mountain ridges, rivers and plains, re-discovering the land by taking a great effort of the imagination

[3] Snyder, "What Happened Here Before," in *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions Press, 1974), p. 79.

[4] Edwin Folsom, "Gary Snyder's Descent to Turtle Island: Searching for Fossil Love," *Western American Literature*, vol. 15 (1985), pp. 103–121.

[5] Folsom, "Gary Snyder's Descent," p. 107.

[6] Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*, p. 6.

[7] Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*, p. 6.

[8] Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*, p. 6.

to retreat from the civilization into the wilderness; an act of re-opening the frontier contradictory to what, over a century earlier, Frederick Jackson Turner called the closure of the frontier.

Re-opening the frontier becomes a sort of an attempt to dissolve a dichotomy between the civilized and the wild. It looms as erasing the imposed and heading towards that which is given; it involves untying the cords once stated as final and fixed, and loosening the social order on behalf of the natural order; it means replacing greed with humility. As Snyder admits in his inspiring essay entitled "Poetry and the Primitive,"

> much has been said about the frontier in the American history, but overlooking perhaps some key points: the American confrontation with a vast wild ecology, an earthly paradise of grass, water, and game – was mind-shaking.[9]

Therefore, Snyder – with his deep interests in cultural anthropology and prehistory – speaks on behalf of the natural order, which brings forth some affinities with another Californian, Robinson Jeffers, who spoke for the non-human and saw the world as falling away from the wild American past. Snyder, likewise Jeffers, though in general, far more playful and joyous in his interpretation of wild nature,[10] presents himself as a critic of the type of social organization called civilization, adding that human beings are not to be particularly fearful in regard to nature, though they have reasons to be fearful of civilization for "civilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home."[11]

Descent to the Primitive and Back 

Snyder's critique of civilization always touches upon and interpenetrates the vestiges within the more-than-human world after its collision with the human; it deeply involves the relation – lurking somewhere in the ancient times,

[9] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive" in *Earth House Hold* (New York: New Directions Press, 1969), p. 119.

[10] Jeffer's "inhumanism" and deep distrust in the human and the trends of his nation is in Snyder transfixed into the so-called "panhumanism" and a joyous interpretation of the world's deep, intricate, interrelated, "detritus pathways" which, stored in the mind, open up the world as a field of interconnected lives which consist of all the human and more-than-human.

[11] Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive. A Critique of Civilization* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2007), p. 11.

myriads of layers underground – of the human and nature. The source for his many comments upon the nature of civilization is found in a book of poems entitled *Regarding Wave*, where in the "Long Hair" section, the poet introduces the civilization theme with the notion of revolution. However, the revolution, which underlies all conquests and its oppressive apparatus, here involved in a play on a Trotskyist slogan, is now turned inside out. Namely, it is "the revolution in the revolution in the revolution," where the very word comes to lose its power when reiterated all over again as in mantras, since finally there are no boundaries that separate the pre-conquest and the post-conquest land but all is inscribed within one single, though many-layered, palimpsest. ("& POWER / comes out of the seed-syllables of mantras.")[12] The only revolution this can be is the revolution of the unconscious which is to be found beyond the class-structured society or mass ego.[13] Snyder says:

> Class-structured civilized society is a kind of mass ego. To transcend the ego is to go beyond society as well. "Beyond" there lies, inwardly, the unconscious. Outwardly, the equivalent of the unconscious is the wilderness: both of these terms meet, one step even farther on, as *one*.[14]

To go beyond the ego is to go beyond the self for "it is ultimately man's self that is imperialized as the civilization spreads and deepens."[15] "Revolution in the Revolution…" surpasses political boundaries and strives for true Communionism beyond all nation-states, for each part of the land is surrounded by another larger area interlaced with yet other layers of life, where the masses – the standing people, the creeping people, the swimming people, the flying people – lead their lives in desperation, though no longer quiet,

[12] See Gary Snyder, "The Voice as a Girl," in *Earth House Hold*, p. 123. Snyder explains that "certain emotions and states occasionally seize the body, one becomes a whole tube of air vibrating; all voice. In mantra chanting, the magic utterances, built of seed-syllables such as OM and AYNG and AH, repeated over and over, fold and curl on the breath until – when most weary and bored – a new voice enters, a voice speaks through you clearer and stronger than what you know of yourself; with a sureness and melody of its own, singing out the inner song of the self, and of the planet."

[13] In "Wondrous Figures and Forms" Robert Schuler in his discussion of "Burning" (the third section of the volume *Myths and Texts*) says that "Force, whether supplied by mind or body, cannot make a change. The only revolution is the revolution of the spirit […]. It is important to note that the spiritual revolutionary, the model for Snyder's poetics, is a determined character with firm values. He will not use force, but he will also not back off from executing what is spiritually correct in: Robert Jordan Schuler, *Journeys Towards the Original Mind. The Long Poems of Gary Snyder* (Peter Lang: N.Y.-Washington D.C.: 1994), pp. 53–54.

[14] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 122.

[15] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 10.

to invert the famous Thoreauvian phrase. The Sioux's other people became "the masses" – among trees, water, air and grasses – necessary to the state, just as "native communities were the ground out of which the earliest, class-structured, territorially defined civilizations arose."[16] Therefore, the ground with all unique patterns, lines, scratches, forming up drawings, depicting ways of living; trails, then finally roads, directing and redirecting individuals in their life-long travels upon the surface of the earth, already engraved with eons of lives and deaths, tinged with emotions issuing from songs and poems, dances, rituals of rebirth – the entire palimpsest, used and used up, again and again, becomes re-created and re-imagined by Snyder's descent to the ground in search for some authenticity, the right balance, real values. Such opening – which lies in contradistinction to progress and civilization with its race towards that which is almost sterile in its perfection, final, immaculate, automatized, and distant in its heavenly abstract form – is a tremendous task of digging through projections of civilization, the imposed and the rejected, the scratches violently carved both in the land and in the minds of those pushed to the frontiers, then down, underground.

However, to withdraw from the society half-bent on its destructive, though highly-efficient lifestyles, would suggest an analogous retreat in some utopian vision reverberating with tribal passions and archaic values.[17] Instead of any retreat and replacement Snyder adheres to the concept of a modern man as being contemporary with all periods.

> Part of our being modern is the very fact of our awareness that we are one with our beginnings – contemporary with all periods – members of all cultures. The seeds of every social structure or custom are in the mind.[18]

Therefore, the Snyderian descent is never without return, it draws on the thought of the American anthropologist Stanley Diamond who has said that "the sickness of civilization consists in its failure to incorporate (and only then) to move beyond the limits of the primitive"[19]; it is concerned more with our awareness of the process of countless cross-fertilizations of cultures and languages, where human being is part of this network of related parts, tiny fragments absorbing and absorbed heading towards transformation. While

[16] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 8.

[17] Snyder says, "as a poet I hold the most archaic values on earth. They go back to the late Paleolithic; the fertility of the soil, the magic of animals, the power-vision in solitude, the terrifying initiation and rebirth; the love and ecstasy of the dance, the common work of the tribe" ("Poetry and the Primitive," *Earth House Hold*, back cover).

[18] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 126.

[19] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 126.

drawing on the primitive, Snyder calls on to harken to the roots and reconsider our beginnings as some whirls in the knot, forces blooming, bursting and scattering of seed throughout the continent and the entire planet. Therefore, the thought implicit in his notes on the primitive revolves around "the power to move away from the self-imposed limitations of small-minded social systems."[20] Snyder writes:

> Today we are aware as never before of the plurality of human lifestyles and possibilities, while at the same time being tied, like in an old silent movie, to a runaway locomotive rushing headlong toward a very singular catastrophe.[21]

As humans live within skin, ego, society, species boundaries they tend to ignore that "consciousness has boundaries of different order," and that "the mind is free."[22] Moreover, "imagination, intuition, intellect, wit, decision, speed, skill, were fully developed forty thousand years ago,"[23] which reverses popular misconceptions about the primitive, as Folsom says. Humans, cognizant of the destructive industrial and technological growth, and addicted to fossil fuels, are not the ones to hold the wisdom, techniques and attitudes that would allow them to live, continue to live on earth for long periods. The time we live in is anomalous, devastating the old traditions, "the old ways" neglecting the wisdom, losing the balance along with sane, healthy existence, a symbiosis with other lives. Hence, part of our being modern is to witness the extinction of species, and the uncovering of boundaries; it is to be exposed to the growth of greed; it means fighting the old myths and stories and searching for relief in abstractions – cleansed, white, immaculate, intangible beliefs of a better place, while hiding ourselves in the Metropole, easily sliding in loveless schemes and forms, societies of our contemporaries. Being modern entails indulging in comforts and easy solutions; however, on deeper levels it is experiencing isolation and "placelessness,"[24] while the place of elders is often taken by books; whereas, the local, kin-based, or tribal populations are slowly absorbed by the Metropole, smoothed out to integrate, only to wither away with the all-devouring now.[25]

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[20] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 127.

[21] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 126.

[22] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 127.

[23] Folsom, "Gary Snyder's Descent," p. 104.

[24] For a more detailed account on "placelessness" see: Robert Adams, "Not Here Yet. Remarks by Gary Snyder on Buddhism, Ecology & the Poetics of Homelessness," *Shambhala Sun*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1994), pp. 18–25.

[25] Stanley Diamond, quoted in Gary Snyder, *The Real Work. Interviews and Talks 1964–1979* (New York: New Directions Press, 1980), p. 115.

"Civilization"

> At the root of the problem where our civilization goes wrong is the mistaken belief that nature is something less than authentic, that nature is not as alive as man is, or as intelligent, that in a sense it is dead, and the animals are of so low an order of intelligence and feeling, we need not take their feelings into account.[26]

In Pueblo Indian societies there was a strong sympathy between humans and animals. Through certain dances and rituals animals were given a place and a voice in the political discussions, which was a kind of "ultimate democracy."[27] Animals, plants and a variety of wildlife were therefore the "people" of the land (the swimming people, the flying people, the creeping people and the standing people).[28] Nonetheless, a line was drawn to separate primitive peoples and civilized peoples. The line which divides our lives into authentic and inauthentic; forested and stoned; wild and tame; balanced and imbalanced; compassionate and enclosed in one's own self, is the line sieving the old teachings, cleansing them of the natural human-nature relation and of the western pre-white history replaced by the history written by the conquerors and discoverers. Perhaps "civilization has something to learn from the primitive."[29] There is

> [s]omething to be learned from the native American people about where we are. It can't be learned from anybody else. We have a western white history of a hundred and fifty years; but when we look at a little bit of American Indian folklore, myth, read a tale, we're catching just the tip of an iceberg of forty or fifty thousand years of human experience, on this continent, in this place.[30]

Drawing on from the uncivilized side, while scrutinizing the native American trails, Snyder delves into the depths, the soil of his continent and pans for wisdom like miners panned for gold in mid-nineteenth century in the land where he now resides, Nevada County. Panning for wisdom is a struggle to find "common human elements;" it is to re-discover the world in its nakedness, authentic, fundamental elements like birth, love, death; "the sheer fact of being alive."[31] It is to re-configure perception, re-consider the Blakean

[26] Snyder, "The Wilderness," in *Turtle Island*, p. 107.
[27] Snyder, *Turtle Island*, p. 104.
[28] Snyder, "The Wilderness," p. 108.
[29] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 120.
[30] Snyder, quoted in Folsom, "Gary Snyder's Descent," p. 107.
[31] Snyder, *Earth House Hold*, p. 118.

looking "with the eye," more sensitively, to see the beautiful along with the terrible, to reconstruct the "seamless web of man and nature, the enveloping silence of their primordial relationship, that long originally shattered."[32]

A number of essays and poems were written in relation to the civilization theme among which the poem "Civilization," composed by Snyder during his Japan years, looms as medley of voices issuing from the scratched land, from the silenced people of the land.

> Those are the people who do complicated things.
> They'll grab us by the thousands
> and put us to work.
> World's going to hell, with all these
> Villages and trails.
> Wild duck flocks aren't
> What they used to be.
> Aurochs[33] grow rare.
> *Fetch me my feathers and amber.*[34]

As history has always been written by the conquerors, so has been the history of civilization. As writing was itself "an instrument for the recording of official histories,"[35] then the use of symbols became explicit, they lost certain richness whereas writing became "an ideological instrument of incalculable power."[36] Diamond continues in this vein:

> Man's word was no longer an endless exploration of reality, but a sign that could be used against him. [...] For writing splits consciousness in two ways – it becomes more authoritative than talking, thus degrading the meaning of speech and eroding oral tradition; and it makes it possible to use words for the political manipulation and control of others. Written signs supplant memory.[37]

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[32] Robert Kern quoted by Philip Jay Lewitt, "Gary Snyder and the Vow," in *Kyoto Review*, vol. 23 (1990), p. 7.

[33] Aurochs: "Aurochs are from earlier and prehistoric Europe, huge wild cattle (*Bos taurus premigenius*). The word aurochs is of itself singular. Plural is aurochses. It has been extinct for many centuries now, but was still around in small numbers in Roman times. It may be the ancestor of contemporary cattle species – all Bos. It was also in North Africa. I'm sure it roamed about in what is today Poland. It is not the same as the European bison. Sometimes it was referred to as the Urus. It is very elegantly represented in SW European cave art, especially Lascaux. The word is apparently from Old High German." Gary Snyder's e-mail message, March 8, 2010.

[34] Snyder, "Civilization" in *Regarding Wave* (New York: New Directions Press, 1970), p. 84.

[35] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 3.

[36] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 4.

[37] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 4.

Snyder in his counter-cultural approach to the nature of civilization reverses the purpose of writing and speaks on behalf of those who remained silenced, the "ruthlessly exploited classes" for there are no conventional ways of knowing unless facts are written down or created anew. Diamond concludes that in this way "achievements of civilization are reduced to their proper proportions."[38]

In ritual dances of the Pueblo Indians animals were speaking through people to make their point, they seized an individual and then he danced as deer would dance, or impersonated a squash blossom; "they were no longer speaking for humanity, they were taking it on themselves to interpret, through their humanity, what these other life-forms were."[39] Therefore, the spokesmanship for the rest of the world pervades the first part of the verse, and makes it clear that in order to become conspicuous one needs to be useful; in order to be audible one's history needs to be cleansed of complexities and reduced to the written word before it is told out loud. Therefore, here the silenced are given a voice and a place to articulate the unarticulated, to describe the non-describable. Like in mantra chanting, "expiration, 'voiced', makes the signals by which species connects,"[40] endowing human beings with an intrinsic capability of "interpreting the inwardness of the acts of others."[41] Only by changes in consciousness are we able to communicate *par excellence*, to "empathize with what we do not directly share."[42] To communicate with others is to assume that they are as we are, somehow in a way that people of the primitive cultures appreciated animals as other people off on various trips.[43] As paths and trails came to be covered and crossed with concrete, asphalt, thus pushed down beneath the layers of the American present, the native animal-people's earlier ways have tended to disappear, mutilated and torn, as the palimpsest itself gradually became enriched with multitudinous layers of man's culture; but undeniably, the poem leaves us with the presupposition which is forever drifting in our minds, and winding through deeper levels of understanding, namely, "civilized man cannot know what has been gained until he learns what has been lost."[44] Thus, the poem seems to be weighting human deeds on earth; balancing the trails lost and gained throughout time, both in the sky and on the land, indicating the intolerable condition of gradual displacement and finally, disappearance of species, their trails, the primal kinship of man and nature. Snyder reaffirms archaic values which he

[38] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 2.
[39] Snyder, *Turtle Island*, p. 109.
[40] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 123.
[41] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 212.
[42] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 212.
[43] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 121.
[44] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 121.

juxtaposes with the "current aberration of human society called civilization."[45] Therefore, "fetch me my feathers and amber" is a focus on that which is non-existent in its palpable form since it belongs to songs and stories, sung and told, and dying along with natives of that land. Amber, so rich in symbolism – (healing properties, general protection, a charm against evil spirits) – is in the native American context the sunstone of creation and new beginnings; in the Scandinavian context – a sea-stone, or in Greek myths – a solidified sunshine taken away from heavens and sunk down into the sea. Conjoined within the fossilized resin are the sky and the sea. "Feathers and amber" can be read as emblems implicit in the native American beliefs, in the whole oral tradition, which now appears to be waning in the overwhelming entanglement of artificially glowing roads offering divergent forms of freedom and comfort. "Fetch me my feathers and amber" looms as a "puzzled search," to use Diamond's phrase, "for what is diminished." In other words, it is "the search for different ways of being human,"[46] underlined with interrelatedness with more-than-human world. Moreover, it is a caring, considerate look at particular layers of the palimpsest where lives of others continue and end as ours. In the second stanza of "Civilization" Snyder beholds a small cricket occupying a tiny part of his typescript page.

> A small cricket
> On the typescript page of
> "Kyoto born in spring song"
> Grooms himself in time with *The Well-Tempered Clavier.*
> I quit typing and watch him thru a glass.
> How well articulated! How neat!
> Nobody understands the ANIMAL KINGDOM.[47]

A close and careful, though momentary attention is paid to the cricket that landed on a piece of paper with Snyder's poem from *Regarding Wave*'s second section. The cricket looms as attuned with the rest of creation, and with world's recognizable music such as *The Well-Tempered Clavier* – "well articulated" and "neat." Although the cricket's simple form is harmoniously integrated with the living world and thus reminds us of nature's own intrinsic, complex tunes, its own music issuing from the very authenticity of being alive is neither recognized nor understood and unheard by many. Implicit in the poem is its link with poetry in general, since "music, dance, religion,

[45] Patrick D. Murphy, *A Place for Wayfaring. The Poetry and Prose of Gary Snyder* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2000), p. 103.

[46] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 120.

[47] Snyder, "Civilization," p. 84.

and philosophy [...] have archaic roots – a shared origin with poetry;"[48] emphasizing the fact that poetry must sing or speak from authentic experience. Therefore Snyder ends the poem with a short reflection: "When creeks are full / The poems flow / When creeks are down / We heap stones."[49] The image of a riverbed is suggestive of his individual lifelong practice – an integration of intellectual and physical work, the flow of poems as well as placing stones to build trails are acts that Snyder refers to as the real work that nourishes community. Words read as stones laid down in the real world are fragmented remnants of that which is the past projected upon the future with "civilization" being the middle term.[50] Gathered in it are all lines of the palimpsest we step on, with cave drawings, petroglyphs, hieroglyphs, mounds, mazes, tombs.

Heaping stones, or hunting among stones, or panning for wisdom and writing poems are all acts to search for human identity, common human elements, for the primitive which itself may occur an idea, as Diamond reflects, that civilization creates in the search for human identity. Nevertheless, this is the positive direction, but – as Snyder maintains – in the prose and verse it is frequently described as a "non": non-Western, non-Christian, non-white, non-capitalist, non-national, non-military, non-civilization. The struggle and tension it incorporates is to create a mind purified of the lusts and greeds of history. Therefore, the restoration of the primitive would permit the inclusion of rituals that pave the way to the ecstatic, the passionate, the physical.[51]

[48] Snyder, "Poetry and the Primitive," p. 118.

[49] Snyder, "Civilization," p. 84.

[50] Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive*, p. 208.

[51] Gary Snyder Archives, Interviews, Special Collections Library, University of California, Davis, California.

Gabriela Marszołek

„Zwróć mi me pióra i bursztyn" Gary Snyder o cywilizacji i prymitywizmie

Streszczenie

Powracając do koncepcji patrzenia na kontynent amerykański jako na palimpsest szlaków, Gary Snyder przywraca prymitywne wierzenia minionych epok, takie jak: harmonia, prawdziwe wartości i odpowiednia równowaga pomiędzy światem człowieka a natury. Poeta poszukuje wyznaczników tradycji mówionej, zarówno przedzierając się przez kolejne projekcje cywilizacji przykrywające sam kontynent, jak i zagłębiając się w koncepcje kultur prymitywnych, nieświadomości oraz umysłu. Pozornie pojęcia te odnoszą się do tego, co zwie się amerykańską dziczą (*the wilderness*). Niemniej jednak, w zamian za ukazanie

pewnej ucieczki od społeczeństwa pochylającego się nad skutkami swej destrukcyjnej siły, Snyder naświetla fakt, że człowiek współczesny jest zespolony ze wszystkimi okresami dziejów, gdyż „nasiona wszelkich społecznych zwyczajów i struktur są [osadzone] w umyśle". Celowy wybór symboli, takich jak pióra i bursztyn, których proweniencja jest niezwykle bogata znaczeniowo i konceptualnie, a jednocześnie przynależą do tradycji oralnej, służy zestawieniu z pismem. Pismo natomiast przedstawione jest jako narzędzie nieobliczalnej siły, ponieważ „pisanie zastępuje pamięć".

Gabriela Marszołek

„Gib mir meine Feder und meinen Bernstein zurück" Gary Snyder von Zivilisation und Primitivismus

Zusammenfassung

Mit dem Zurückkommen auf die Konzeption, den amerikanischen Kontinent als ein Palimpsest von Routen zu betrachten, stellt Gary Snyder solchen primitiven Glauben der vergangenen Epochen, wie: Harmonie, wirkliche Werte, bestimmtes Gleichgewicht zwischen der menschlichen Welt und der Naturwelt wieder her. Der Dichter sucht die Maßstäbe der gesprochenen Tradition, indem er durch die den Kontinent bedeckenden Projektionen der Zivilisation vordringt und sich in die Konzeptionen von primitiven Kulturen, Ahnungslosigkeit und Geist vertieft. Diese Begriffe beziehen sich nur scheinbar darauf, was als amerikanische Wildnis (the wildernees) bezeichnet ist. Doch statt eine gewisse Flucht vor der gegen die Folgen ihrer destruktiven Kraft ankämpfenden Gesellschaft darzustellen, stellt Snyder fest, dass der heutige Mensch mit allen Geschichtsepochen verbunden ist, denn „Samen aller gesellschaftlichen Sitten und Gesellschaftsstrukturen stecken in dem Verstand". Die absichtliche Auswahl von solchen Symbolen, wie Feder und Bernstein, deren Herkunft bedeutungsvoll und konzeptuell ist, und die zur gesprochenen literarischen Tradition gehören, dient dazu, die Symbole mit dem Schreiben als einem Werkzeug unermesslicher Kraft gegenüberzustellen. So wird „das Gedächtnis durch das Schreiben ersetzt".

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Original Sin, Fear and Metaphysical Poetry

The term "original sin" itself does not appear in the Bible and the story of our first parents' fall from grace was of minor importance to early Christians and Church Fathers. It is also worth remembering that the Hebrew Bible only speaks about some unspecified forbidden fruit, but later Christian theologians and artists were inclined to take the forbidden fruit to be an apple, most probably because the Latin *malum* means both "apple" and "evil." The doctrine in its incipient form grew out of the debate between early Christianity and gnosticism, which held that good and evil were equipotent; Christians felt obliged to defend the essential goodness of creation and stress the contingency of evil, which – as Paul says in his epistle to Romans – entered the world through sin. It was later developed by St. Augustine, whose arguments were based on rather tenuous evidence (the biblical story and Paul's epistle to Romans (Romans 5:12–21) where Paul explicitly assigns the universality of death to Adam's sin: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death, so then death spread to all men inasmuch as all sinned"). Augustine believed that human nature was so profoundly befouled by *peccatum originale* that it could be cleansed only in the rite of baptism. Moreover, he claimed that we always sin if we follow our own nature, and, by the same token, we are capable of doing good only when God chooses to fill us with his grace. As Edward T. Oakes wryly remarks: "In other words, if you do a good deed, that is God's doing; if you commit a wrong, it is your doing."[1] The fourth century saw an important debate between St. Augustine and the English monk, Pelagius; the latter held that human nature was not irremediably corrupt and that man was capable of doing good and moral

[1] Edward T. Oakes, "Original Sin: A Disputation," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, vol. 87 (November 1998), p. 16.

betterment. Among those who took a grimmer position and followed in the damning footsteps of Augustine was Calvin; he maintained that newly born infants are odious in the eyes of God.[2]

Because of its irrationality and radicalism, the doctrine lends itself easily to ridicule and was duly mocked by some Enlightenment thinkers in the eighteenth century, and by the group of so-called New Atheists today. Both groups find it offensive primarily on ethical grounds: how can sin and guilt be hereditary? Blaise Pascal responds to this charge with his usual clarity and brevity: "Doubtless there is nothing more shocking to our reason than to say that the sin of the first man has rendered guilty those who, being so removed from its source, seem incapable of participating in it. Certainly nothing offends us more rudely than this doctrine, and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves."[3] This view was shared by John Henry Newman, who always insisted that original sin is the only way believers can make sense of the world when they contrast that world to their faith in God.[4]

Living in a civilization which took most tenets of Christian theology for granted, the Metaphysical Poets were naturally strongly influenced by this doctrine. Fortunately, at least from the point of view of literary criticism, their poems are not marked by (marred by?) monolithic coherence. Sometimes they directly invoke the doctrine, but most of the time we can see how it unobtrusively informs the whole *Weltanschauung* of a given poet.

The first to be considered is John Donne. The cheeky, audacious speaker in the poems written by the young Jack Donne seems blissfully dismissive of not only the notion of original sin, but of the very idea of sin altogether, whether venial or deadly. His only interest lies in a paradoxical and witty examination of the exquisite bliss, and the exquisite anguish, of being in love. In Donne's erotic poetry, sin seems to be merely an obstacle which the hostile world of prohibitive social regulations and repressive morality unsportingly puts in the way of lovers to prevent them from enjoying the pleasures of love. In what is probably Donne's most famous poem – and a good example of his arrogant repudiation of conventional standards of morality – the young lover engages in a teasing tug-of-war with his would-be mistress urging her to climb into bed with him: "Thou know'st that this cannot be said / A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead" (ll. 5–6).[5] Since Donne often claims that the world of lovers constitutes an entirely independent and self-containing universe, they are endowed with all the prerogatives of sovereign law-makers. Consequently,

[2] Oakes, "Original Sin," p. 22.
[3] Quoted in: Oakes, "Original Sin," p. 30.
[4] Oakes, "Original Sin," p. 23.
[5] John Donne, *Poems*, ed. D.J. Enright (London: Orion House, 1997), p. 22.

the lovers are free to establish their own rules including axiological hierarchies which can negate the very idea of sinfulness.

With the financial and spiritual crisis of Donne's middle years and the impudent Jack slowly turning into the serious-minded dean of St. Paul's, this world of winsome insouciance of love is all but obliterated by the anxiety weighing upon the poet's mind. The poems and sermons written in that period become more and more sombre as they wrestle with the theme of man's innate depravity and the picture of the human condition which emerges from the later part of his opus shows man as deeply contaminated by the legacy of original sin. Donne embraces the doctrine of St. Augustine believing that every man is born guilty of sin, and naturally gravitates towards it later in life. Donne in fact subscribes to the protestant belief of *sola fide*: what can save man is not his own virtue and good deeds, but grace. Much of the frequently disputed violence in the Holy Sonnets stems from Donne's belief that only most extreme measures can eradicate man's natural corruption. Violence used by God must be in direct proportion to the severity of the spiritual predicament in which both the speaker, and by extension, every Christian, find themselves. A good example of Donne's radicalism is the famous "Holy Sonnet XIV" with its disturbing motif of holy rape:

> Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you
> As yet but knock; breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
> That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
> Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
> I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,
> Labour to admit you, but O, to no end.
> Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
> But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
> Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
> But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
> Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
> Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
> Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
> Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.[6]

As Helen Gardner points out: "No other religious poems make us feel so acutely the predicament of the natural man called to be the spiritual man. None present more vividly man's recognition of the gulf that divides him from God and the effort of faith to lay hold on the miracle by which Christianity

[6] John Donne, *Poems*, p. 74.

declares that the gulf has been bridged."[7] This point is further fleshed out in his sermons, where one can see Donne following very closely in the footsteps of Augustine: "That all being derived from Adam, Adam's sin is derived upon all [...] as all our other faculties were . . . in *Adam*, and we sinned wilfully when he did so, and so original sin is a Voluntary Sin."[8]

The tone of a rather desperate realization of man's natural depravity can be found again in "First Anniversary":

> And can there be worse sickness than to know
> That we are never well, nor can be so?
> We are born ruinous: poor mothers cry
> That children come not right, nor orderly;
> Except they headlong come and fall upon
> An ominous precipitation.
> How witty's ruin! how importunate
> Upon mankind! It labour'd to frustrate
> Even God's purpose; and made woman, sent
> For man's relief, cause of his languishment.
> They were to good ends, and they are so still,
> But accessory, and principal in ill,
> For that first marriage was our funeral;
> One woman at one blow, then kill'd us all,
> And singly, one by one, they kill us now. (ll. 93–107)[9]

The entire eulogistic poem, occasioned by the death of Elizabeth Drury at the age of 15 (a girl, Donne himself admits, he had never seen) is in fact a long lament over the fallen condition of man, where the poet's praises of Edenic perfection are juxtaposed by the wretchedness of the present. More relevantly to the theme of this essay, the poet hyperbolically assures the reader that only the dead girl could "drive / the poisonous tincture, and the stain of Eve" (ll. 179–180). Later on in an effort to grasp the baffling story of man's first disobedience, Donne turns to both the biblical narrative and the apocryphal story of angels' rebellion against God. These efforts remain fruitless, as he discovers that he cannot quite account for the origins of corruption in an otherwise perfect universe:

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[7] Helen Gardner, "The Religious Poetry of John Donne," in *John Donne: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Helen Gardner (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, 1961), p. 131.

[8] Itrat Husain, *The Dogmatic and Mystical Theology of John Donne*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1938), p. 80.

[9] John Donne, *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward (London: Nonesuch Press, 1929), p. 199.

For, before God had made up all the rest,
Corruption ent'red, and deprav'd the best;
It seiz'd the angels, and then first of all
The world did in her cradle take a fall,
And turn'd her brains, and took a general maim,
Wronging each joint of th'universal frame.
The noblest part, man, felt it first; and then
Both beasts and plants, curs'd in the curse of man.
So did the world from the first hour decay,
That evening was beginning of the day. (ll. 193–202)

In "Hymn to God the Father," Donne returns to the idea that all men, including himself, sinned in Adam, and though the immediate *reatus* of that sin is cleansed in the rite of baptism, a certain proclivity towards evil (often described as "concupiscence") remains and becomes the root of sinfulness in man:

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done,
For I have more. (ll. 1–6)[10]

According to Donne, man's fate is always hanging in the balance; on the one hand, the poet never questions God's mercifulness, on the other hand, he knows that man's inveterate depravity means that everlasting perdition is always looming as an awfully real possibility. In the last stanza of this hymn, however, Donne shakes off his customary pessimism and confidently proclaims that God's forgiveness and mercy shall ultimately prevail:

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And having done that, Thou hast done;
I fear no more. (ll. 13–18)

In "Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness," Donne makes use of so-called symbolic typology, which sought to illustrate the Old Testament as

[10] Donne, *Poems*, p. 85.

a series of anticipatory stories pointing forward to their ultimate fulfilment in the New Testament. One of its claims was that the cross on which Jesus died was made from the tree standing in the Garden of Eden; moreover, it often described Christ as "second Adam":

> We think that Paradise and Calvary,
> Christ's cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place;
> Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;
> As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
> May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace. (ll. 21–25)[11]

Once again, the dean of St. Paul's recognizes habitual sins as a legacy of man's original fall from grace; in a way Adam "blazes the trail" for future sinners. Molly Mahood makes the following comment: "He is made one with Adam who was also the epitome of mankind in that all its generations were of his seed; and by nature he thus participates in Adam's sin and death. But he is also made one with the Second Adam who stood for all humanity in taking its sins upon Himself, and in whose Resurrection Donne shares by grace."[12]

While George Herbert taps the same sources and themes as John Donne, he is more "English" (if Englishness can be understood as synonymous with moderation and understatement) of the two, and speaks in a far more restrained manner. While he certainly shares Donne's awareness of man's depravity, ingratitude and propensity for evil, which he often deplores in his verse, he never speaks with the desperate urgency of the dean of St. Paul's. Unlike Donne, Herbert is saddened rather than horrified by man's corruption and sinfulness. He never sinks to the depths of Augustinian pessimism because in his view – which of course translates itself into his verse – the central event of Christianity is not the tragedy of the fall from grace, but the twin miracles of the Incarnation and Redemption. He shares the optimistic soteriology of Julian of Norwich, who famously claimed that in the end "all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."[13] The priest-poet knows only too well that there may be occasional differences between himself and God, who is very often personified as Love; there may be periods of divine self-withdrawal, the ravages of mystical dark nights, or outbursts of angry rebelliousness on the part of the speaker himself as his most famous poem "The Collar" clearly demonstrates, but the final outcome and the unwavering benevolence of the deity are never questioned.

In "Easter Wings" we encounter the familiar notion of *felix culpa*: Adam's fall was fortunate in that it "forced" God to intervene and send his son to

[11] Donne, *Poems*, p. 84.
[12] Molly M. Mahood, *Poetry and Humanism* (London: Cape, 1950), p. 129.
[13] Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (New York: Penguin, 1998), p. 24.

redeem mankind. The argumentative movement of the poem posits a kind of Eckhartian dynamics: man's fall and sin leave God no alternative, but to act and save man from his self-imposed misery. Paradoxically, once the gap caused by sin is bridged by the vicarious sacrifice of the creator, God and man are raised to a higher level of intimacy:

> Lord, Who createdst man in wealth and store,
> Though foolishly he lost the same,
> Decaying more and more,
> Till he became
> Most poore:
> With Thee
> O let me rise,
> As larks, harmoniously,
> And sing this day Thy victories:
> Then shall the fall further the flight in me.
>
> My tender age in sorrow did beginne;
> And still with sicknesses and shame
> Thou didst so punish sinne,
> That I became
> Most thinne.
>
> With Thee
> Let me combine,
> And feel this day Thy victorie;
> For, if I imp my wing on Thine,
> Affliction shall advance the flight in me.[14]

As Jeannie Sargent Judge comments: "Rapprochement occurs when the Word of God becomes incarnate and makes amends for Original Sin. For a Christian poet like George Herbert, it is significant that the Atonement is effected through the Word of God. The Christian church teaches that while God redeemed humanity through the Incarnation, human nature remains fallen – subject to the consequences of sin: sickness, death, temptation to evil, and consumed with questions, doubts, and anxieties unknown to its prelapsarian state."[15] The contrast between the humble yet confident hope of Herbert and the disillusioned harshness of Donne is brought out in sharp

[14] George Herbert, *The Works of George Herbert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 43.

[15] Jeannie Sargent Judge, *Two Natures Met: Herbert and Incarnation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 7.

relief when we compare the first stanza of Herbert's "Complaining" with the previously discussed "Holy Sonnet XIV." Herbert writes:

> Do not beguile my heart,
> Because thou art
> My power and wisdome. Put me not to shame,
> Because I am
> Thy clay that weeps, thy dust that calls. (ll. 1–5)[16]

Julia Carolyn Guernsey's commentary is illuminating in highlighting the differences between the two metaphysical poets: "[…] the speaker's words imply not a rigidly fixed, depraved human will to be broken by divine punishment but an organic softness, the suppleness of an infantile self who can be molded to fit the Divine plan. The antithesis is articulated by John Donne's speaker in Holy Sonnet XIV. Herbert's speaker believes that his infantile (true) self, once baptized from the bondage of original sin, is the form of subjectivity to which he should aspire. Donne's speaker, on the other hand, believes that no trace of potential goodness exists in him to be revitalized."[17]

Since – as Christian theologians maintain – the most grievous consequence of original sin is death, it may be worthwhile to look at poems which grapple with that theme. While Donne in his "Holy Sonnet X" famously says that death himself will die, Herbert goes even further and depicts even death as utterly transformed – almost beautified, one is tempted to say – by the Incarnation and the redemptive self-sacrifice of Jesus:

> But since our Saviours death did put some bloud
> Into thy face;
> Thou art grown fair and full of grace,
> Much in request, much sought for, as a good.[18]

Interestingly and significantly, Donne uses the future tense thus hoping that at some point in the future death will lose his power over man, while Herbert with his characteristic confidence uses the past tense to show that for a true believer this is already the case. Herbert's unostentatious optimism is best seen in the poem "The World," where in a slightly medieval fashion, he relates the story of creation by means of an allegory. God, represented as love, builds a stately house, but then, i.e. in stanza three of the poem, things begin to unravel only to be rectified by the operation of *Grace*:

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[16] Herbert, *Works*, p. 143.

[17] Julia Carolyn Guernsey, *The Pulse of Praise: Form as a Second Self in the Poetry of George Herbert* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1999), p. 141.

[18] Herbert, *Works*, p. 186.

Then enter'd *Sinne*, and with that Sycomore,
Whose leaves first sheltred man from drought & dew,
Working and winding slily evermore,
The inward walls and sommers cleft and tore:
But *Grace* shor'd these, and cut that as it grew

Then *Sinne* combin'd with *Death* in a firm band
To raze the building to the very floore:
Which they effected, none could them withstand.
But *Love* and *Grace* took *Glorie* by the hand,
And built a braver Palace then before. (ll. 11–20)[19]

Although Henry Vaughan's verse – like Herbert's, whom the Welsh poet recognised as his master – is suffused with light, we find in it a strange dialectics of contradiction. On the one hand, Vaughan expresses "a desolating sense of separation from God through man's sin, which fills him with self-disgust and despair,"[20] on the other hand, his poetry is full of overwhelming joy "in the Presence that animates and illumines all creation, itself visible proof of His power and love."[21] With a delight which in many ways points forward to Hopkins's world "charged with the grandeur of God", Vaughan says that every "tree, herb and flower" are proofs of God's love and generosity. While man's soul has a unique propensity for sin, and can choose to be either vicious or virtuous, it seems that nature has not been sullied by original sin and remains a visible proof of God's goodness. Consequently, Vaughan believes that one of the ways in which man can, in a manner of speaking, grope his way back into paradise is by attuning himself to natural beauty and retaining a constant awareness of its being divinely infused, which is most easily accomplished in the countryside, away from the annoying bustle of great cities: "If *Eden* be on Earth at all / Tis that, which we the *Country* call."

Although his work seems to contain nothing but exultant praises and joyous ejaculations, it is undercut by a constant tension between these two opposing views. As if the poet could not quite make up his mind where to stand on the issue, the world alternately becomes a dazzlingly beautiful gift from God, or a prison for the soul which is pining for its true home in heaven. At times, when the poet is seized with a particularly passionate longing for his prelapsarian bliss, he fulminates against the sinful body with an intensity that is almost Manichean: "O that I were all soul." The flesh is denounced as "vile, foul, obscene: 'impure, rebellious clay,' 'all filth, and spott.'"[22]

[19] Herbert, *Works*, p. 84.
[20] Margaret Willy, *Three Metaphysical Poets* (London: The British Council, 1961), p. 23.
[21] Willy, *Three Metaphysical Poets*, p. 23.
[22] Willy, *Three Metaphysical Poet*, p. 25.

The poem "Corruption" is a miniature theological treatise in verse on the theme of original sin. Like Gerard Manley Hopkins in "God's Grandeur," Vaughan deplores the fact that man has lost the ability to see traces of the invisible in the visible, and can no longer recognize the hand of God in his creation. At the same time, Vaughan abandons his usual enthusiasm for nature and sees it as also having been made corrupt in the wake of man's transgression. Original sin brings division not only between man and God, but also between man and nature:

> Sure it was so. Man in those early days
> Was not all stone and earth;
> He shined a little, and by those weak rays
> Had some glimpse of his birth.
> He saw Heaven o'er his head, and knew from whence
> He came, condemned hither;
> And, as first love draws strongest, so from hence
> His mind sure progressed thither.
> Things here were strange unto him: sweat and till,
> All was a thorn or weed:
> Nor did those last, but – like himself – died still
> As soon as they did seed.
> They seemed to quarrel with him, for that act
> That felled him foiled them all:
> He drew the curse upon the world, and cracked
> The whole frame with his fall.[23]

Vaughan shows that his reading of *Genesis* is very careful since in the biblical account only the earth is cursed for man's sake. The rest of the poem's theology is also faithful to what we find in its biblical source – even in his prelapsarian state, man is not created immortal: he lives in tune with nature, but must die; in fact the reason why God banishes Adam and Eve from paradise is to prevent them from eating from the tree of life and thus becoming immortal.

> This made him long for home, as loth to stay
> With murmurers and foes;
> He sighed for Eden, and would often say,
> 'Ah! what bright days were those!'
> Nor was Heaven cold unto him; for each day
> The valley or the mountain

[23] Henry Vaughan, *Complete Poems* (London: Penguin Classics, 1995), p. 77.

Afforded visits, and still paradise lay
In some green shade or fountain.
Angels lay lieger here; each bush and cell,
Each oak and highway knew them;
Walk but the fields, or sit down at some well,
And he was sure to view them.
Almighty Love! where art Thou now? Mad man
Sits down and freezeth on;
He raves, and swears to stir nor fire, nor fan,
But bids the thread be spun.
I see, Thy curtains are close-drawn; Thy bow
Sin triumphs still, and man is sunk below
The center, and his shroud.
All's in deep sleep and night: thick darkness lies
And hatcheth o'er Thy people –
But hark! what trumpet's that? what angel cries,
'Arise! thrust in Thy sickle'?

We can see the familiar motif of decline and decay, which we find in other cultures, e.g. in Hesiod's account of man's degeneration from the Golden Age all the way down to the Age of Iron. Moreover, the very structure of decline is reminiscent of Platonic idea of *anamnesis*; the child still remembers, and is haunted by, the memory of the world of pure joy and happiness while this memory plays a curiously double role: it is both regenerative for it revives the memory of man's true home, and agonising since it sharpens our sense of banishment. Vaughan's poetry points forward to the Wordworthian dynamics of loss – a little child can still retrace his steps into the world of heavenly bliss, but as he grows older, the shadows of the prison house of the material world begin to close in on him.

The last poet to be discussed is Thomas Traherne. Whereas Donne's severity resembles that of St. Augustine, Traherne's position is very close to that of his adversary, i.e. the English monk, Pelagius, who questioned the legacy of original sin. Pelagius believed that the whole of mankind did not sin in Adam and human nature is still capable of goodness despite our parents' fall from grace. At first glance, it may seem that Traherne is simply following in the footsteps of Vaughan, but while certainly drawing on Vaughan's idea of the exquisite innocence of childhood, Traherne outdoes him in the scope of his vision and the audacity of the claims he makes for the soul's capabilities. Little wonder that Gladys Wade called him "one of the most radiantly, most infectiously happy mortals this earth has known."[24]

[24] Gladys I. Wade, *Thomas Traherne* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 3.

A learned and a happy ignorance
Divided me
From all the vanity,
From all the sloth, care, pain, and sorrow that advance
The madness and the misery
Of men. No error, no distraction I
Saw soil the earth or overcloud the sky.
I knew not that there was a serpent's sting
Whose poison shed
On men, did overspread
The world; nor did I dream of such a thing
As sin, in which mankind lay dead.
They all were brisk and living wights to me,
Yea, pure and full of immortality.
Only what Adam in his first estate,
Did I behold;
Hard silver and dry gold
As yet lay under ground; my blessed fate
Was more acquainted with the old
And innocent delights which he did see
In his original simplicity.[25]

Since he is primarily a visionary and not a scholar, Traherne does not become embroiled in a theological refutation of the legacy of original sin, but points out that innocence and ignorance of children lift them out of the fallen state of man, which blights the lives of adults. At the same time, although more easily accessible to the child, this felicity is by no means restricted to childhood. Traherne consigns the doctrine of original sin to irrelevance by drawing a picture of man as naturally gifted with a potential for infinite happiness. In his view, man is blessed rather than cursed since by embracing the innocence of a child, we reach down to the *imago Dei*, which is indelibly though unobtrusively imprinted in every human soul, and see the world for what it really is – a paradise full of angels and miracles. Molly Mahood makes the following comment: "The greatest of the world's wonders is thus Man, the end and purpose of them all. Only the Florentine Platonists (who strongly influenced him) can rival Traherne in the fervency of their pride and delight in human nature. The poet exults like a newly-created Adam in the strength, complexity and dignity of the body."[26] According to Traherne, the soul is always aspiring to new heights in its pursuit of the infinite. As

[25] Thomas Traherne, *Complete Poems* (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), p. 63.
[26] Mahood, *Poetry and Humanism*, p. 301.

Margaret Willy writes: "To despise and dismiss the divinely planned pattern of the earth seemed to Traherne a sin against man's potentialities for praise; an 'abominable corruption' of his nature which denied that 'heavenly Avarice' implanted in him as positive proof of his immortal soul and its destination."[27] In the poem "Desire" Traherne enthuses over that noble insatiability of the soul with his customary exhilaration:

> For giving me desire,
> An eager thirst, a burning ardent fire,
> A virgin infant flame,
> A Love with which into the world I came,
> An inward hidden Heavenly love,
> Which in my soul did work and move,
> And ever ever me inflame
> With restless longing, Heavenly avarice,
> That never could be satisfied,
> That did incessantly a Paradise
> Unknown suggest, and something undescried
> Discern, and bear me to it; be
> Thy Name for ever praised by me.[28]

Let me round this essay off with a picture: we know from *Genesis* that after banishing Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, God placed an angel with a flaming sword in the gate to foil any attempt at re-entering it. We can imagine John Donne praying ardently to God that the sword may come swishing down on his neck as only by being divinely tortured, can he re-establish the severed relationship with his Maker. George Herbert is confident that at some point in the future that angel will be called away and we will go back to the garden of primordial bliss. Henry Vaughan is wistfully and hopefully looking over his shoulder (i.e. both his own and the angel's) at the world of lost delight, while Thomas Traherne is convinced that we can sneak back into the garden even now by embracing the natural innocence of a child.

[27] Willy, *Three Metaphysical Poets*, p. 42.
[28] Traherne, *Poems*, p. 76.

Przemysław Michalski

Grzech pierworodny, strach i poezja metafizyczna

Streszczenie

Niniejszy esej podejmuje próbę określenia związku pomiędzy grzechem pierworodnym i strachem w twórczości siedemnastowiecznych poetów metafizycznych (Johna Donne'a, George'a Herberta, Henry'ego Vaughana i Thomasa Traherne'a). Esej zaczyna się od krótkiego przedstawienia samej historii pojęcia *peccatum originale*, jego ewolucji i potencjalnie negatywnych konsekwencji, jakie doktryna ta może spowodować w życiu psychicznym jednostki. Następnie omawia indywidualne różnice między podejściem do tego problemu w twórczości każdego z wymienionych wyżej autorów. Esej próbuje odpowiedzieć na pytanie, do jakiego stopnia doktryna ta wpłynęła na ich twórczość oraz ogólny *Weltanschauung*.

Przemysław Michalski

Erbsünde, Angst und metaphysische Dichtkunst

Zusammenfassung

In seinem Essay bemüht sich der Verfasser, den Zusammenhang zwischen der Erbsünde und der Angst in den Werken von den metaphysischen Dichtern (John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan und Thomas Traherne) aus dem 17.Jahrhundert zu schildern. Zuerst bespricht er die Genese der Doktrin *peccatum originale*, deren Weiterentwicklung und potentielle negative Auswirkung auf psychisches Leben des Menschen. Dann zeigt er unterschiedliche Auffassung des Problems von den oben genannten Autoren. Der Verfasser sucht die Frage zu beantworten, in wie weit die Doktrin ihre Dichtkunst und ihre Weltanschauung beeinflusst hat.

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Gods for the Final Days: Selected Religious Systems Devised by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Philip K. Dick

Pessimistic attitudes toward the future of the world and the direction modern societies are taking are characteristic of mid-twentieth-century writers. This period in the West was, at least for intellectuals interested in the future of the human race, a very depressive time. Memories of the two world wars, disillusionment over a civilization that had produced totalitarian systems and failed to prevent slaughter, along with growing fear of nuclear Armageddon made the future look bleak. The looming World War Three was expected to bring the end of human civilization and even of biological life on Earth. The pervasive fear and sense of insecurity spawned religious radicalism and inclined more and more people to pay heed to preachers announcing the approaching doom.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, a majority of the estimated 300-plus religions in the US were millennial in belief and outlook. Even mainstream Protestantism and Catholicism had strong fears of the End of the World. There were numerous television and radio stations whose programs consisted mostly of discussions and sermons on the subject of the apocalypse. Bestselling accounts of what Armageddon was going to look like were published, notable among them *Approaching Hoofbeats; The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* by the Reverend Billy Graham.[1]

The poor intellectual quality of such books and sermons, along with the clearly exaggerated forms of religious activity (bizarre cults, money-making

[1] Donald E. Morse, *The Novels of Kurt Vonnegut* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Preager, 2003), p. 112.

sects, and teachings inspired by the New Age) provoked diverse reactions among fiction writers, most notably those whose novels went beyond realism. Some authors produced bitter satires on the human need for religion and the consequent gullibility. One of them was Kurt Vonnegut Jr., whose postmodernist novels *Sirens of Titan*, *Cat's Cradle* and *Slapstick* describe new religions (the Church of God the Utterly Indifferent, Bokononism, and the Church of Jesus Christ the Kidnapped) cynically devised to answer the needs of people in hopeless situations. At the same time these religions demonstrated that the current situation of humankind is completely hopeless.

Another writer, L. Ron Hubbard, gave up writing his pulp fantasy stories and devised and marketed a new religion. The Church of Scientology became popular first among science fiction fans and then universally, thus proving that the human race is gullible and does need religious systems. The most complicated case is that of the fiction of Philip K. Dick, who depicts the application of modern marketing techniques to selling religious experience – and yet he portrays the experience itself as genuine. In the universe of Dick's fiction the opposing forces of Good and Evil, empathy and entropy, do exist – moreover, there are ways in which human beings are involved in or aware of their existence. Dick's fiction abounds in examples of religious and semi-religious experience, but the two most complete religious systems – Mercerism and belief in the Four Manifestations of God – can be found in his short story "The Little Black Box" and the novels *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and *A Maze of Death*. This essay compares these religions in order to show how they take advantage of human fear and anxiety and what they offer to their followers.

James Blish in "Cathedrals in Space" (1964), an essay discussing religious themes in contemporary science fiction, compares the current religious boom to the millennial craze of A.D. 999. Both now and towards the end of the tenth century may we observe increasing social anxiety and note that people are easily drawn to radical organizations and charismatic leaders. One such leader among science fiction fans was L. Ron Hubbard, a mildly successful author of pulp fantasy. Virtually all of his early stories are built on the same cliché: a heroic protagonist fights against a corrupted universe and gradually grows aware of his own potential.

In 1950 Hubbard moved from the realm of fiction to reality and founded Dianetics, a new belief system (or, a new branch of pseudoscience). Dianetics is a psychotherapeutic technique meant to allow for the full realization of human potential. During therapy the patient is encouraged to talk to an auditor (therapist) on every subject which comes to his mind. The auditor's role is to identify traumatic areas and make the patient elaborate on painful subjects. Sooner or later the patina of ordinary things is swept away and the patient-auditor tandem reaches the level of pre-natal trauma dating from

the patient's previous incarnations. Once these are dealt with, such long lost abilities as telepathy, high intelligence and the ability to move outside the body are recovered.

In 1952 Hubbard reworked the Dianetics therapeutic method and founded Scientology. Initially it was a form of organized therapy, but then for tax reasons it became a religion called the Church of Scientology. Scientology enjoyed numerous early successes and spread to the UK, Australia, and South Africa. But soon Hubbard and his followers encountered serious legal problems and had to flee. For some years they lodged on Hubbard's fleet of ships in the Mediterranean. Finally, in 1975 they came back to the US. Interestingly, the first enthusiasts of this church were recruited from among science fiction writers and readers, but soon the movement attracted many other followers. It offered a blend of religious zeal and a technique for self-improvement which promised to liberate the latent powers within human beings.

Despite grave charges of taking advantage of the mentally ill and promoting suspicious techniques, the Church of Scientology flourished. Numerous books describing this phenomenon have been published, including *The Cult of Unreason* (1973) by Dr Christopher Evans and *L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman?* (1987) by Bent Croydon. In 1992 an arm of the Church of Scientology called the Church of Spiritual technology built an underground crypt to house the holy works of L. Ron Hubbard and "other key religious works of mankind."[2]

The case of the Church of Scientology's commercial success highlights the contemporary need for radical religions that offer to treat the prevailing sense of failure. The maladaptation to the conditions of life in late capitalism expresses itself in many ways, depending on individual features of personality. Some people reject the changes and the modern world by denying progress and trying to find safe enclaves for themselves; escapist ideologies, life in communes, strange cults or even psychic derangement. New religions might be barefaced lies, but as long as they give hope they will find believers. In his early novels Kurt Vonnegut Jr. introduces the motif of a carefully manufactured religion thrice. Vonnegut is patently fascinated by the idea of a man-made religious system tailored to answer the needs of a humanity in distress. Yet the religions his protagonists devise are not scientology-like commercial enterprises, but rather the fruit of the selfless efforts of benefactors who, in seeing the hopeless state of our civilization, want to help people suffer happily.

In *Sirens of Titan* an eccentric millionaire Winston Rumfoord, who due to some failed experiment ceaselessly travels in space and time, decides to take advantage of this situation and rebuild human civilization. His masterstroke

[2] John Clute and Peter Nicholls, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (London: Orbit, 1993), p. 1078.

is the Church of God the Utterly Indifferent, a religious system he devises to serve as means to engineer a new kind of society. Its motto reads: "Take care of the people, and God Almighty will take care of Himself,"[3] and its believers consider every trace of egoism and egocentrism evil. To eliminate social tensions and feelings of envy and jealousy people are virtually made to be equal: some carry weights to mitigate their extraordinary physical strength, while others mar their good looks (this idea is elaborated on in Vonnegut's dystopian short story "Harrison Bergeron"). Rumfoord arranges for a war in the near future: Martian armies (Mars is a rebellious colony of Earth) go to Earth on a suicide attack and die in spectacular slaughter. People turn in revulsion from the war and accept the new faith. Rumfoord makes them wait for a Messiah (a soldier marooned in a remote part of the Solar System) to return and announce the Gospel: "I was a victim of a series of accidents," to which they are to reply "as we all are."

God the Utterly Indifferent does not interfere with human affairs. His sole task is to back up an ideology that allows for a socially and psychologically satisfying way of life. The God of Bokonon in *Cat's Cradle* is equally disinterested in the human race; in fact he does not help people at all. But the very fact they believe in Him does help a lot. This religion was manufactured to sweeten the last years of a civilization rapidly approaching its doom.

Bokonon (a mispronunciation of Lionel *Boyd Johnson*) was a Tobago Black who spent his youth sailing all over the world. He had numerous adventures and for a few years was even an apprentice of Ghandi. In the end he was shipwrecked and washed up naked on the small poverty-stricken island of San Lorenzo. For some years he worked hard trying to ease the hardships of the inhabitants, but all his efforts to restore the local economy failed. The natives were dying of famine and diseases and no project for healing or educating them worked. All Bokonon could do was to devise a happiness-giving religion, become its prophet and propagate it among the islanders. He even arranged for Bokononism to be outlawed and went into hiding in the wilderness, which gave the local population some religious zeal and occupied them in a search for their prophet.

Bokononism is cynical and straightforward about being just a social manipulation. Every Bokononist knows that the world is doomed, life rough, hope none – and there is nothing to do about it. Whatever happens Bokononists say "it was meant to happen." They know there is no meaning to suffering, but also that we all feel better if we pretend there is. Looking at the Western world and the constant striving for money and success they say "busy, busy, busy." Their own worldview is built on a number of categories devised by Bokonon. "Karass" is one such notion: it is a team of people

[3] Kurt Vonnegut, *The Sirens of Titan* (New York: Dell, 1959), p. 180.

around you who, albeit unaware of it, are organized by God to do His will, never discovering what it is. Their lives often rotate around a "wampeter": an object, event or idea important to all of them. Sometimes somebody experiences a "vin-dit," which is a personal experience pushing you towards your "karass" and your "wampeter." Unhappily enough, there are also encounters with "wrang-wrang" – somebody or something that steers one away from Bokononism. Another danger is that of "granfalloons" – false karasses (such as a nation, an organization, or a political party) blinding one with false ideas. Egotism is again deemed sinful and its victim, a "sin-wat," is somebody who wants all of somebody else's love for himself, which is the ultimate offence. All Bokononists do "boko-maru," a ritual of meeting souls in which the participants press the soles of their bare feet together, and thus are all the inhabitants of San Lorenzo kept together. The only sacred thing for Bokonon is Man and all the rest is just "foma" (lies), including politics, science, and religion (Bokononism included). All Bokononists engage in a guessing game similar to reading horoscopes in popular magazines: they try to interpret their lives according to categories of "karass," "wampeter" and "granfalloons." Bokonon gave the people of San Lorenzo happiness without pretending he was a God-inspired mystic. The situation on the island was so terrible that the truth about it became an enemy of the people, and the same holds for the situation of the human race in the late twentieth century, Vonnegut seems to be ironically suggesting. Therefore, Bokonon sacrificed himself to provide people with better and better lies in order to make them perish happy.

It is an utterly helpless picture of humankind unable to face the truth. And the truth is the total meaninglessness of existence and the inevitably approaching self-imposed end of the planet. Bokonon ponders upon this in one of his short poems:

> I wanted all things
> to seem to make some sense
> So we all would be happy, yes,
> Instead of tense.
> And I made up lies
> So that they all fit nice,
> And I made this sad world
> A par-a-dice.[4]

The third religious system devised by Vonnegut in his novel *Slapstick*, the Church of Jesus Christ the Kidnapped, is the most depressing. In contrast to the previous two, this religion does not offer its followers any kind of solace.

[4] Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat's Cradle* (New York: Dell, 1970), p. 90.

It flourishes in the Final Days after the human race has reverted to barbarity and before the end of human life on Earth, and seems to be nothing but a grotesque proof of human stupidity. It quickly becomes the most popular American religion of all time and its believers enthusiastically search for their Lost Savior everywhere around, continuously jerking their heads in all directions. Finding the Kidnapped deity seems to them the only constructive thing to do to improve their fatal lot. Vonnegut's satire is very bitter in *Slapstick* when the protagonist finally receives a phone call from his dead sister, who describes the Afterlife as a badly run turkey farm designed by a person who knew nothing of human beings.[5]

The fiction of Philip K. Dick abounds in gods. At first glance this author is very much concerned with the commercial character of contemporary metaphysics. In the future depicted in his numerous novels and short stories prophets and messiahs often want to sell drugs or gadgets guaranteeing religious experience, and even genuine religions must be properly marketed to acquire believers. Yet, in contrast to Vonnegut, his religions are not a laughing matter as they do contain a strong mystic component and beyond the level of tangible reality there is a sphere of the Divine.

To uncover Dick's philosophy is always a hard task. His imagery is very dense and very chaotic, and his characters do have a lot of adventures in apparently cliché science fiction scenery – but there is not much meaning to whatever happens to them on the level of action, as what counts is the hidden struggle of cosmic forces manifesting themselves to the characters in diverse ways. Thus, though Dick's novels have careless pulp fiction-like narration, superficial characterization and confusing plots they search to discover the ultimate power structure of the Universe.

Gods and semi-gods feature in most of his fiction written in the 1950s and 1960s, even before he attempted to devise new religions. One such deity is Glimmung, a God-like alien. In a fantasy book for children, *Glimmung of the Plowman's Planet*, a teenage protagonist who with his parents emigrated from Earth to the Plowman's planet has to fight an army of native spirits led by Glimmung. In *Galactic Pot-Healer* the same deity is no longer evil but weak; he wants to restore the splendor of an ancient Cathedral whose ruins are in the ocean. To do so Glimmung searches for ingenious artisans on many planets and organizes them into a team, as he himself is not strong enough to miraculously rescue the Cathedral.

In *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* the title character is an Antichrist figure: his name "Palmer" suggests a reversed pilgrimage not to Jerusalem (as palmers did in the Middle Ages), but to some place at the far end of the Solar System where his ship crashed. He survived and came back to Earth, but

[5] Kurt Vonnegut, *Slapstick or Lonesome No More* (New York: Dell, 1989), p. 234.

changed and genuinely "eldritch." The mysterious race (or creature) whom he encountered there gave him diabolical powers and a powerful drug he started to market on Earth using the slogan: "God promises eternal life. We can deliver it." The drug offers a mystical experience which can only be compared to the descent to a hellish entropy-ridden universe where God is Eldritch and everybody slowly becomes Eldritch-like. The drug is patently evil, while "ubik" a heavily advertised divine gadget in the novel *Ubik* epitomizes the powers of Good. In the disintegrating world of the novel spreading "ubik" reverses entropy.

The above examples describe supernatural beings and objects, but whole religious systems can also be found in Dick's novels. In a short story entitled "The Little Black Box" we encounter a genuinely new religion, Mercerism. In the near future money-oriented world religions are very popular, but rather as intellectual games and sources of anecdotes, like the Zen Buddism fad everybody is crazy about for a short time. This world is devoid of spirituality, cold and schizoid, and its inhabitants are separated from one another despite telepathy and other technical innovations.

When we see the protagonist for the first time she wishes "if we only could suffer."[6] Suffering is better than numbness and it is finally re-introduced to social life in the most bizarre capitalist way: a strange corporation delivers to people's houses little black boxes. At the same time somewhere on the Moon or in Nebraska, or any other desert, a lonely man named Mercer ascends a hill. He is hungry, ill, and stones are thrown at him – soon he will be killed or die of exhaustion. Watching Mercer on round-the-clock live transmission on TV while holding the handles of the black box you unite with him, suffer his pains, and feel all that he feels. Mercerism becomes a true religion, first sweeping the US and then the whole globe, despite the FBI's paranoid fear that results in outlawing and confiscating the boxes. Mercerites are desperate to hold the handles:

> They want to suffer as a means of denying their private, personal existences. It's a communion in which they all suffer and experience Mercer's ordeal together. Like the Last Supper… That's the real key: the communion, the participation that is behind all religions. Or ought to be. Religion binds together in a sharing corporate body, and leaves everyone else on the outside.[7]

Mercerites are persecuted and arrested yet they cling to their faith, despite the fact that Mercer offers no salvation. He is not a Christ-figure, the only les-

[6] Philip K. Dick, *We Can Remember It For You Wholesale* (London: Millennium, 1991), p. 14.

[7] Dick, *We Can Remember*, p. 19.

son Mercerites learn by uniting with him is that there is no salvation. Indeed, the sole reason of his suffering is "to show you, Wilbur Mercer said, that you aren't alone. I am here with you and always will be."[8] In dying with Mercer Mercerites experience "the tomb world" of death, entropy and schizophrenia, but also feelings of empathy and togetherness. In his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* Dick elaborates on the motif of Mercerism: we learn that Mercer was initially a hoax, All Jarry – a down-on-his-luck Hollywood actor filmed in the studio illusion of a desert. And yet the people did feel his suffering and united in empathy. Thus it was the feeling that counted – not the looped tape that provoked it.

The most complicated religious system in Dick's fiction is the belief in the Four Manifestations of God described in *A Maze of Death*. In the preface to the novel Dick writes that once while together with his friends (one of whom was the unorthodox bishop James A. Pike) he attempted to create an abstract religious system on the sole postulate that God exists. This religion was to be socially and psychologically satisfying and in accordance with human needs and culturally rooted notions of divinity. The supreme God of this religion manifests himself in four ways.

The first of the Manifestations, the Walker-on-Earth, is often seen by believers. He travels a lot across the Universe helping people and talking to them in difficult moments. When one of the novel's protagonists embarks on a journey the Walker-on-Earth comes to him and advises him not to travel in the spaceship he has chosen but to choose another one. The deity helps the protagonist to carry his luggage to the other ship and at the same time engages him in a conversation, which is very much like a therapeutic session aimed at resolving repressed traumas.

The next Manifestation, the Intercessor, once in the remote past offered himself as a sacrifice thanks to which the curse of entropy can be partially nullified. Most prayers are addressed to the Intercessor and transmitted by electrodes through the galaxy. If they reach any of the god-worlds which are in a relay network they are heard and often answered. The third Manifestation, Mentufacturer, has the power to roll back time and replace decaying things with new ones, thus rebuilding the Universe.

These Manifestations quite clearly resemble the Christian Holy Trinity with Walker-on-Earth standing for the Holy Ghost; the Intercessor for Jesus Christ, and Mentufacturer – God the Father. Yet the fourth Manifestation is more problematic; it is the embodiment of chaos, the Form Destroyer who raids the planets outside the relay network. He may manifest himself as a decaying corpse, and he corrupts the world made in the Mentufacturer's image. It is not quite clear whether the supreme God contains this Manifestation or not.

[8] Dick, *We Can Remember*, p. 28.

According to this theology, at the beginning of the Universe things were only good, but then the spontaneous appearance of the Form Destroyer introduced entropy and suffering to the world. To counterbalance decay God walked the Earth, manifesting himself as the Intercessor and redeeming us through his own suffering. Since this moment, though the Form Destroyer is still powerful, entropy can be reversed. The Manifestations mingle with people and listen to their prayers, and thus if need arises Mentufacturer might roll back time to, for example, the moment before you made the wrong decision.

The canon of the religion of the Four Manifestations was written down by the twenty-first-century communist theologian A.J. Specktowsky in the book *How I Rose from the Dead in My Spare Time and So Can You*, and its most important dogma is: "God is not supernatural. His existence was the first and the most natural mode of being to form itself."[9] This book is the future equivalent of the Bible. People learn passages by heart and usually carry a copy with them as a kind of talisman. The way the Specktowsky book is described introduces a strong element of parody to the novel: its self-help manual-like title points to the commercial character of religious enterprises.

Mercer may be an imposter played by All Jarry (the Dadaist allusion should be noted here), Specktowsky might have earned millions, Palmer Eldritch may market his diabolical drug in a very skillful manner, and yet the religious systems they stand for are not necessarily a hoax. The powers of entropy and empathy in Dick's fiction do belong to a metaphysical order of the Universe and humans should always try to unite with the Good and True power against false gods, who like Eldritch are in fact demiurges enclosing people in the illusive reality they create. In his last novels Dick goes on to develop his idea of the true absent God versus the false present demiurge – and not in some fantastic futuristic setting, but in the contemporary world.

Even if Mercerism and the four Manifestations are similar to the New Age-inspired Californian freak cults, the world Dick describes is definitely not godless. His fiction is set in a Universe containing mighty evil forces usually described in comparisons with entropy, emotional numbness, madness, schizophrenia and chaos. There is also the opposing power which counterbalances destruction: all good people and divine entities are part of it. Talking about this power his characters sometimes use the Christian concept of *caritas* – which for Dick is not only love, but also the ability to communicate, to feel togetherness.

Contrarily, the genuinely atheistic (though abundant in artificial religious systems) fiction of Vonnegut depicts religions as artful manipulations that rely on inborn human gullibility. At best they may help the believers endure

[9] Philip K. Dick, *A Maze of Death* (London, Glasgow, Toronto, Sidney, Auckland: Grafton Books, 1986), p. 11.

the hardships of life in a civilization in decline by introducing some altruism to social life, but rarely are the religious leaders honest enough to call the manipulation manipulation. At worst religions are "granfalloons," false ideas that enslave people. None has anything to do with transcendence or metaphysics; they always are "foma," lies, which can be used to do good or evil depending on the founder's fancy. Taking into consideration the millennial character of late twentieth-century (predominantly American) culture, radical religious systems will be a constant element of social life, and people such as L. Ron Hubbard will profit from this fact.

Dominika Oramus

Bogowie dni ostatnich. Sztuczne systemy religijne w powieściach Kurta Vonneguta i Philipa K. Dicka

Streszczenie

W połowie XX stulecia atmosfera narastającego poczucia niepewności co do losów świata sprawiała, że w krajach zachodnich powodzeniem cieszyły się radykalne odłamy protestantyzmu i coraz większa liczba wiernych słuchała kaznodziejów wieszczących bliską zagładę. Eks-pisarz specjalizujący się w pulpowej fantastyce L. Ron Hubbard wymyślił i rozreklamował nową religię, scjentologię, która zyskiwała wyznawców najpierw wśród fanów SF, a potem i w innych środowiskach, co pokazuje powszechne zapotrzebowanie na łatwo przyswajalną metafizykę. Gorzką satyrą na takie potrzeby są postmodernistyczne powieści Kurta Vonneguta – *Syreny z Tytana*, *Kocia kołyska* i *Slapstick*, których bohaterowie wymyślają nowe religie (Kościół Boga Doskonale Obojętnego, bokononizm, Kościół Jezusa Chrystusa Uprowadzonego). Philip K. Dick również opisywał sztuczne systemy religijne: merceryzm oraz wiarę w Cztery Manifestacje Boga w opowiadaniu *Mała czarna skrzynka* oraz powieściach *Czy androidy marzą o elektrycznych owcach?* i *Labirynt śmierci*. Artykuł porównuje te systemy, pokazując, jak żerują na poczuciu zagrożenia i zagubienia współczesnych ludzi oraz co oferują swoim wyznawcom.

Dominika Oramus

Die Götter der letzten Tage. Künstliche Religionssysteme in den Romanen von Kurt Vonnegut und Philip K. Dick

Zusammenfassung

Die in der Mitte des 20.Jahrhunderts herrschende Atmosphäre der wachsenden Ungewissheit an der Zukunft der Welt verursachte, dass radikale protestantische Gruppen in den Westländern Popularität erlangen haben und die eine baldige Vernichtung weissagenden

Prediger von immer mehreren Gläubigen gehört wurden. Der sich auf Pulpfantasy spezialisierte Ex-Schriftsteller, L. Ron Hubbard erfand und verbreitete eine neue Religion, Scientology, zu der sich zuerst die Sciencefiction-Anhänger und dann andere Kreisen bekannten, was von einer allgemeinen Nachfrage nach einer leicht assimilierbaren Metaphysik zeugen kann. Eine bittere Satire auf solchen Bedarf sind postmoderne Romane Kurt Vonneguts – *Die Sirenen des Titan, Katzenwiege* und *Slapstick*, deren Figuren neue Religionen erfinden (Kirche des Vollkommen Gleichgültigen Gottes, Bokononismus, Kirche des Entführten Jesus Christus). Philip K. Dick stellte auch künstliche Religionssysteme dar: Mercerismus, Glaube an Vier Gottes Manifestationen in der Erzählung „Alter Blackbox" und in den Romanen *Träumen Androide von elektrischen Schafen*? und *Todeslabyrinth*. Im vorliegenden Artikel werden diese Systeme von dem Verfasser miteinander verglichen; es wird gezeigt, wie sie aus dem Bedrohungsgefühl und dem Gefühl der Verlorenheit der Menschen Nutzen ziehen und was sie ihren Bekennern dafür anbieten.

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Fear of the Inside: Neurology as a Science of Sensation in Victorian Literature

In nineteenth-century literary discourse, "sensation" was as much a trendy word as it was ambiguous. Scientific attempts, instead of circumscribing it, further contributed to its hybrid nature. Physiologically oriented neurologists examined it as a sensory system, while psychologists associated it with individual psychic predispositions. None of these perspectives offered an exhaustive, universal definition of "sensation." Stefano Poggi observes that despite discoveries within the field of physiology and the psychology of sensation, this area was mostly "left to philosophical assumptions."[1] The uncertain ontology of "sensation" generated a vast hermeneutic space and invited a variety of creative interpretations. Nineteenth-century writers passionately seized this opportunity by colonizing and exploiting this fertile ground. Anne Stiles distinguishes between those who adopted an empirical stance and contributed to the so-called "low sensationalism," and others who understood sensation as a source of mystery and used it to create instances of "high sensationalism."[2] Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) use neurology in the second sense, by stimulating readerly imagination through the feelings of inscrutability, fear, and terror. Stevenson's and Stoker's deployment of sensation contrasts sharply, as

[1] Stefano Poggi, "William James and German Naturalism" in *Nature in American Philosophy*, ed. Jean De Groot (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), p. 79.

[2] Anne Stiles, *Neurology and Literature, 1860–1920* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Stiles observes, with George Eliot's subtle and psychologically convincing use of neurology to convey sensation. This essay explores literary rhetoric utilized in order to convey "sensation." Sensationalist novels as such will not be a subject of focus in this essay.[3] In order to examine and understand Victorian accounts of "sensation," I will first outline its selected philosophical and scientific definitions.

Early Neurology and Sensation

For John Locke (1632–1704) sensation denoted sensory impressions which constitute a condition of abstract thinking. He observed that sensation and reflection are understood "as the foundation and materials of all our ideas, and consequently of all our knowledge."[4] Sensory experience (sensation) and thought (reflection) are both "simple ideas" which, as a result of processing (understanding), lead to "general ideas."[5] Alexander Bain (1818–1903) developed this approach further. Sensation, he argued, though it stems from the sphere of feeling, cannot be separated clearly into its physiological and mental aspect because "it is always considered as introductory to the Intellectual powers."[6] Thus, according to Bain (1868), sensation must be recognised as a dynamic, threshold phenomenon, which in the act of processing becomes a resourceful, motivating force. This imaginative conceptualisation of sensation corresponds to Bain's physiological definition of sensation: "In the exercise of sensation the mind becomes conscious, through the medium of the brain, of impressions conducted or propagated to that organ along the nerves from distant parts."[7] In his *Principles of Human Physiology* (1847), William Carpenter (1813–1885) distinguished between "special" and "common" sensations; the former he associated with particular sensory organs, the latter with general bodily states such as hunger or thirst.[8] He recognised the interlinking function of sensation

[3] For critical evaluations of the English "sensation novel" see Deborah Wynne's *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), Jane Tompkins's *Sensational Designs* (Oxford: OUP, 1985), and Christine Ferguson's *Language, Science and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

[4] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: Thomas Longman, 1796), p. 95.

[5] Locke, *Essay*, p. 94.

[6] Alexander Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect* (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 8.

[7] Bain, *Senses*, p. 7.

[8] William Benjamin Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology* (Philadelphia: Lee and Blanchard, 1847), p. 663.

by actually using the word "medium": "It is through the medium of sensation that we acquire a knowledge of the material Universe around us, by the psychical operations which its changes excite in ourselves."[9] He enhances this intermediary role of sensation by referring directly to "ideas": "the various kinds or modes of Sensation suggest to us various ideas regarding the properties of matter."[10] This "medium" is, nonetheless, totally conditioned by the physiological constitution of the nervous apparatus.[11]

Physiology of sensation is directly related to the development of the physiology of the nervous system. Thus, the study of sensation required recognition of the brain as a material, cognizable object. This proved to be problematic. Early physiologists of the brain still worked within the paradigm of Cartesian dualism, and considered the individual in terms of an ontological binary: divisible and passive matter on the one hand, and indivisible, reactive mind on the other.[12] The dualism of mind and body, accompanied by lingering romantic myths, promoted the perception of the brain as an immaterial, disembodied entity.[13] Consequently, the pioneers of neurology had not only to conquer the resistance of inscrutable grey matter but also to confront public reluctance.[14] Among the pioneers in this field were Franz Joseph Gall (1756–1828), Pierre Flourens (1794–1867), Francois Magendie (1783–1855), Johannes Muller and Charles Bell (1774–1842). Gall developed phrenology, a system which assumed that the shape of the skull was indicative of the brain's, and thus of the mental faculties of its proprietor. Gall contributed to

[9] Carpenter, *Principles*, p. 665.

[10] Carpenter, *Principles*, p. 665.

[11] Carpenter writes: "The nervous apparatus […] causes the excitor *impression* to travel in the *upward* direction, if it meet with no interruption, until it reaches the Cerebrum, becomes an occasion of the formation of the *idea*. If with this idea any pleasurable or painful feeling should be associated, it assumes the character of an emotion: and either as a simple or as an *emotional* idea, it becomes the subject of *intellectual* operations, whose final issue is in *volitional determination*, or the act of the Will, which may be exerted in producing or checking a muscular movement, or in controlling or directing the current of thought." Carpenter, *Principles*, p. 516.

[12] Robert M. Young, "The Functions of the Brain: Gall to Ferrier (1808–1886)," *Isis*, vol. 59, no. 3. (1968), pp. 250–268.

[13] This hypothesis undermined eighteenth-century belief that the mind is associated with intellect and the heart with passions – see Xavier Bichat, *Psychological Researches on Life and Death* (New York: University Publications of America, 1978).

[14] Franz Joseph Gall's "Lectures on the functions of the brain" were banned in Germany and Austria in 1802 by the Emperor Francis I. The imprimatur was issued on the grounds of their "materialism," undermining existing moral and religious principles. In his eloquent appeal, Gall implicitly compared himself to Galileo and defended his scientific discoveries by claiming that "In all ages, it has happened that truths entirely new […] have appeared to threaten the existence of all previously established principles." Franz Joseph Gall, *On the Functions of the Cerebellum* trans. George Combe (Edinburgh: Maclachlan & Stewart, 1838), p. 313.

modern neurology by analysing the brain not in philosophical or spiritual, but in physiological terms, as "the organ of the mind." Franz Joseph Gall found one of the staunchest followers in the person of a Scottish lawyer, George Combe (1788–1858). Combe's *Essays on Phrenology* contain Gall's description of the nerve, one of its first modern descriptions:

> A nerve [...] is a firm white cord composed of nervous matter and a cellular substance. The nervous matter exists in distinct threads, which are bound together by the cellular membrane. They may be likened to a bundle of hairs or threads, inclosed in a sheath composed of the finest membrane. [...] The nerves in thickness vary, from the diameter of a small thread to that of a whip cord. They are dispersed through the body and extended to every part which enjoys sensibility or motion [...]. There is no evidence that fluid or spirit circulates in the nerves; nor is there any that the nervous fibrils are tubes.[15]

This definition not only demonstrates the extent to which Gall's empirical methods were determined by technological progress, but also introduced the "nerve" in a concrete physical form of "threads" or "whip cords," which later, as a form of imagery, pervaded literary discourse. Gall's research was developed by Flourens, Magendie and Muller. Florens located the respiratory centre in the medulla oblongata, Magendie demonstrated by experiment that the anterior spinal nerve roots are motor in function and the posterior roots are sensory, while Muller confirmed and extended these findings.[16] Robert Young observes that between 1822 and 1845 these three scientists established the experimental method in neuropsychology, yet their research, influenced by positivism, was limited to the mechanics and biology of the nervous system.[17] The discovery of the material nature of both the brain and the nervous system was soon to be further complicated. Gustav Fritsch and Eduard Hitzig published a paper entitled "On the Electrical Excitability of the Cerebrum" in which they demonstrated that brain tissue reacts to electric stimulation. This finding exerted an enormous impact on the perception and popular understanding of "sensation." It came to be perceived, on the one hand, as cognizable and empirically verifiable; on the other hand, it had an unexplainable connection with spiritual aspects of human existence. The omnipresent and widely exploited "sensation" urgently needed clarification.

In general, nineteenth-century scientists of the mind were divided into conservatives (that is, Cartesians) and the more progressive sensationalists. The second group was inclined towards physiology but programmatically open

[15] Combe, *Essays on Phrenology*, p. 57.
[16] Young, "The Functions of the Brain," p. 256.
[17] Young, "The Functions of the Brain," p. 252.

to other methods of inquiry. It was in this spirit that one of them, George Henry Lewes (1817–1878), explored the mental faculties of the mind. Lewes, a polymath with no formal medical training and an outlook which can be described as that of "empirical metaphysics," allowed the possibility of a complex relationship between body and mind.[18] Lewes rejected determinist methodologies, and instead insisted on denotative precision in scientific discourse. In particular, he stigmatised the liberal deployment of the words "sensation" and "mind," which, he argued, for each author had different meanings, thereby initiating a debate around the ambiguity of the word "sensation." He observed that sensation "sometimes means the simple reaction of the sensory organ – as in a sensation of colour or of temperature. It sometimes means a complex of many reactions – usually called perceptions – as in a sensation of sight. It sometimes means only one element in a judgement; at other times it means the judgement which groups the present impression with the revived impressions of other sensory organs."[19] Thus, in Lewes' view, "sensation" may involve purely physiological changes, or it may involve psychological (mental) states of variable complexity. This means that it is necessary to distinguish between sensations registered by consciousness (accompanied by feeling) and those which remain unregistered. Correspondingly, Lewes notes, a physiologist will always grant primacy to the neural process and consider a mental reaction secondary; he will call "sensation" a physiological response of a sensory organ.[20] The psychologist, on the other hand, focuses on the feeling, of which he "has to *infer* that it is a consequence of a neural process."[21] Instead of categorising sensation, Lewes focused on the connection between its physiological and mental aspects, on the mechanism of processing physiological sensation. He emphasized that "consciousness is necessary to transform impression into a sensation [while] volition is the equivalent of conscious effort."[22] For Lewes' partner, George Eliot, this secret connection between consciousness and the physiological and mental sensation proved to be one of the richest literary metaphors.

[18] Jack Kaminsky, "The Empirical Metaphysics of George Henry Lewes," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 13, no. 3 (June 1952), pp. 314–332.

[19] Henry George Lewes, "What Is Sensation?" *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1876), pp. 157–161.

[20] Lewes, "What Is Sensation?," p. 159.

[21] Lewes, "What Is Sensation?," p. 159.

[22] Lewes, "What Is Sensation?," p. 157.

George Eliot's Electric Sensations

What appealed to Eliot in neurology was the possibility of knowing and explaining individual mental life.[23] In her novels the word "brain" functions as a metonymy for the character's idiosyncratic individuality. Eliot's frequent deployment of the word "brain," and in particular its framing in language to describe sensation, indicates her physiological perspective. When she ventures to persuade the reader about the uncompromising devotion of Mr Casaubon (*Middlemarch*) to his studies, and the idiosyncratic sensation he experiences during intellectual activity, she uses the analogy of the brain and the battlefield by referring to the "Rivalry of dialectical phrases raging against each other in his brain."[24] A similar technique is used to account for a sensation of intellectual effort experienced by Mr Brooke: "The only way in which Mr Brooke could be coerced into thinking of the right arguments at the right time was to be well plied with them till they took up all the room in his brain. But here there was the difficulty of finding room; so many things have been taken in beforehand."[25] Framed in spatial tropes, the brain is disassociated from infinity and spirituality, and transplanted to the ordinary context of a cluttered room. Inspired by George Combe's phrenological ideas, Eliot furnishes the brain with the capacity of a container as if it were one of the *topoi* where sensations take place.[26] Though they are purely "mental" sensations, they acquire physical attributes through the similes of "raging ideas" and "things" which overcrowd a limited space. Through this process, mental sensations become physical objects in the act of their conscious processing. To portray the sensation experienced by Will Ladislaw in relation to local elections, the text refers to the structure of the candidates' brains: "[…] any candidate on the right side, even if his brain and marrow had been as soft as was consistent with gentlemanly bearing, might help to turn the majority."[27] The "softness" of the brain as an analogy to temperate and constrained gentlemanly behaviour shows the influence of both phrenology and physiognomy, quasi-sciences founded on the assumption that external appearance indicates characteristics of the interior.

[23] See Stiles, *Neurology and Literature, 1860–1920*.

[24] George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (New York; London: Norton, 2000), p. 47.

[25] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 310.

[26] Early in her career, Eliot was an enthusiast of phrenology and read Combe's works on the subject. Combe described the brain in terms of space and quantity. His account of the fundamental phrenological methodology may have had a direct impact of Eliot's image of a "cluttered room": "when an organ is very largely developed, it encroaches on the space usually occupied by the neighbouring organs, the relative situations of which are thereby […] altered" (Combe, *Phrenology*, p. 94).

[27] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 67.

Eliot's descriptions of sensation employ the mysterious responsiveness of the nerve tissue to electric stimulation. At that time the details of this phenomenon were only vaguely established. It was recognised that the nervous apparatus reacted to electric stimulation, but the exact nature of the processes involved was imprecisely understood. Realist writers, such as Eliot, used this remarkable but unexplained phenomenon to represent events of everyday life, while others, for example Bram Stoker or Mary Shelley, employed it as a vehicle for expressing mysterious and dangerous phenomena. Electricity, that herald of civilization, emerged as a subtle yet powerful force which connected the two, hitherto separate aspects of the individual: body and mind. Eliot utilises electricity as a rhetorical device for expressing human emotions, especially inner sensations, translated into the new, scientifically defined category of electric current. When Celia desires to gaze at her late mother's jewels and her ascetic sister Dorothea is about to refuse, Celia's experiences an ambiguous sensation which comprises both admiration of her sister and the desire for the jewels. The relationship between those two contradictory feelings is explained in terms of electricity: "Celia's face had a shadow of pouting expression in it, the full presence of the pout being kept back by a habitual awe of Dorothea and principle; two associated facts which might show a mysterious electricity if you touched them incautiously."[28] Electricity lends itself here as a vehicle for a physical manifestation of sensation in the facial expression. Eliot employs "mysterious electricity" in order to demonstrate that expression, as a consequence of an inward sensation *appears* rather than manifests itself unmistakably. In a way, in Eliot's fiction the phenomenon of electricity replaced static systems of face-reading such as physiognomy and phrenology.[29] The confrontation of two contradictory emotions in Celia's face manifests itself in a transient, and yet a perceptible form. Similar "inner" collision is evident in Dorothea's impressions from her stay in Rome: "Ruins and basilicas, palazzos and colossi all this vast wreck of ambitious ideas, of sensuous mixed confusedly with signs of breathing forgetfulness and degradation at first jarred her as with an electric shock and then urged themselves on her with that ache belonging to a glut of confused ideas which check the flow of emotion."[30] Exposure to the canon of Occidental artefacts, initiated and carefully planned by her cultivated husband, provokes a violent sensation

[28] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 8.

[29] For illuminating accounts of George Eliot's interest in phrenology, see T. R. Wright, "From Bumps to Morals: The Phrenological Background to George Eliot's Moral Framework," *Review of English Studies*, vol. 129, no. 33 (1982); Sally Shuttleworth, *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984); and J. van Wyhe, *Phrenology and the Origins of Victorian Scientific Naturalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

[30] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 124.

in Dorothea. Visual stimuli stir her emotions with the strength of an electric shock which prevents her from genuine, unconstrained enjoyment. This is expressed through the imagined blocked "flow," a simile borrowed from neurological discourse, according to which nerves were "firm white cords," and functioned as channels through which emotions can travel freely. This time, Eliot utilises the inexorability, abruptness and brutality of electric current ("jarred her with an electric shock") to render Dorothea's sensation more comprehensible and psychologically convincing. Analogically, Will Ladislaw's strong feelings for Dorothea are also represented through a vehicle of electric phenomena: "When Mrs Casaubon was announced he started up as from an electric shock, and felt a tingling at his finger ends."[31] Later, the passion of both Dorothea and Will is conveyed in the same terms: "It seemed as if an electric stream went through Dorothea, thrilling her from despair into expectation."[32] Here the metaphor serves to express the intensity of polarised sentiments, and to quantify the emotional amplitude experienced by Dorothea. Finally, to validate the mutual affection of Will and Dorothea, Eliot writes: "It was as if the same electric shock passed through her and Will. Each of them felt proudly resistant, and neither looked at the other [...]."[33] The "electric" metaphor exposes and affirms the qualities shared by both phenomena such as intensity, concentration, suddenness of appearance, and inexorability: "Will felt something like an electric shock. He was already in a state of keen sensitiveness and hardly allayed agitation on the subject of ties in the past and his presentiments were not agreeable."[34] In *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot stresses the uncompromising nature of sensations due to their unalterable structure, similar to the physical structure of the human body. Gwendolen attempts to resist her affection for Daniel but – Eliot stresses – "she might as well have tried to defy the texture of her nerves and the palpitation of her heart."[35] The sensation she experiences in relation to Daniel is conveyed in a physiological simile in order to render it more solid, tangible and therefore more comprehensible. Not only external stimuli but also alternations in mental habits and intense introspection can be a source of intense sensations. In *Daniel Deronda*, the reader "Mordecai was undergoing that peculiar nervous perturbation only known to those whose minds, long and habitually moving with strong impetus in one current, are suddenly compelled into a new, or re-opened channel."[36] In Eliot's narratives, sensory reception and feeling are almost always connected; therefore, her representation of sensation transcends

[31] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 241.
[32] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 25.
[33] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 85.
[34] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 384.
[35] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (London: Wordsworth, 1996), p. 54.
[36] Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, p. 191.

the distinction between subjective and objective. Despite the fact that he assumes that "sensation" refers to the objective, and feeling to the "subjective" aspect of perception, Lewes admits that "[w]e never do, indeed we never can, entirely separate the objective from the subjective aspect in any mental phenomenon."[37] In consequence, sensibility indicates both an objective and a subjective reaction, since "[i]t points to the sensory organism, and to the feeling which is the psychical aspect of the sensory reaction."[38] For Eliot, sensation can never be reduced to sensory organs, as she points out in *Middlemarch*: "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of this roar which lies on this other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity."[39] On the whole, Eliot finds middle ground between metaphysics and physiologist determinism. Her treatment of sensation expresses her romantic materialism and helps her to convey the feelings of her characters.

The Terror from Within

Around the beginning of the nineteenth century, phrenologists and physiologists of the brain proposed to study it as a divisible organ. By applying the logics of correspondence and causality, they assumed that each organ of the brain corresponded to a particular propensity of human character. In the so-called high-sensationalist Victorian novel, the brain was often treated in this anti-Cartesian manner, as a material, spatial object. The modularity of the brain was applied to literature in a form of fantasy that it is possible to extract the negative, uncontrollable aspect of human nature and separate it from reason and moral goodness. This application is evident in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In this text Dr Jekyll embarks on an experiment in which he disconnects the moral and immoral components of his self. The book is not, however, inspired by radical physiology; on the contrary, it denounces radical positivism and evokes necessity to fill an ontological and linguistic void between metaphysics and science. When the progressive Dr Jekyll demonstrates his experiment to the conservative Dr Lanyon, the former argues that the brain cannot be considered in strictly physiological terms and reproaches Lanyon for being a radical physiologist:

[37] Lewes, "What Is Sensation?," p. 160.
[38] Lewes, "What Is Sensation?," p. 161.
[39] Eliot, *Middlemarch*, p. 124.

"You who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you have denied the virtue of the transcendental medicine, – behold."[40] The expression "transcendental medicine" is chosen as a temporary refuge from Cartesianism and from the binaries of metaphysics and positivism. Stevenson searches for an alternative solution and in this he is representative of his time. The transformation from Dr Jekyll into Mr Hyde is a consequence not of an unsightly surgery but of the intake of a phosphorescent liquid which changes colours several times before it acquires its medicinal properties. The use of such a remedy endows Jekyll's experiment with mystical and magical aspects, symbolises the need to transgress the boundaries of the material world and to escape determinist positivism. On the other hand, Stevenson's neuropsychology, like Eliot's, is strongly grounded in the tradition of physiognomics. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde are extracted and distilled as ideal types in terms of character and their physical form. As in physiognomics, their contrasting exteriors correspond to their characters, which become personifications of good and evil. Dr Jekyll stresses this in his confession: "I had now two characters as well as two appearances."[41] The sensation which Dr Jekyll experiences during the process of splitting oscillates between symptoms of mental illness (Dr Lanyon observes that Mr Hyde was "wrestling against the approaches of the hysteria"[42]) and Locke's "general sensations":

> The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness, something indescribably new, and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a hardy recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill-race in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul. [...] I stretched out my hands, exulting in the freshness of these sensations.[43]

The blend of bodily and psychological sensations creates a mysterious, flowing zone of connection between body and mind. Sensation, employed here to convey the mystery of transformation, is rootless, formless and directionless. As a consciousness of movement, sensation inhabits the liminal territory between the body and the mind like a restless monad. The shifts

[40] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales of Terror* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 72.

[41] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, p. 80.

[42] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, p. 69.

[43] Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, p. 78.

between the sensory impressions ("grinding in the bones, deadly nausea"), the spiritual anxiety ("a horror of the spirit") and a mental-moral sensation ("a feeling of solution of the bonds of obligation") open up questions about the unknown sphere where they coexist and shape each other. Consequently, the metamorphosis exposes the reader to a mysterious synthesis of body and mind where bodily and mental sensations intersect and interconnect. Jekyll's full consciousness of his "hardy recklessness" and "a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill-race" locate this sensation outside the Cartesian paradigm. Here, sensation evades classification in terms of the mind-body dualism. Instead, it is imagined as a multiplicity of impulses continuously flowing; at one moment dispersed, at another merging back into flowing streams of impressions. This representation of sensation has further implications as it resonates with Stevenson's criticism of Victorian society. According to Irving S. Saposnik, the central issue in Stevenson's narrative "is the necessity for moral and social flexibility in a society which dictates rigidity."[44] In this sense, the artistic articulation of the connectivity and volatility of sensation, not constrained by physiology but enhanced by a blend of physiology and 'transcendental medicine', contributes to the diagnostic and didactic aspects of the text.

In *Frankenstein* (1818), Mary Shelley examines sensation as an ability to feel emotion. Sensation acquires qualities of an inexplicable, overwhelming feeling which cannot be fully conveyed in words. The impressions of the bodily senses are finite and explicable while the sensation proper is usually left undefined, with an indication only as to its intensity. When Robert Walton sets off on a sea journey, he declares: "I cannot describe to you my sensations on the near prospect of my undertaking. It is impossible to communicate to you the conception of the trembling sensation, half pleasurable, half fearful, with which I am preparing to depart. I am going to unexplored regions, to 'the land of mist and snow' […] there is something at work in my soul which I do not understand […] there is a love for the marvellous […] which hurries me out of the common pathways of man, even to the wild sea and unvisited regions."[45] The "unexplored regions," like uncharted knowledge, are to be conquered. Yet, though the human corporeality can be, as was then believed, controlled by the means of "galvanism," here the mental and emotional faculties prove to be uncontrollable and evade scientific explanation. Sensation is identified with psychological suffering which affects the physiological condition of the body. This is evident in Victor Frankenstein's declaration: "I was overcome by the sensation of helplessness, so often felt in frightful dreams, when you in vain endeavour to fly from an impending danger, and was rooted to the

[44] Irving S. Saposnik, "The Anatomy of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, vol. 11, no. 4 (autumn 1971), p. 715.

[45] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*: *or the Modern Prometheus, the 1818 text* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1993), p. 21.

spot."[46] Thus, "sensation" can be a product of internal stimuli; it can be triggered by thought and contemplation. When Victor realises the consequences of creating a partner for "the monster," he loses his mental equilibrium: "I thought with a sensation of madness on my promise of creating another one like him, and trembling with passion, torn to pieces the thing on which I was engaged."[47] Shelley uses galvanization to connect mental and corporeal phenomena. As if to contradict the epistemological drive, she endows "sensation" with a mysterious form, associated with the unexplored and uncontrollable aspects of human behaviour such as extreme fear or madness. In fact, it is often the "sensation" itself which constitutes the main source of fear.

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the sense of external peril overlaps with the threats hidden inside the human psyche, in particular the sensation of madness. Dracula's victims do not trust their own perception and often attribute strange visions and sensations to their own mental infirmities. Jonathan, who early in the novel encounters Dracula, admits his loss of control over his mental powers: "I am beginning to feel this nocturnal existence tell on me. It is destroying my nerve. I start at my own shadow, and am full of all sorts of horrible imaginings."[48] Throughout the novel Jonathan fears that he will lose his ability to reason no less than he fears Dracula: "God preserve my sanity, for to this I am reduced. […] Whilst I live on here there is but one thing to hope for: that I may not go mad, if, indeed, I be not mad already."[49] In vain Jonathan attempts to resist the disconcerting stimuli and to restore his metal equilibrium. He feels as if his own 'brain were unhinged' and turns to his diary which he hopes will restore his reason."[50] Though madness is associated with nervous disorder, this association provides no explanation at all. Neurology and "nerves" are used as catch-words due to their unusual, twofold, denotative value. On the one hand, the word "nerves" appears clear due to scientific origins, on the other, it remains unclear and opaque. This linguistic phenomenon is evident in Wilkie Collins' *Woman in White* (1860), in which "nerves" are consistently woven into the fabric of the textual rhetoric. On the one hand, they are tangible and breakable; they are "shaken,"[51] "broken down,"[52] "set on edge,"[53] "finely strung,"[54] and even provide "cavities to creep in."[55] On the other hand, one of the central characters declares: "We

[46] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p. 115.
[47] Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p. 114.
[48] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: Spark Educational Publishing, 2004), p. 35.
[49] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 39.
[50] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 41.
[51] Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 274.
[52] Collins, *Woman in White*, p. 250.
[53] Collins, *Woman in White*, p. 152.
[54] Collins, *Woman in White*, p. 149.
[55] Collins, *Woman in White*, p. 156.

all say it's on the nerves, and we none of us know what we mean when we say it."[56] Thus, to refer to "nerves" in order to describe "sensation" was to reveal the secret only partially and to prove, once more, the ambiguity and obscurity of "sensation."

The success of the mission against Dracula depends to a large extent on the characters' "strong nerves." Van Helsing had "a more iron nerve, more subtle brain, […] than any man."[57] However, he experiences the sensation of losing control in the same way as Jonathan does, fears his own madness and having "one's nerve broken."[58] The repeated reference to nerves is used by Stoker not for its explanatory purposes (for there are none) but as a structuring device which serves to increase the narrative tension. The mentally ill patient who seems to possess Dracula's secret suffers from a head injury and receives immediate help in the form of surgery. While operating, the surgeon announces: "we must reduce the pressure and get back to normal conditions, as far as can be; the rapidity of the suffusion shows the terrible nature of his injury. The whole motor area seems to be affected. The suffusion of the brain will increase quickly, so we must trephine at once or it may be too late."[59] Here, the neurological operation symbolises the possibility to explore and to control the mysterious sensation in its source: the brain. This attempt, however, results in failure; the patient dies and both his madness and the strange sensations he experienced remain unexplained.

Conclusion

In the above texts, the word "sensation" serves different purposes. George Eliot deploys it to emphasise the intricate connectivity of body and mind. Sensation serves to underscore the complex and indeterminate character of the whole human frame. For Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker, "sensation" is a phenomenon grounded in the physiology of the brain, and can be controlled by altering the physical conditions. However, neither neurological operations nor the deployment of electricity elucidates the notion of "sensation." Stevenson, on the other hand, conceives sensation as invisible energy connecting mental and physical organs. Despite the deployment of a wide range of textual devices in all of the discussed texts, the notion of "sensation" remains indefinite and mystifying, and thus contributes to their general quality of hermeneutic openness.

[56] Collins, *Woman in White*, p. 25.
[57] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 339.
[58] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 279.
[59] Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 242.

Kamilla Pawlikowska

Zagrożenie z głębi
Neurologia jako nauka o wrażeniu w literaturze wiktoriańskiej

Streszczenie

Mimo że dziewiętnastowieczni psychologowie, filozofowie i fizjolodzy nieustannie próbowali zdefiniować „wrażenie", pojęcie to pozostało wyjątkowo nieuchwytne. Ta nieuchwytność pociągnęła za sobą znaczne możliwości interpretacyjne. Możliwości owe chętnie wykorzystywali ci pisarze, którzy poszukiwali nowych literackich środków wyrazu, aby oddać złożoność natury ludzkiej. W rezultacie „wrażenie" zostało włączone w dwa nurty sensacyjnej literatury wiktoriańskiej (wyróżnione przez Annę Stiles), czyli literaturę sensacyjną „niską" i „wysoką". Do pierwszej kategorii według Stiles należą *Dziwny przypadek Dr Jekylla i pana Hyda* (1886) Roberta Louis Stevensona i *Drakula* (1897) Brama Stokera, w których „wrażenie" służy do określenia niekontrolowalnych sił ludzkiego umysłu. George Eliot z kolei utylizuje język neurologii, aby uczynić „wrażenie" bardziej zrozumiałym i przekonującym. Niniejsza praca jest krótkim przeglądem różnorodnych sposobów wykorzystania „wrażenia" w prozie wiktoriańskiej, a także omówieniem ich zastosowań i relacji do związku ciało – umysł.

Kamilla Pawlikowska

Die Gefahr aus dem Inneren
Neurologie als Eindruckslehre in der viktorianischen Literatur

Zusammenfassung

Obwohl die im 19.Jahrhundert lebenden Psychologen, Philosophen und Physiologen immer wieder versuchten, einen „Eindruck" zu definieren, blieb der Begriff äußerst unbestimmbar. Diese Unbestimmbarkeit zog nach sich zahlreiche Interpretationsmöglichkeiten, die von den Schriftstellern gern angewandt werden, welche nach neuen literarischen Ausdrucksmitteln suchten, um die ganze Kompliziertheit der menschlichen Natur wiederzugeben. Im Resultat wurde der „Eindruck" in die zwei von Anna Stiles unterschiedenen Strömungen der viktorianischen Kriminalliteratur („niedrige" und „hohe" Kriminalliteratur) hineingepasst. Zur ersten Kategorie gehören ihrer Meinung nach die Werke: „Der seltsame Fall des Dr. Jekyll und Mr. Hyde" (1866) von Robert Louis Stevenson und „Dracula" (1897) von Bram Stoker, in denen der „Eindruck" zur Bezeichnung von unkontrollierten Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes verwendet wird. George Eliot dagegen glättet die Sprache der Neurologie, um den „Eindruck" verständlich und triftig zu begründen. Im vorliegenden Essay wird gezeigt, auf welche Weise der „Eindruck" in viktorianischer Prosa und in der Diskussion über dessen Beziehung zum Verhältnis Körper-Verstand ausgenutzt wird.

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The Black Atlantic Zombie: National Schisms and Utopian Diasporas in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*

Since the early 1990s black diasporic studies have become the dominant critical framework within which texts by contemporary Caribbean writers have been held for examination. On the one hand, it seems to be quite appropriate given that many writers are domiciled away from the Caribbean. On the other hand, however, some critics, such as Alison Donnell, have often argued that diasporic studies rely too heavily on historically and politically scripted movements of populations to talk about a side-effect of these movements – the formation of diasporic, cultural subjectivities that thrive in the metropolitan centres.[1]

I wish to contend that the book *The Dew Breaker* written by the Haitian American writer Edwidge Danticat,[2] often considered the chief spokesperson for millions of Haitian refuges in diaspora in the USA, validates Alison Donnell's observation. *The Dew Breaker* takes issue with the unduly optimistic valorization of diaspora. It shows that Danticat is more interested in the political and ethical dimension of the metropolitan encounter, than in celebrating the metropole as a liberatory place to be applauded, lauded and venerated. The multiple migrant tales included in this collection show that the immigrant's empowerment of the self, so often eulogized by postcolonial critics, is not a one-man success story, as it is often achieved at the price

[1] Alison Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 83.

[2] As a Haitian American, Edwidge Danticat, writes and publishes in English, which is untypical for Haitian writers who are mostly francophone.

of dissolution of moral responsibility and detachment from the family and community.

I will also argue that in her efforts to demystify the Black Atlantic myth Danticat does not fall back on the competing ideology of nationalism. Danticat's collection demonstrates the pitfalls of pursuing the belief in ethnonational exclusivity and Haitian cultural exceptionalism, which for decades dominated Haitian writing. *The Dew Breaker* refuses to comply with the myth of the Haitian uniqueness that was promoted by the rhetoric of nationalism. It exposes the nationalistic evaluation of Haiti as a timeless and immaculate place of tranquil retreat as a dangerous fallacy by foregrounding the history of political upheavals in Haiti in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Dew Breaker deals with terror and trauma caused by the horrifying system of repression, predation and impoverishment brought by the Duvalier's terrorist regime. François Duvalier was the president of Haiti from 1956, when he was elected on a populist and Black Nationalist platform, until his death in 1971. He first won acclaim as a country doctor, which earned him the nickname "Papa Doc" ("Daddy Doctor" in French). As President for Life, he gained unsavoury immortality as the most predatory Haitian dictator. He entrenched his rule through terror and political crimes, and it is estimated that thirty or even, fifty thousand Haitians were killed by his regime, whereas many more had to flee the country. Duvalier's rule was based on a rural militia called *Tonton Macoutes*,[3] who were really a secret police that employed corruption and intimidation to create new elites of the country. They were instrumental in the government's take-over of industries, bribery, extortion of domestic businesses and farms.

Duvalier's rhetoric of nationalism can be traced back to the US occupation of Haiti (1915–1934), which, as J. Michael puts it, was "Haiti's irruption into Modernity," whereby "[the] parochial, francophone world [of Haiti] [was] disrupted by the tastes and values of American culture." American attempts to modernize Haiti by force gave rise to national resistance that "questioned Modernity itself and Haiti's place within the world systems of the Enlightenment, capitalism, and imperialism. The argument went: Haiti had failed because of modernization and the only solution was to find a pre-modern alternative."[4] Duvalier's concept of *noirism* (Black Nationalism) was a part of the nationalist project of healing the national psyche after the US occupation by means of providing Haitians with a new folkloric model of culture and identity that was "outside the ills inflicted by Modernity."[5]

[3] The term is derived from the Haitian mythology – *Tonton Macoute* is a bogeyman, who kidnaps children.

[4] J. Michael Dash, "Fictions of Displacement: Locating Modern Haitian Narratives," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 27 (October 2008), p. 35.

[5] Dash, "Fictions of Displacement," p. 33.

At the same time, the US neocolonial presence in Haiti ushered in a specifically American concept of nationalism that became the foundation of François Duvalier's totalitarian dictatorship. Duvalier exploited and mirrored the US nationalist ideology that defined itself through political, geographic and ideological distinction. He used his policy of Black Nationalism to unify the country in fear and loathing of the white Dominican Republic that occupies the other part of the island of Hispaniola. He eradicated the mulatto elite and all traditions not appropriate for the new indigenous identity of the nation.

Nonetheless, despite his elevation of the popular folklore and religion, his regime drove thousands Haitians to seek refuge in the US and other countries. Those who remained in Haiti were subjected to what Lucas calls "the process of zombification,"[6] that is "a mechanism of debasement through dehumanization."[7] It was "a mixture of generalized corruption and terror" whose aim was to break any resistance, to "[annihilate] any impulse of redemptive revolt."[8] Tortures were the main weapon to subjugate Haitians into submission, to turn them into the living dead deprived of the self, human dignity and freedom. They were often directed at "the destruction of individual personality and its transformation into a human wreck attempting to *déchirer* – in Creole, the term has the meaning of utterly destroying, wiping out, breaking apart – [the tortures were to lacerate] the ontological tissue in order to reduce it to shreds."[9] Thus Lucas's use of the term "zombie" goes beyond the commonplace denotation of "zombie" as "a living dead" brought back to life through "voodoo" sorcery. Zombification, in the sense that Lucas uses it, is "the stigmata of degradation [imprinted] upon the entire Haitian world."[10]

Danticat's short stories offer a few glimpses of the acts of genocide committed by *Toton Macoutes*. Only one story shows the extent of their transgressions against their fellow countrymen. That story presents the fate of an activity priest, who bravely opposed the regime through his rebellious sermons. He knows that his sermons, which he calls "sermons to the beast,"[11] delivered in the church and on the radio, will inevitably lead to his incarceration. Still he tenaciously insists on following his personal creed of a gladiator according to which "life was neither something you defended by hiding, nor surrendered calmly to other people's terms."[12]

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[6] Rafaël Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 35, no. 2 (summer 2004), p. 56.

[7] Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," p. 57.

[8] Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," p. 56.

[9] Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," p. 57.

[10] Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," p. 56.

[11] Edwidge Danticat, *The Dew Breaker.* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), p. 227.

[12] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 201.

When the preacher is imprisoned and drugged into *Toton Macoutes*' barracks, he fully realizes the painful truth about the state apparatus of systematic dehumanization through torture:

> He felt as though he was shedding skin, shedding voice, shedding sight, shedding everything he'd tried so hard to make himself into, a well-dressed man, a well-spoken man, a well-read man. He was leaving it all behind now with bits of his flesh on the ground, morsel by morsel being scrapped off by pebbles, rocks, tiny bottle shards and cracks in the concrete.[13]

In the prison he encounters other prisoners who had languished there for years. These prisoners with "skeletal frames and festering sores" are likened to zombies: "many of them were forgotten by the world outside given up for dead. For indeed they had died! They were being destroyed piece by piece, day by day, disappearing like the flesh from their bones."[14] The preacher, who had dreamed about a glorious death and resurrection, does not want to be caught like them "in the squalid limbo between life and death."[15] Instead of this "prolonged suffering" that in due course of time can turn any human being into zombie, he chooses a quick death by attacking his tormentor. He dies a hero's death, unlike other prisoners, turned into the living dead by physical and psychological ordeals.

Other characters from Danticat's collection choose exile and diaspora in an attempt to save their lives. Beatrice the protagonist of the story "The Bridal Seamstress" survived tortures inflicted on her by the same *Toton Macoute*, who arrested her for her refusal to dance with him. Presently she lives in New York where she has made a career as a bridal seamstress. Though she is safe she finds it difficult to put her traumatic past behind. She is transfixed by the thought that her torturer as well found a refuge in the New York Little Haiti. She is interviewed by a young Haitian-American journalist Aline, who makes sure that it is not true, and who is shocked to realize "that people like Beatrice existed, men and women whose tremendous agonies filled every blank space in their lives."[16] Beatrice is like a terrified infant in a cruel experiment that Aline remembers from her psychology class. The infant was made "to crawl on the glass surface with the image of a gorge

[13] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 213.

[14] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 225.

[15] The choice of the word limbo, meaning a kind of dance performed by slaves during the Middle Passage is not accidental, as it brings to mind slavery which, according to Lucas, was the first successful attempt at zombification of black people. See Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," p. 63.

[16] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 137.

below."[17] Just as the infant cringes form a danger that is not really there, so Beatrice is scared of a prospect of running again into the man who in the past tortured her.

Many characters in this collection are haunted like Beatrice by this phantom who eventually turns out to be a flesh-and-blood person – he is Mr. Bienaime, the main protagonist of the collection, a former prison guard and torturer under the Duvalier's regime, one of the famous *choukèt lawoze* i.e. dew breakers who used to "come before the dawn, as the dew was settling on the leaves, and they'd take you away."[18] In the words of Sierra Prasada Millman's "he is the man who has raped, imprisoned, and murdered the women of Danticat's five books, has stolen her lovers form each other and children form their parents, has forced her varied protagonists into what may be a permanent exile."[19]

The central theme of the book is "the puzzle of his identity" – the split between two conflicted persona – that of the torturer in Duvalier's regime and a hard working barber and good and loving family man living in Haiti's tenth department in New York. The book dramatizes the possibility and plausibility of such a radical transformation, through testimonies provided by Mr. Bienaime's victims such as Beatrice; victims who are unable to put an end to their mental torture. Their descriptions of Mr. Bienaime's hideous crimes, scattered throughout the book, foreground his sadism and the evident relish with which he performed his duties as *Toton Macoute*. From their accounts Mr. Bienaime emerges not a loving and "beloved" father[20] but as an angel of death and a wanton sadist.

Yet the strength of this book comes from the fact that Danticat does not refuse Mr. Bienaime his humanity. Just as Mr. Bienaime's wife and daughter learn to love him before they find out about his secrets, so readers learn to appreciate his humanity and his suffering evidenced by his violent nightmares that plunge him into the darkness of his past and send him rolling off his bed at night, before they know the full extent of his sins. We not only see how the blows Mr. Bienaime "has rained down on others continue to fall on his own head,"[21] but also how, in a sense, he is both a hunter and a prey. Danticat is very careful not to put Mr. Bienaime's suffering on a par with his victims,' but it is the triumph of the novel that it manages to convince

[17] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 130.

[18] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 131.

[19] Sierra Prasada Millman, "Far from Heaven, Far from Home," *In The Fray* Magazine. n.d, accessed December 12, 2009, http:inthefrey.org/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view7id=397&pop. Page numbers were not provided.

[20] "Bienaime" in French means "well-loved," the name is only seemingly ironic because Mr. Bienaime's wife and daughter dote on him.

[21] Sierra Prasada Millman, "Far from Heaven, Far from Home."

a reader that, Mr. Bienaime is also a victim of the totalitarian state of Haiti and its terror producing machinery. He can be seen as a product of an entropic, violence-prone postcolonial society that Lucas associates with moral bankruptcy, chronic corruption and obscurantism.

The American occupation of Haiti not only taught Haitians how to build prisons but also extended the scope of state-targeted individuals. In the words of Walcott-Hackshaw "these individuals included children, the elderly, and families of suspected political adversaries; [Duvalier's regime] eliminated the gender distinction that had ensured preferential treatment for women; it disregarded rank and status in civil society; and it used violence against groups that could not be defined in political terms such as villages and sports teams."[22] Mr. Bienaime, as it turns out, is one of such "targeted" individuals. He is one of Haiti's displaced peasants who, due to Duvalier's state-sanctioned corruption, lost his only inheritance – the land which was a symbol of his family rise in social status. As his land is taken over by the *Toton Macoutes*, he turns from the son of landowning farmers into a vulnerable orphan who internalizes the violence wreaked against his family and responds with more violence, indulging his worst impulses. To compensate for the lack of family, land and liberty, he turns his fear and impotence into self-empowerment by joining the ranks of the very people who dispossessed him. However, in the process he loses his soul thus becoming what Lucas might call "a character bloated with Ubuesque totalitarianism" – "a desacralized, laicized, banalized incarnation of the zombie."[23]

In this way, through the character of Mr. Bienaime, Danticat interrogates the working of the terrorist state. She demonstrates that in Duvalier's totalitarian regime no individual could remain outside the culture of terror and zombification. Most importantly she shows how the process of zombification, meant to tear apart the victims, first and foremost, dehumanized the perpetrators. Mr. Bienaime is a zombie par excellence – he is, to misquote Lucas again, "the *creature* […] of the will to power," "[an] archetypal figure of failure."[24] He is a madman "pushed outside the ranks of normalcy by certain endemic calamities of Haitian history." As a zombie, he is "a figure of decline," one that "brings together the signifiers of failure."[25] He perpetuates the vicious

[22] Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw, "My Love is Like a Rose: Terror, *Territoire*, and the poetics of Marie Chauvet," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 18 (September 2005), p. 43.

[23] Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," pp. 57, 66.

The adjective "ubuesque" is an allusion to a nineteenth-century French play *Ubu Roy* by Alfred Jarry, a forerunner of the Theater of the Absurd. The play is a satire on grotesque power and greedy self gratification. Its titular protagonist is in many ways similar to Bienaime before his transformation: fat, ugly, gluttonous, cruel, and evil.

[24] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 65.

[25] Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation in Haitian Literature," p. 66.

circle of Haitian history, which is said to be cyclical as it perpetually returns to the starting point repeating again and again its unspeakable horrors. He is a spectral phantom – an embodiment of the nation suspended, as Fanon might put it, in a condition of negativity, in which the narcissistic pattern of aggression is unleashed on the postcolonial people themselves. Through Mr. Bienaime's hands Haiti is committing acts of violation against itself, against its own people, zombifying them through the deprivation of the self, human dignity and liberty and turning them either into hunters or prey.

Danticat's cycle shows how Mr. Bienaime, who has never revealed the truth about his past to anyone but his wife and daughter, has turned into a tired ghost caught in the liminality between life and death. He blights the lives of his family with death and decay, as his hidden guilt not only cuts them off from the country of their birth but also alienates them from the Haitian community of New York. Therefore another important theme of the collection is how the dead weight of the past affects the people in the present. It shows what effect his murky past has had on his family. So there is the story of Anne, a half-sister of her husband's last victim – the preacher, who believes in miracles and considers her husband's transformation as one of them; and there is the story of Ka, his daughter – a young woman aspiring to be an artist – who learns about her father's secret in the opening story "The Book of the Dead."

In this story the father and the daughter are traveling to Tampa to deliver Ka's first successful sculpture to Gabrielle Fonteneau – a Haitian American film star who is "an avid art collector."[26] The sculpture presents Ka's visualization of her father, as a prisoner of the Duvalier's regime. It is made of "the piece of mahogany naturally flawed" – it has superficial cracks on its back that remind Ka of the scar on his father's face which she believes to be a mark of torture. It betrays her desire to belong to the Haitian nation, to forge a connection to her parents' homeland. It is a connection that her parents so far have failed to provide, as they live a reclusive and secretive life, dreading that one day the truth about their past may come to light.

As Ka's parents have been unwilling to share with her any of their recollections of Haiti, Ka's knowledge of it is based on television, newspapers and books which put forward a stereotyped picture of Haiti. It is either portrayed as a country of discrimination, oppression and despotism, in which ordinary Haitians, like her father, must put up a heroic fight; or as a country afflicted by poverty, corruption, Aids and "voodoo." When faced with these clichés, the former perpetuated by Haitian immigrants, the latter by the American media, Ka opts for the first one, seeing victimization and martyrdom as the founding experience of Haitian expatriates and the Haitian nation.

[26] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 7.

In order to construct her nation-based identity, Ka creates art that is a nostalgic reconfiguration of the past – it is based on a static and fixed definition of home, identity and nation. She is entrapped in the mythology and rhetoric of nationalism that celebrates cultural rootedness and collective identification based on one version of historical experience. She conflates national and filial identity and imposes a conventional grid of nationalist ideology – the idealized history of heroes and martyrs – on her father. The sculpture makes the past tangible, and it gives Ka a sense of secure and stable identity. It is an expression of her confidence in her father and of her solidarity with Haiti; finally it is a simplification and beautification of its history.

Gabrielle Fonteneau, the prospective buyer of the sculpture, represents a similar desire "to museumize [the] culture left behind," to misquote Gayatri Spivak. The sculpture is meant to be another exhibit in Gabrielle Fonteneau's parents' house which is tellingly situated on a cul-de-sac and is vaguely reminiscent of a temple, with its living room that "has a cathedral ceiling and walls covered with Haitian paintings with subjects ranging form market scenes and first communions to weddings and wakes."[27] It is a place where the memory of Haiti is not only "museumized" but also worshipped. When Mrs. Fonteneau, Gabrielle's mother, with words "paints a picture [of Haiti],"[28] she becomes "giddy; her voice grows louder and even her daughter is absorbed, smiling and recollecting with her mother."[29] Gabrielle Fonteneau, just like Ka, negotiates her identity through the filial connection. Ka's sculpture is meant to be a present for Gabrielle's father, and it fits well into the Fonteneau's idealized vision of Haiti.

For the Fonteneaus, who are protected by their daughter's privileged status, Haiti is like a paradise where "the rain is sweeter, the dust is lighter, [the] beaches prettier."[30] The Fonteneaus not only display nostalgia for the past but also an evident relish for the nationalist image of Haiti as Eden. Nothing of the hardship, trauma or lived realities of the Haitians living in Haiti's numerous shantytowns intrudes upon this ideal, which is not unlike the tropical picturesque promoted not only by national iconography but also Euro-American travel literature. Such images as the ones displayed in the Fonteneau's house "render as natural the rituals of national life and misrecognize the country through prescribed signs of nationhood."[31] For Ka, who has been just made a privy to her father's secret, this vision and jubilation it induces are hard to

[27] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 28.
[28] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 29.
[29] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 30.
[30] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 29.
[31] Leon Wainwright, "Art, Embodiment, Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography and Framing the Caribbean," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 25 (February 2008), p. 137.

embrace. Therefore, when Mrs. Fonteneau asserts that there is "nothing like sinking your hand in sand from the beach in your own country," the image that immediately springs to Ka's mind is of her father "dripping his hands in the sand on a beach in his own country and finding that what he comes up with is a fistful of blood."[32]

"The Book of the Dead" presents the moment at which Ka experiences her identity crisis, when, having learned the truth about her father, she has to move on beyond historical and national narratives that are based on one hegemonic vision of the past and history. As an artist, Ka should be able to negotiate an identity outside the nationalist/historical framework and she should go beyond the artificiality, sterility and rigidity of her vision. Her father's confession forces her to see through the nostalgic idealization of the past or the present. She also has to start to think about her identity in a new way, without looking at it through the lenses of nationalist ideology.

Yet the story dramatizes the possibility of Ka's transformation into a fully-fledged artist and a more complete subject. Once her identity is destabilized by her father's confession, Ka finds it difficult to adjust to the new reality and its far-reaching implications. Throughout the story, Ka is portrayed as a person who feels unsure of herself and is not confident in her capacities as an artist. She considers herself "an obsessive wood carver with a single subject so far – [her] father" and she admits she is not really an artist, "not in the way [she] would like to be."[33] She is constantly pestered with doubts about the value of her sculpture ("Would the client be satisfied?"[34]) and is susceptible to other people's value judgments: "I am not beyond spontaneous fanaticism inspired by famous people, whose breezy declarations seem to carry so much more weight than those of ordinary mortals."[35] Her father's confession not only shatters her illusions but also reveals her hidden desire to miss out some disconcerting facts about her parents' life:

> Is he going to explain why he and my mother have no close friends, why they've never had anyone over in the house, why they never speak of any relatives in Haiti or anywhere else, or have never returned there, or even after I learned Creole from them, have never taught me anything else about the country beyond what I could find out on my own on the television, in newspapers, in books? Is he about to tell me why Manman is so pious? Why she goes to daily Mass?

[32] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 30.
[33] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 4.
[34] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 7.
[35] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 12.

> I am not sure I want to know anything more than the little they've chosen to share with me all these years, but it is clear that he needs to tell me, has been trying to for a long time.[36]

The story does not show Ka's reconstitution of a coherent sense of the self. Straddled with the inheritance of her father's guilt, Ka becomes a forced accomplice of his crimes. When she is leaving with her father the Fonteneaus' house, she feels as stigmatized as he is. When he rubs his scar, yet another artifact "chiseled and embossed looking,"[37] left on his cheek by the preacher, "out of a strange reflex [Ka] scratch[es] her face in the same spot."[38] Then as if understanding the reason of this strange reflex, she recollects a passage form the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which gave the title to this particular story. The passage called "Driving Back the Slaughters" precisely encapsulates Ka's predicament: "My mouth is the keeper of both speech and silence. I am the child who travels the roads of yesterday, the one who has been wrought from his eye."[39] Ka will remain the prisoner of her father's dark past, an heir to his guilty conscience. She will not reveal her father's secret, which only deepens her sense of fragmentation and isolation, reflected by the silence that sets in between them. Estranged from her parents, who "betrayed" her and deprived of her reveries about Haiti and the nation, Ka will never satisfy her desire to belong because her father has barred her way to all communities she knows, either real or imagined.

Both Ka and Anne are isolated and silenced by the Dew Breaker. Anne is described by her daughter, who, is her father's only judge, as a "thirty-year-plus disciple of [Ka's] father's coercive persuasion."[40] According to her daughter, Anne is an "echo" of her husband – in speech, actions, even businesses. She does her best to convince herself that her husband's transformation is the greatest miracle of her life. She takes on the role he assigns her, believing herself to be his "ka" – his good angel.[41] Anne's life is built on continuous self deception, sometimes mercilessly exposed by the ironic tone of narration – in Anne's opinion her husband "hadn't been a famous Dew Breaker, or torturer anyway, just one of the humans who had done their jobs so well that their victims were never able to speak of them again."[42] Anne never talks about her half-brother's death with her husband:

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[36] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 20.
[37] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 16.
[38] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 32.
[39] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 32.
[40] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 2.
[41] In Egyptian mythology "Ka" is a kind of soul that guides the deceased person through the underworld.
[42] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 77.

> After the daughter was born, she and her husband would talk about her brother. But only briefly. He referring to "his last prisoner," the one that scarred his face, and she to "my stepbrother, the famous preacher," neither of them venturing beyond theses coded utterances, dreading the day when someone other than themselves would more fully convene the two halves of the same person. He endorsed the public story, the one that the preacher had killed himself. And she accepted that he had only arrested him and turned him over to someone else. Neither believing the other nor themselves. But never delving too far back in time, beyond the night they met. She was too busy concentrating on and revising who she was now, and who she wanted to become.[43]

Thus Anne can be seen as a diasporic subject, who, is more interested in "becoming" than in the reckoning of the past. Her new sense of the self is achieved at the easy price of cutting herself form the past, erasing her brother form memory and attending a daily Mass.

Even though Anne would like to believe that "atonement, reparation, was possible and available to everyone,"[44] her life is full of remorse – it is "a pendulum between forgiveness and regret."[45] She yearns for peace she is never allowed to experience, "acknowledging of kinship of shame and guilt she had inherited form her husband."[46] The pendulum is finally stopped by her daughter, and the ultimate price Anne pays for her self-deception is her daughter's trust and love. In the opening story, Ka hangs on her mother in the mid-conversation, when she realizes that her mother is a bearer of the same shameful past as her father. It is only on the last page of the collection that the reader finds out what happens at the other end of the line. The silence that engulfs Anne makes her acutely aware of "this particular type loneliness, this feeling that you could be alive or dead and none would know." [47] There are many things she wishes to say to her daughter, but the damage has already been done: "the daughter was already gone, lost, accidentally or purposely, in the hum of the dial tone."[48] Now that the past catches up with Anne, she realizes "there is no way to stop this dread anymore, […] this fright that the most important relationships in her life were always on the verge of being severed or lost […]."[49] The "benevolent collaboration, a conspirational

[43] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 241.
[44] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 142.
[45] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 86.
[46] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 81.
[47] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 242.
[48] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 244.
[49] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 242.

friendship"[50] with her husband ultimately brings Anne on the brink of disintegration – her muttering to the receiver, in which she can no longer hear her daughter's voice, represents her shattered world broken to pieces by the Mephistophelian pact with her husband. She becomes a zombie-like phantom, contaminated with evil and reduced to being an "echo" of her husband, his "ka," "his [mask] against his own face."[51]

Danticat delineates the paths to renewal, and rebirth, which many of her characters dream about but so few actually take. These paths always lead individuals back to their communities, not away from them. The ethical framework of some of the stories seems to suggest that these communities could forgive Mr. Bienaime and help him to solve the puzzle of his hunter-and-prey identity. But Mr. Bienaime is not ready to take such a path, becoming instead, to use Alison Donnell's expression, a traveler, "an independent center of gravity, gathering experiences and possessions."[52] By cutting his ties with Haiti and becoming a member of a diasporic community, he hides his dishonourable secret and elides responsibility. Mobility, migrancy and diaspora make it possible for him to formulate an autonomous and empowering agency, contingent only on his daughter's forgiveness.

It is my argument that the fiction of Edwidge Danticat, the life-long chronicler of Haitian immigrants' experience, inserts in this way an important caveat in the idealistic conceptualization of diaspora and migrancy. Her bi-local collection of short stories *The Dew Breaker* demonstrates that not for all diasporic subjects emigration was a choice, for most it was a necessity, while for some it was an opportunity "to step back from [their] moral commitments,"[53] to use David Scott's words. *The Dew Breaker* refuses to unproblematically embrace the liberatory rhetoric of postnationalism that fashions migrancy as a prerequisite of freedom and presents "diaspora as a utopian antidote, or corrective measure, to homeland politics."[54] It reminds the reader that "[…] violent, repressive criminals often escape punishment for their crimes against humanity *in diaspora*, even as thousands of destitute and victimized Haitians fleeing violence on small boats and crossing the Atlantic are routinely intercepted, detained, and deported in effect turned away from [the American] shores."[55]

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[50] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 240.

[51] Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*, p. 34.

[52] Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature*, p. 98.

[53] David Scott, *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 154.

[54] Jana Evans Braziel, "Diasporic Disciplining of Caliban? Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Intra-Caribbean Politics," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 26 (June 2008), p. 150.

[55] Evans Braziel, "Diasporic Disciplining of Caliban?," p. 159.

Danticat's relentless scrutiny of national and diasporic problematic shows that both places – Haiti and its Tenth Department in the US – can be tainted with evil. Diaspora might be a revolt against the nation state, as Michael Hanchard claims,[56] but in Danticat's collection we are constantly reminded that "diasporic formations […] often violently reproduce and re-inscribe the divisions of home and homeland."[57] As Evans Braziel contends, diasporas "are fractured landscapes," as "not only oppressed but also corrupt presidents and even petty but violent Calibans are part of out-migratory waves that constitute diasporic formation abroad."[58] *The Dew Breaker* presents such a fractured landscape in which petty zombies infiltrate American Little Haitis. Consequently there is a great deal of ambivalence towards the moral aspect of diasporic identity formation.

Though Danticat rethinks the idea of Haitianness in a globalized context, as Dash argues, her writing should not be exclusively "seen in terms of the uniform postcolonial experience of nomadism and hybridity. It has much more to do with writing back to exclusionary ideas of difference in Haitian thought, and re-sitting of Haitian narrative in a new relational space."[59] Danticat undoes the myth of Haiti as a paradise. *The Dew Breaker* is as much about mobility, hybridity and diaspora as about some misconceptions of national mythology which "appropriated rural landscapes as sites of cultural authenticity and national identity."[60] It is also a novel about Haitian history in which the state is constantly posed against the nation. The theme of zombification becomes a construction through which, Danticat's collection enters the new reconfigured novelistic universe, new system of Haitian aesthetics, which Lucas calls "The Aesthetics of Degradation,"[61] in which the enchantment with Nature is gone and the degradation of the spirit becomes the major subject matter. *The Dew Breaker* can be seen as one of the contemporary Haitian apocalyptic narratives whose "tableaux […] signal definite inadmissibility of

[56] Michael Hanchard. "Identity, Meaning and the African American," *Social Text*, vol. 24 (1990), p. 40.

[57] Jana Evans Braziel, "Diasporic Disciplining of Caliban? Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Intra-Caribbean Politics," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 26 (June 2008), p. 154.

[58] Jana Evans Braziel, "Diasporic Disciplining of Caliban?," p. 149.

[59] Dash, "Fictions of Displacements," p. 41.

[60] Dash, "Fictions of Displacements," p. 38.

[61] Other formal aspects of the aesthetics of degradation according to Lucas are: fragmentation i.e. the form of short stories reflecting "the perception of the country broken into thousands of pieces" and different from "the broad frescoes of magical realism" (pp. 71–72); new focus on urban settings which are "concentration and amplification of the defects of Haitian society," "a gigantic space of debasement," "whose basic characteristic is filth" (p. 70); replacement of Promethean heroes from the earlier magical realist fiction with anti-heroes or collective heroes – "change is often borne by collectivity […] or by women figures" (p. 72).

any euphoric discourse of national identity ([…] 'dear Haiti,' […] 'the pearl of the Antilles;' 'the first black republic;' 'the cradle of Negritude')."[62]

[62] Lucas, "The Aesthetics of Degradation," p. 72.

Izabella Penier

Czarnoatlantycki zombie: nacjonalistyczne schizmy i utopijne diaspory w książce Edwidge Danticat *The Dew Breaker*

Streszczenie

Tematem artykułu jest analiza zbioru opowiadań *The Dew Breaker* autorstwa afrokaraibskiej pisarki Edwidge Danticat, która jest powszechnie uważana za rzeczniczkę haitańskiej diaspory w USA. Książka Danticat przedstawia terror i traumę wywołane przez represyjny i brutalny reżim haitańskiego dyktatora „Papy Doca" Duvaliera, który rządził krajem w latach 1957–1971. Artykuł sytuuje cykl opowiadań Danticat we współczesnej haitańskiej konwencji literackiej określanej mianem „estetyki degradacji", której najbardziej wyrazistym tropem jest sylwetka kata-szaleńca, posiadającego cechy znanego z haitańskiego folkloru zombie. Artykuł opisuje sposób, w jaki Danticat przedstawia proces „zombifikacji", jako metaforę mechanizmu działania państwa policyjnego, które dehumanizuje swoich obywateli, pozbawiając ich wolnej woli i obracając w „żywe trupy". Artykuł rozważa również strategie odrodzenia się społeczeństwa Haiti, jakie ukazuje w swoim zbiorze Danticat, która pomimo swego statusu pisarki diasporycznej nie wpisuje się w modny wśród postkolonialnych krytyków dyskurs trans-nacjonalizmu.

Izabella Penier

Schwarz-atlantischer Zombie: nationalistische Schismen und utopische Diasporen in Edwidge Danticats Buch *The Dew Breaker*

Zusammenfassung

In ihrem Essay analysiert die Verfasserin die Sammlung von Erzählungen der afrokaribischen Schriftstellerin, Edwidge Danticat, die für eine Fürsprecherin der haitischen Diaspora in den USA allgemein gehalten ist. Danticats Buch stellt die durch repressive und brutale Regime des haitischen Diktators, „Papa Doc" Duvalier (1957–1971) hervorgerufenen Terror und Trauma dar. Die Erzählungsreihe gehört der in gegenwärtiger haitischer Literatur auftretenden Konvention „Ästhetik des Abstiegs", deren besonderes Merkmal die Gestalt eines verrückten Henkers, des in haitischer Folklore bekannten Zombies, ist. Die Verfasserin zeigt, auf welche Art und Weise Danticat die „Zombifizierung" schildert; der Prozess ist hier

eine Metapher für die Tätigkeit des Polizeistaates, der seine Bürger entmenschlicht, indem er ihnen freien Willen wegnimmt und sie in „lebende Leiche“ verwandelt. In ihren Erzählungen lässt Danticat erscheinen, mit Hilfe welcher Strategien sich die haitische Gesellschaft zu erneuern versucht. Obwohl Edwidge Danticat den Status einer Diaspora-Schriftstellerin hat, versucht sie jedoch nicht, sich in den heutzutage unter den postkolonialen Kritikern populären transnationalistischen Diskurs hineinzupassen.

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Fears and Fictions of Samuel Beckett

A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine.[1]

Imagine yourself a child of five or six. The bustle of the whole day hushed by a long twilight and slowly enveloped in the silence of the dark. All lights in the house go out. You coil yourself in your bed and, as if with a sixth sense, you feel the gloomy night pressing upon the window-panes. A quiet fear creeps up your heart and floods the stomach like a gush of muddy water. You try to make yourself snug in your solitary bed which floats through the sea of dark: an all-forgotten boat. Lying, foetus-like, you dare not leave the bed and still you cannot stay there. What would not you give then for even the dimmest ray of light? Or for a goodnight story?

Fear is a double-faced paradoxical creature. On the one hand, I fear therefore I am, to paraphrase a well-known dictum, or even the more I fear, the more I am. For it is fear that makes the consciousness swell like a wounded muscle and intensifies the sense of being. But on the other hand, fear releases a drive to hide, to escape from the all too painful reality into a cosy bed of fiction, to find a shelter of a story. There is denial and repression at work. Every traumatic event is followed by this urge to speak, to confide in your family or friends, to talk to a shrink or to a priest. Very often the person is negligible: it can be anyone willing to listen. It is the confession itself that counts: the process of transfiguring the fearful reality into an acceptable fiction. It is a goodnight story that you need.

Thus the narrator of "The Calmative", one of Beckett's short stories, says:

> For I'm too frightened this evening to listen to myself rot, waiting for the great red lapses of the heart, the tearings at the caecal walls, and

[1] Samuel Beckett, *Nohow On* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), p. 3.

> for the slow killings to finish in my skull, the assaults on unshakable pillars, the fornications with corpses. So I'll tell myself a story, I'll try and tell myself another story, to try and calm myself, and it's there I feel I'll be old, old, even older than the day I fell, calling for help, and it came. Or is it possible that in this story I have come back to life, after my death? No, it's not like me to come back to life, after my death.[2]

This mechanism of story-telling as a defensive reaction to fear can be transferred from the level of an individual to the human collective consciousness. That is what Giambattista Vico does in his seminal *New Science*, when he speaks of the poetic stage in human history. Driven by fear of the supernatural, the dark unknown and unnameable, people resort to creating fictions, mythologies, narratives to explain the inexplicable and to organize their experience into a meaningful whole. "In this fashion the first theological poets created the first divine fable, the greatest they ever created: that of Jove, king and father of men and gods, in the act of hurling the lightning bolt; an image so popular, disturbing and instructive that its creators themselves believed in it, and feared, revered and worshiped it in frightful religions […]."[3]

The peculiar and paradoxical nature of this "divine fable" consists in its being a *true fiction*: its creators actually believe it to be a fact. Their poetic imagination invades the *terra incognita* and creates a world in its own image and likeness. The fictitious character of the story is revealed only in the subsequent stages of human history, when it has become outdated, questionable and no longer useful. Greek mythology was such a divine fable, grown rusty during the sceptical and decadent period of the late Roman empire, and afterwards replaced with the Christian world-image which found its most complete artistic expression in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The Christian fable, in its turn, underwent decline and disintegration in the period from Voltaire to Nietzsche, followed by a general crisis of culture and values at the beginning of the twentieth century.

And here we come to Beckett whose writings present an attempt to confront the fearful void of inexplicable universe and to create a story that would once again imbue existence with meaning. This attempt is, however, a failure from beginning to end, a frenetic struggle with the unknown ending in defeat. Importantly, Beckett's works do not speak *about* this fiasco, but they stage and perform it: they create art out of this very fiasco.

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[2] Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose, 1929–1989* (New York: Grove Press, 1995), p. 61.

[3] Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, trans. T.G. Bergin and M.H. Fisch (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1948), p. 106.

"I'll tell my story in the past," says the narrator and protagonist of "The Calmative", "as though it were a myth, or an old fable, for this evening I need another age."[4] The ambition of telling a sense-creating story is there and the model is there: a myth, an old fable, a goodnight story told by the protagonist's father. A story about "the adventures of one Joe Breem, or Breen […] a strong muscular lad of fifteen […] who swam for miles in the night, a knife between his teeth, after a shark, I forget why, out of sheer heroism."[5] The story was such that it was easy for the boy to identify with its hero ("the pictures that were of me already,"[6] says the narrator), and to be transported into the world of fiction which healed the fear of the night. The protagonist can remember then, however faintly, what a good goodnight story should be like and he tries to follow the example in his own account but he cannot but fail.

As often in Beckett, it is a story of a journey, or a trip perhaps, though each word one could come with up seems more and more inadequate as the story proceeds. First of all, the very reason for setting out escapes the narrator: "What possessed me to stir […]? Was I hungry […]? Did the weather tempt me? It was cloudy and cool, I insist, but not to the extent of luring me out."[7] The reader never learns what the actual motivation. The journey just as the story itself does not go well, it does not go anywhere, sometimes it does not go at all: "I couldn't get up at the first attempt, nor let us say at the second, and once up, propped against the wall, I wondered if I could go on, I mean up, propped against the wall. Impossible to go out and walk."[8]

Not a promising onset, to be sure. Once the protagonist has managed to get out on the road, there is an attempt at a descriptive passage: "A lush pasture lay before me, nonsuch perhaps, who cares, drenched in evening dew or recent rain."[9] At a certain point in the story other characters appear, though it must be said at once that they are inconsequential for the plot (this word is a gross overstatement) and very soon disappear without a trace. An example: "What I saw was a bald man in a brown suit, a comedian. He was telling a funny story about a fiasco. Its point escaped me. He used the word snail, or slug, to the delight of all present."[10] Moreover, the narrator frequently decides about the details of his account in a completely arbitrary manner, which reveals how the holes, blank spaces and blind spots of the story are inexpertly patched up. It is a house of cards about to fall into pieces. For instance, there is a cathedral where the protagonists resolves to hide (why? from

[4] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 62.
[5] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, pp. 63–64.
[6] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 64.
[7] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 62.
[8] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 62.
[9] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 63.
[10] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 63.

whom?). "I say cathedral, it may not have been, I don't know, all I know is it would vex me in this story that aspires to be the last, to have taken refuge in a common church."[11]

What strikes one already at first reading is that the text abounds in such phrases and structures as: "perhaps," "I don't know," "if my calculations are correct," "must have been," "I imagine," "I had no idea," "proceeding on this hypothesis," "possibly," "assuming they were there," "in a way," "by I know not what means," "I suspect," "how shall I say," "seemed," "if that were possible," "unless," and other expressions of hesitation, uncertainty or total ignorance coupled with many counter-factual or hypothetical statements. Significantly, when the word "reality" appears in the course of the story, the narrator's comment reads: "too tired to look for the right word."[12] Is there a right word? The entire text seems to be an anxious search for the right words and a continual failure to find them. The reality that the narrator attempts to convey is always elusive, uncertain and for the most part unknown. It is merely a dark blur in the reader's eye, resisting comprehension and interpretation. And the story itself goes nowhere, it is an absurd impasse best expressed by the following passage: "But soon realizing I was going downhill I turned about and set off in the other direction. For I was afraid if I went downhill of returning to the sea where I had sworn never to return. When I say I turned about I mean I wheeled round in a wide semi-circle without slowing down, for I was afraid if I stopped of not being able to start again, yes, I was afraid of that too."[13]

The story ends on this "at a loss" note as well. The protagonist realizes the sea is east so he must go west since he has sworn his oath. And west is to the left of north, that's for sure at least. But there are no stars to show the way. There is then nowhere to go because there is nothing to go by.

This figure of impasse, of aporetic entanglement, recurs throughout many of Beckett's writings in different forms and versions. I take the pleasure of quoting one of the most memorable, the one which opens the short story entitled "The Expelled":

> There were not many steps. I had counted them a thousand times, both going up and coming down, but the figure has gone from my mind. I have never known whether you should say one with your foot on the sidewalk, two with the following foot on the first step, and so on, or whether the sidewalk shouldn't count. At the top of the steps I fell foul of the same dilemma. In the other direction, I mean from top to bottom, it was the same, the word is not too strong.

[11] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 68.
[12] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 76.
[13] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 70.

> I did not know where to begin and where to end, that's the truth of the matter. I arrived therefore at three totally different figures, without ever knowing which of them was right. And when I say that the figure has gone from my mind, I mean that none of the figures is with me any more.[14]

It is worth noting that in the fretful attempts at telling a coherent story and thereby creating a sensible reality there is also another significant thing at stake: a sense of stable identity, a consistent self. The fear of fragmented and chaotic world is at the same time a fear losing the thread of one's identity in that incomprehensible mess-up. This motif can be found in Beckett's dramaticules, particularly in *That Time* and *Footfalls*. The clamour of voices in *That Time* creates a disquieting atmosphere of a disintegrated life. Various memories emerge and vanish, uttered in a disjointed, distressed and disturbed language. No sense of unity, order, consistency can be found. Only a sudden realization: "one of those things you kept making up to keep the void out just another of those old tales to keep the void from pouring in on top of you."[15] The fear has a name here: it is the void. But is it the right word? In *Footfalls* May tries to tell herself a story, a story about her life, about herself, about "it all."[16] Here the concrete pronoun with a specific reference is coupled with the word of universal compass. Again a paradox, a riddle to reason, an attempt to do justice to the unnameable.

To conclude, all the stories are failures. The fearful void that the storytellers face looks back into their own spirits. Tortured by the fear engendered in their minds and hearts, they try to patch up a story, a good story like the old fables, to connect the scattered pieces and get a firm hold of themselves. They fail, but it is the way they fail and the style of their fiasco that turns out to be of artistic value. For, to quote Beckett once again and for the last time, "to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world and the shrink from it desertion, art, craft, good housekeeping, living."[17]

[14] Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose*, p. 46.

[15] Samuel Beckett, *Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), p. 230.

[16] Beckett, *Collected Shorter Plays*, p. 243.

[17] Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta. Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), p. 145.

Maciej Piątek

Lęki i fikcje Samuela Becketta

Streszczenie

Artykuł prezentuje odczytanie opowiadań Samuela Becketta (*The Calmative*, *The Expelled*) oraz krótkich utworów dramatycznych (*That Time*, *Footfalls*) jako tekstów zrodzonych z obezwładniającego lęku. Psychologia uczy nas, że produkowanie fikcji jest jednym ze znanych sposobów na radzenie sobie z niemożliwą do zniesienia rzeczywistością, swego rodzaju eskapizmem, który pozwala oswoić to, co przerażające i niesamowite (niem. *unheimlich*). Dla Becketta człowiek jest wewnętrznie zmuszony do wymyślania historii, aby stworzyć poczucie stabilnej tożsamości oraz podjąć próbę wyjaśnienia tego, co niewytłumaczalne, jakkolwiek żałosna byłaby to próba. Tak właśnie Beckett, uważny czytelnik *Nowej nauki* Giambattisty Vico, postrzega funkcję literatury jako takiej. Jego własne teksty pokazują, że tworzenie fikcji w celu stłumienia lęku jest z jednej strony nieuniknione, a z drugiej skazane na porażkę w czasach ponowoczesnych. Teksty Becketta nie tyle mówią o tej porażce, ile same tę porażkę inscenizują swoją strukturą i znaczeniem, które pozostają zawsze na granicy rozkładu. Teksty te nie są „o czymś", ale same „są tym czymś", jak młody Beckett pisał o *Finnegans Wake* Jamesa Joyce'a.

Maciej Piątek

Ängste und Fiktionen Samuel Becketts

Zusammenfassung

Im vorliegenden Essay werden Samuel Becketts Erzählungen (*The Calmative*, *The Expelled*) und kurze dramatischen Werke (*That Time*, *Footfalls*) als die infolge einer überwältigten Angst entstandenen Texte interpretiert. Die Psychologie lehrt, dass die Erfindung von Fiktionen eine der bekannten Methoden ist, mit quälender Wirklichkeit zurechtzukommen; es ist eine Art des Eskapismus, der erlaubt, sich mit dem Schrecklichen und Unheimlichen vertraut zu machen. Becketts Mensch ist innerlich gezwungen, verschiedene Geschichten zu erfinden, um eine stabile Identität zu erreichen und das Unerklärliche zu klären, wenn das auch ein jämmerliches Verhalten würde. So sieht Beckett, der aufmerksame Leser der *Neuen Wissenschaft* von Giambattista Vico, die Funktion der Literatur an sich. Seine Texte bestätigen, dass die Fiktionserfindung um Angst zu unterdrücken, einerseits unvermeidlich, und andererseits in postmoderner Epoche zum Scheitern verurteilt ist. Becketts Werke handeln nicht so sehr über den Misserfolg selbst, sondern inszenieren den Misserfolg dank ihrer Struktur und Bedeutung, die immer an der Grenze des Zerfalls sind. Sie handeln also nicht „von etwas", sondern „sind etwas", wie es der junge Beckett über James Joyces *Finnengans Wake* geschrieben hat.

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Deeper Darkness: Fear of the Dionysian Ultimate in H.P. Lovecraft

The fiction and personal philosophy of Howard Phillips Lovecraft is centered around the fundamental fear that human civilization, agency and perceptions mean nothing in the infinite, cosmic void of existence. Man attempts to remedy this fear, this *horror vacui*, by filling the void with delusions of his own significance.[1] Such an attempt is futile, and Lovecraft shows this through man's discovery of ultimate reality, which eventually leads to dissolution and madness. In doing so, the author employs some theological notions: the idea of the Dionysian, and what Rudolf Otto called the "wholly other."[2] Yet, he maintains a staunchly atheist perspective as well. This union of a Dionysian sensibility, together with his "distinctly nihilistic vision,"[3] creates a unique notion of what Karl Kerenyi dubs "the indestructible life."[4] As stated in Lovecraft's meta-textual invention, *The Necronomicon*: "That is not dead which can eternal lie/ and with strange aeons, even death may die."[5]

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *A Genealogy of Morals*, in *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library of America, 2000), p. 533.

[2] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 25.

[3] Robert M. Price, "Lovecraft's 'Artificial Mythology'" in *An Epicure in the Terrible: A Centennial Anthology of Essays in Honor of H.P. Lovecraft* (Fairleigh: Dickinson University Press, 1991), p. 250.

[4] Karl Kerenyi, *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of an Indestructible Life* (Princetion: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. xxviii.

[5] H.P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," in *The Necromonicon: The Best Weird Tales of H.P. Lovecraft* (London: Gollancz, 2008), p. 215.

The philosopher Friederich Nietzsche thought of this life force of the Dionysian as a goal to which man should aspire, in the hope that man will "be oneself the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity,"[6] with a "joyous and trusting fatalism, in the faith that only the single is loathsome, and that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole." To Nietzsche this is the highest of all possible faiths, baptized with the name Dionysos.[7] This redeeming whole is ostensibly the ultimate reality of life beyond the facets of the single – the human, and faith in such a world is man's "great liberation."[8] In Lovecraft's view, however, this goal is unattainable. The horror author is more inclined toward the notion of the Dionysian in its original Greek sense. Its eternal power, what Karl Kerenyi designates as the "indestructible life," and what Rudolf Otto calls the "wholly other" is not expressed by man or even his art.[9] Nietzsche's transcendence of man through Dionysos is rejected, in favour of the recognition that man cannot transcend his infinitesimal position in relation to this "whole." Lovecraft, however, takes this one step further – to such an extent that any interaction with the whole leads to destruction.

Therefore, H.P. Lovecraft presents a similar world of the Dionysian as Nietzsche's, beyond the facets of the human – but his conception owes more to Dionysos in Euripides' *The Bacchae*, a being whose rites must be celebrated – man may either join in such a celebration, or be destroyed.[10] By employing an artificial mythology, Lovecraft – like Nietzsche – puts forth the idea that "human beings are not the effect of some special purpose, or will, or end."[11] The difference is that Lovecraft sees man's attempts to see the universe with regard to his own significance as sheer folly. Therefore, he sees the Dionysian as the instigator of man's madness and inevitable decay, rather than the liberator. The Dionysian "indestructible life" is the signifier of an ultimate reality that cannot be engaged by man. When man makes any attempt, his choices are limited to madness, or nothingness – as Lovecraft would put it: "going

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[6] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols – Or How One Philosophizes With a Hammer*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (Penguin Group, 1976), p. 563 – Nietzsche refers to Goethe as embodying the spirit of this man above others.

[7] Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 553.

[8] "[...] that the mode of being may not be traced back to a primary cause, that the world does not form a unity either as a sensorium or as 'spirit' – that alone is the great liberation." Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 501.

[9] "In the myth of Dionysos, *zoe* expressed itself. Through the myth men trusted in *zoe* as they went to their graves, but they did not express the *zoe*; it expressed itself." Kerenyi, *Dionysos*, p. 350.

[10] Euripides, *The Bacchae*, ed. John Davie (London: Penguin, 2005). The tragic figure of the Bacchae, Pentheus is destroyed by his own mother after he enjoins in the celebration of Dionysos, punished for attempting to stifle the god's celebration earlier in the play.

[11] Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 500.

mad from the revelation," or retreating into "the peace and safety of a new dark age."[12] Any liberation from illusion, that which Nietzsche recommends, is rendered itself an illusion.

Lovecraft's stories and novels, especially "The Colour Out of Space," "The Dunwich Horror," *At the Mountains of Madness*, and *The Shadow Out of Time*, all show what occurs when man encounters Dionysian reality, which the author reveals by simulating the "removal of the natural limits on human perception" so as to provide a "full view of the horrible empty (naturalistic) cosmos."[13] This true nature of reality only leads man to physical disintegration and mental decay at its revelation, and destruction when man encounters it, through the stripping away of man's piffle, constructed reality.

In "The Colour Out of Space," Lovecraft shows concretely where the individual life is destroyed in its encounter with life outside of the confines of man's experience – or the ultimate reality of the universe at large. This destruction takes the form of the dissolution of human flesh when it encounters the ineffable powers of the larger, indifferent cosmos. A meteorite strikes a farm in a rural community, carrying with it a strange luminescent organism, a "colour" that begins to take hold of everything around it, sucking out the pigment from everything it has touched. The process by which this occurs begins with mental dissolution, followed by physical dissolution – in which it ultimately reduces plants, animals, and humans to the same grey, crumbling dust. What follows is moral dissolution, and then finally a revelation of something more terrifying than dissolution itself.

The mental dissolution of the first victim, the farmer's wife, is thus described: "In her raving there was not a single specific noun, but only verbs and pronouns. Things moved… changed… fluttered, and ears tingled to impulses which were not wholly sounds. Something was being taken away, she was being drained of something.[14] This is followed by the physical decay: "collapse, greying, and disintegration […] There was a horrible brittleness, and dry fragments were scaling off." Others look "horrifiedly into the distorted parody that had been a face."[15]

After this, the behaviour of the farmer and his sons' transforms. When they have confronted his Dionysian reality of this strange presence, and seen its power, they retreat into a fatalistic mindset, but not that "joyous and trusting fatalism." Rather, the attitude of the farmer and his sons seems fairly characteristic of Nietzsche's fears of man retreating into self-abnegation, or nihilism. They continue to drink the water after it is poisoned by the strange substance from space, and continue their chores throughout the

[12] Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," in *The Necronomicon*, p. 201.
[13] Price, "Lovecraft's 'Artificial Mythology," p. 248.
[14] Lovecraft, "Colour Out of Space," p. 176.
[15] Lovecraft, "Colour Out of Space," p. 181.

"aimless days," "listlessly." As the narrator states, they have "something of a stolid resignation about them all," as if walking half in another world between lines of nameless guards to a certain and familiar doom."[16] They "would rather will nothingness than not will"[17] *due* to the power of the Dionysian, rather than spite of it. In the narrative of "The Colour Out of Space," Nietzsche's "attempt to raise humanity higher," including the "relentless destruction of everything that was degenerating and parasitical," would not result in an "excess of life on Earth from which the Dionysian state would have to awaken," but in quite the opposite.[18] The awakening of the Dionysian state would result in the destruction of biological life. The latter, in comparison to the former, would be degenerating and parasitical. This realization informs the attitude of the farmer's family, coupled with the awesome power of the strange colour that evaporates men, creating a sense of the wholly other as inextricably bound to dissolution, and thus nothingness – from which nothing can redeem man. Yet, it is a final revelation apart from mere corporeal destruction that completes the process of this dissolution, and evokes the true terror in the story, when the most important phrase with regard to Lovecraft's philosophy is uttered – "deeper darkness."

Lovecraft describes the meteorite payload's ascension's back into space after it has sucked life from everything in its path, using blatantly religious imagery. The fires and the coloration are mentioned chiefly as an otherness, godly, and "unnatural." In a fearsome instant of "deeper darkness, the watchers saw wriggling at that tree top height a thousand tiny points of faint and unhallowed radiance, tipping each bough like the fires of St. Elmo or the flames that came down upon the apostles' heads at Pentecost. It was a monstrous constellation of unnatural light […] like a glutted swarm of corpse-fed fireflies dancing hellish sarabands over an accursed marsh."[19] The "unnaturalness" of the light is an indication that the light is coming from the meteorite, but its significance is far deeper, as the "Pentecostal flames" simile is mentioned right before the metaphor of the dancing, corpse-fed fireflies.

The religious imagery, the numinous, ineffable coloration which has turned all to dust, and the horrific fireflies all contribute to the fear of that great nothingness and void, characterized by a "fearsome instant."[20] That final instant that lays a lasting impression on whoever has seen the true nature of the indifferent universe, is a "deeper darkness," and a madness results which

[16] Lovecraft, "Colour Out of Space," p. 177.
[17] Nietzsche, *A Genealogy of Morals*, p. 533.
[18] Friederich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, p. 730.
[19] Lovecraft, "Colour Out of Space," p. 184.
[20] Lovecraft, "Colour Out of Space," p. 182.

is, in effect, what Lovecraft thought would befall mankind.[21] Thereby, human dissolution is inextricably connected to the Dionysian "indestructible life," peeled back to reveal the *mysterium tremendum*. The best examples of this phenomenon are most clearly defined in "The Colour Out of Space," but they are also explored in another of Lovecraft's stories, "The Dunwich Horror."

In "The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft evokes a notion of the Dionysian through the figure of Yog-Sothoth, a beast that can enter the perceptive reality of humans, yet exists outside humanity's realm. When it is "killed," it rejoins the ineffable reality that it had once held, rather than dying. As stated by the Necronomicon, "the Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but between them, they walk serene and primal, undimensioned and to us unseen."[22] Yog-Sothoth only enters the realm of humanity through forms that humans can perceive, but they do not fully describe the creature, as he is indescribable in human terms. Those forms appear as monsters, but as Rudolf Otto described the Biblical Leviathan as an indication of the power of God, "monsters are just the mysterious in gross form."[23] Wilbur Whately, a strangely featured, abnormally large man, is one of these monsters. When he is killed attempting to steal the Necronomicon from the Miskatonic University library, he begins to dissolve. "All human resemblance," when Whately dissipates, begins to leave off." From the abdomen, "a score of long greenish-grey tentacles with red sucking mouths" protrudes. The hideous scene culminates in a description of a "foetid greenish-yellow ichor" dripping from the creature in place of "genuine blood."[24] All these are elements that are perceptible to humans, but indicative of something far beyond human perception. Before his final dissolution, a being arises that "could not be [...] visualized by anyone whose ideas of aspect and contour are too closely bound up with the "three known dimensions."[25]

Anthropomorphic versions of "gods" like Yog-Sothoth can appear to humans as these monsters, but are manifestations of something greater.[26][27] Yog-

[21] After the revelation, nothing remains in the spot where the colour returns to space: "Five eldritch acres of dusty grey desert remained, nor has anything ever grown there since. To this day it sprawls open to the sky." – "Colour," p. 187.

[22] "[...] Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth." Lovecraft, "Dunwich," p. 276.

[23] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 82.

[24] Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror," p. 279.

[25] "The Dunwich Horror," p. 279.

[26] As noted by Otto, "the devotional awe" with which the "visage of the fiend" is viewed, creates the mind's "recourse for mode of expression first to the fearful and dreadful, thought this is the same time permeated with that element of 'the grand' to which we next turn." *Holy*, p. 62.

[27] "After summer is winter, after winter summer. They wait patient and potent, for here shall They reign again." – Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror," p. 276.

Sothoth is not the creature killed in the library but the doorway through which a creature has been manifested: Yog-Sothoth "knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate."[28] Therefore, the creature that has been seen, however horrible it may be, is destructible only insofar as it takes the shape of something semi-anthropomorphic. When it does not take that shape, it appears as though it has passed back into its other realm. In a sense, it is rejoining with the *mysterium tremendum* referred to by Rudolf Otto, the "mystery inexpressible and above all creatures."[29]

Lovecraft makes it clear that human perception does not describe ultimate reality, and man's infinitesimal status is reinforced through his inability to confront such a reality, as illustrated by the aforementioned stories. But Lovecraft makes his most profound example known by a comparison that results in a "deeper darkness." As in "The Colour Out of Space," where the last revelation of the meteorite's return to space is that which truly evokes the terror of the Dionysian, it is in his novella, *At the Mountains of Madness*, where the author presents beings that take on characteristics of an ultimate reality, and then reveals that the true horror of the empty and "wholly other" universe is beyond even they. These creatures are revealed to be the Great Old Ones, those who have pervaded his stories through passages of *The Necronomicon*, are creatures that have existed in deference to an even greater power. That power, rather than the creatures themselves, evokes the true madness that comes with the viewing of the horrible empty naturalistic cosmos.

The creatures found in the titular Antarctic mountains by a research team seem emblematic, or at least representative – of the "wholly other," much like Yog-Sothoth. They seem to be "the mysterious in gross form." After they are discovered, the most cogent, powerful description of them is in reference to a "religious" text, the Necronomicon. The creatures are described as the "great Old Ones who had filtered down from the stars when the Earth was young – the beings whose substance an alien evolution had shaped, and whose powers were such as this planet had never bred."[30] Indeed, they seem to be godly in comparison to humans: as "the terrific pressure of the deepest sea bottoms appeared powerless to harm them."[31] Few "seemed to die at all except by violence, and their burial places were very limited." By comparison, the beings in *At the Mountains of Madness* exist in a manner that man cannot reach and cannot hope to reach, where pressure would render humans – or most known Earthly sea creatures in 1931 – crushed masses of flesh. They

[28] "The Dunwich Horror," p. 296.

[29] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 13. The *mysterium tremendum* can also come in "wild and demonic forms and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering." It can be expressed through perceptible means, but still exists beyond man.

[30] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 467.

[31] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 470.

appear to be emblems of the indestructible life, but only by comparison, as they do not attain the awe of what is wholly other, the *tremendum*.

The creatures initiate a feeling of dread, but they are only the first step in a larger process that drives one of the story's protagonists to madness. It begins with something attributed to the Old ones, an awe-ful sound described as akin to the peals of the Sirens: "I tried to keep all my skill and self-possession about me, and stared at the sector of reddish farther sky betwixt the walls of the pass – wishing that I had wax-stopped ears like Ulysses' men off the Siren's coast to keep that disturbing wind piping from my consciousness."[32] Both the narrator and Danforth, the narrator's unfortunate companion, cannot stop their ears with wax and shut off their minds from what sounds to be something outside their realm, described in such a mythic manner. When this sound reaches the duo, the narrator remarks that "Not Orpheus himself or Lot's wife, paid much more dearly for a backward glance."[33] Despite the corporeal nature of the Old Ones, they retain the ability to metaphorically render humans into pillars of salt, or otherwise limit their endeavours, with an air of an indestructible creative power, if only in comparison to humans. In the story's narrative, this causes Danforth to repeat the dreadful Siren pealing, in a state of gradual mental dissolution – his shrieks "confined to the repetition of a single, mad word." The Old Ones are still signifiers of "downright stupendousness," "well nigh demoniac," and "wholly incomprehensible […] eternal creative power."[34] But the discovery of the Old Ones and the Siren peals are but the first and second steps to what really induces the madness in Danforth – and symbolically, man.

Despite the awe-inspiring nature of the Old Ones, in a stunning realization by the narrator, they become but a smaller part to a greater terror. In examining the ruins of their civilization, the narrator has this to say: "They had not been even savages – for what indeed had they done? That awful awakening in the cold of an unknown epoch […] God, what intelligence […] persistence! What a facing of the incredible […] Radiates, vegetables, monstrosities […] whatever they had been, they were men!"[35] The equation of these creatures to men of science seems to contradict their evocation of something beyond man. In fact, it seems that they fall prey to the same imperfections that befall great human minds, as indicated by the narrator's exclamation with regard to their art: "Great God! What madness made even those blasphemous Old Ones willing to use and carve such things?"[36] But this is telling of Lovecraft's true purpose in having the narrator describe them in this way. By implying that

[32] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 502.
[33] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 498.
[34] Kerenyi, *Dionysos*, p. 80.
[35] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, in *The Necromonicon*, p. 495.
[36] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 495.

these Old Ones were men of science, he casts them against the overwhelming power of something even greater, and similarly, he implies that this greater power seems to have inspired their art and civilization in some way. By giving the Old Ones an awe inspiring presence of the "indestructible life," but presenting them as limited, transitory beings in a biological state, Lovecraft is peeling back the layers of humanity's perceived significance in the face of the Dionysian. He introduces such beasts, and then suggests that even they are miniscule in the vast infinitude of space. In Lovecraft, it is this viod of infinitude which is the essence of the "wholly other" and the *mysterium tremendum*.

To complete this process, Lovecraft peels back these layers until he reaches that unintelligible, yet simultaneously frightening void that encompasses all of existence. The final step is ineffable, far more terrifying than any corporeal creature. It is much like Rudolf Otto's "peace that passeth understanding," something felt and recognized through corporeal signs, but ultimately above the senses that perceive those signs.[37] This instills fear in its most horrifying form, dissolution in the face of a power that affords no transcendence for man. This final revelation that drives Danforth to madness is recorded by the narrator: "All that Danforth has […] hinted is that the final horror was a mirage." It was not anything connected with […] those echoing, vaporous, wormily honeycombed mountains of madness." It was, rather, a "single, fantastic demoniac glimpse, among the churning zenith clouds," of what "lay back of those other violet westward mountains which the Old Ones had shunned and feared."[38]

This single demoniac glimpse is the end result of the simulation of the removal of the limits of human perception. It remains nebulous, and continued intimations of the Old Ones recognition of this power reinforce this as "the Old Ones were again supreme on the planet except for one shadowy fear about which they did not like to speak."[39] Their work and their art claimed to tell of "larger and greater dreadful things," "beings" the first sources of which "can only be guessed at with bated breath."[40] Danforth goes mad precisely because he cannot handle the threat of this unknown origin, which is manifested by an infinite abyss. The fear begins with the revelation of the Old Ones, their art, and that they were besieged by a "hellish jest" in which they were destroyed. The greater alien race is still in some sense biological, existing in deference to the *mysterium tremendum*, which in the context of man's lack of significance, is to be all the more deeply feared. This fear reaches its climax at the revelation of the eternal void, the "hor-

[37] Otto, *Idea of the Holy*, p. 82.
[38] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 503.
[39] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 472.
[40] Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*, p. 474.

ror of which even the horrors are afraid," as Fritz Leiber put it.[41] This is a deeper darkness.[42]

This deeper darkness, the true crux of ultimate reality is what brings about Lovecraft's "new dark age," in which man will resort to self-abnegation. For this reason, man is unable to achieve Nietzsche's Dionysian reality. But Lovecraft does not end his rebuke of the significance of the single life force against ultimate reality with humans. In a further repudiation of the illusion of transcendence, Lovecraft expands his criticism to the inheritors of planet Earth, after man has long perished. After man's destruction, either by madness or ignorance, the "mongrel" world takes over man – and takes up the throne of his self-imposed throne of significance. Perhaps in a perverse twisting of Nietzsche, if any Dionysian goal or "will to power" would be realized, it would not be realized by man.[43] As Lovecraft states in one of his letters, "some climatic revulsion will almost certainly wipe us out some day as the dinosaurs were wiped out, leaving the field free for the rise and dominance of some hardy insect species [...] creating a civilization, albeit one of wholly different perspectives."[44] This new civilization will look with awe and wonder upon the previous foundations of man, the race that thought it held dominion over the Earth and the stars, until it came to ruin. These insect men "will gape at the legends of which their old women and medicine men will wave about the ruins of concrete bridges, subways, and building foundations."[45] This whole process, in which man is finally definitively stripped of any delusion of his significance is carried to an even greater extent in another Lovecraft novella *The Shadow Out of Time*.

In Lovecraft's *The Shadow Out of Time*, not only is it revealed that insects will inherit the Earth after man has long been extinct, but this species will too disappear. The fear of all civilizations – regardless of what race composes them, against the power of that ineffable force, is presented. A college professor named Alfred Peaslee witnesses this whole process from the entire history of man – beginning to end – to the end of the planet itself, in his sleep after

[41] Fritz Leiber, "A Literary Copernicus," in *H.P. Lovecraft: Four Decades of Criticism*, ed. S.T. Joshi, p. 57.

[42] Lovecraft's process of stripping away the illusion of significance has also been characterized by Barton Levi – St. Armand. As he states, "horror is a species of devolution toward – to use another appropriately Lovecraftian phrase – 'the unspeakable', by which Lovecraft accomplishes." – St. Armand, *Roots of Horror.*

[43] One reason for this may be that Lovecraft fancied Nietzsche's ethical system as a "joke, or a poet's dream – which amounts to the same thing," yet seems to employ a Nietzschean sensibility – H.P. Lovecraft, *Selected Letters I* (Wisconsin: Arkham House Publishing, 1971), p. 134.

[44] Lovecraft, *Selected Letters III*, p. 43.

[45] Lovecraft, *Selected Letters III*, p. 43.

he falls into a coma. Soon after he awakens, he slowly recalls these dreams, as well as the past seven years of his life, which have been swept away by an untold malediction.[46] In these dreams, Peaslee learns that "after man there would be the mighty beetle civilization," and then there would be "races after them, clinging pathetically to the cold planet and burrowing to its horror-filled core, before the utter end."[47] All civilizations meet their end, in which a Dionysian goal is unattainable as it is characterized by Nietzsche, and in which they attempt to preserve their hold on a planet that will inevitably also wilt when confronted with ultimate reality – its temporality in the cosmic void. The revelation of this truth results in fear and madness in Lovecraft, because man has, according to Nietzsche, "already attained the height of self abnegation which seeks to express itself symbolically."[48] This occurs in Lovecraft to such a degree that it is already too late for him to attain Nietzsche's Dionysian goal and remedy such a self-abnegation. He instead becomes a victim of the *mysterium tremendum*, which is the irrevocable nothingness of the cosmos. Yet, in *The Shadow Out of Time*, as before, it is not until he is able to catch a glimpse of that nothingness that the true fear strikes him, and his fate is sealed.

Despite the fear inherent in the foreknowledge of man's demise, and thus, his own insignificance, there is something much more profound that creates the deepest fear in Alfred Peaslee. What finally compels him to recognize this, when investigating the reasons for his previous amnesiac state, is a single, demoniac glimpse much like the one experienced by Danforth in *At the Mountains of Madness*. He again awakens without complete knowledge of what he had seen. All recalls is something of indeterminate veracity, but nonetheless fills him with an absolute dread. He hears the sounds of whistling that assault his ears from all directions, recalled on a final revelation of a supposed memory of a black abyss that "seemed to be alive." He is "instantly engulfed in a pandaemoniae vortex of loathsome sound and utter, materially tangible blackness" as he attempts to flee the horrible whistling sounds, which again harken to the sirens – signifiers of something beyond human comprehension and yet still heard by human ears. When he attempts to recollect this event, he can only harken back to his nebulous memory: "If that abyss and what I held were real, there is no hope."[49]

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[46] The concept of the revelation of the universe's reality slowly sapping human life away is also shown in Lovecraft's poetry – "Yet for each dream these winds to us convey-/A dozen more of ours they sweep away!" – Lovecraft, *Fungi From Yuggoth*, XIV, "Star Winds," in *The Ancient Track: The Complete Poetical Works of H.P. Lovecraft*, ed. S.T. Joshi (San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2001), p. 70.

[47] Lovecraft, *The Shadow Out of Time*, in the *Necronomicon*, p. 576.

[48] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, pp. 40–41.

[49] Lovecraft, *The Shadow Out of Time*, p. 605.

The Shadow Out of Time shows that the Dionysian power of the universe does not leave any opportunity for man to transcend his reality, as it reveals the end of man and the end of the beings that rule Earth after man, when the planet finally dies. The revelation that the great Old Ones fear a creative power even greater than themselves, and the revelation that the creatures that will reign over earth after man's demise will also perish due to the indifference of the universe, further diminishes the ability for any individual lifeform to reach a Dionysian state, or that state of life, the thing in itself.[50] Madness brought upon by these demoniac glimpses prevents in Lovecraft's fiction that which Nietzsche sought as the opportunity for man to transcend. Therefore, man's place in the universe may not be amended to an acceptance of the tragic, as it is "all part of an eternal comedy, at which the gods would laugh if they existed."[51]

Through these narratives, H.P. Lovecraft reflects the fear of human civilization's dissolution into insignificance, presenting the Dionysian as wholly outside human interest. The demoniac glimpse that simulates the lifting of the veil of human perception drives men to madness, rather than allowing them to transcend their reality. In "The Dunwich Horror," the true nature of the Dionysian is made known through its omnipresence regardless of its perceived destruction. In *At the Mountains of Madness*, the Dionysian ideal is only realized by those beings which exist wholly outside the corporeal. By showing that the Old Ones, for all their perceived godliness, are also unable to transcend – also unable to realize the Dionysian goal of Nietzsche's – Lovecraft reveals that the universe itself is empty and indifferent to life as humans define it. If there is an "indestructible life," the Dionysian – the whole that Nietzsche thought would redeem man – it will redeem other life forms after man's demise, and then they too will be destroyed. In a profound sense, the significance of individual life is seemingly rejected in favour of the indestructible life, which in turn is revealed to be an illusion masking the *mysterium tremendum* – in Lovecraft, this final truth is emptiness and indifference, and it rules all.

Therefore, all concepts of tragedy, and the goal of a Dionysian reality, fall short of realization, and are illusions. As Lovecraft said of all religious and idealistic thought: "if anything is true, it is that these beliefs are soon to be finally extinct" until "some cataclysm shall wipe out civilization and inaugurate a new Dark Age of myth and ignorance."[52] The tragedy of man becomes an eternal comedy when it is discovered that the tragedy was simply imagined.

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[50] It is as though man is the character trying to preserve his individuality in the face of death in Arthur Schopenhauer's "Immortality: A Dialogue." In order to achieve immortality, it is doubtful if his individuality will survive. The true nature of the universe does not allow for it.

[51] Lovecraft, *Selected Letters IV*, p. 47.

[52] Lovecraft, *Selected Letters I*, p. 135.

Brian Reis

Głębszy mrok
Lęk przed dionizyjską ostatecznością u H.P. Lovecrafta

Streszczenie

Opowieści grozy autorstwa H.P. Lovecrafta odnoszą się do kluczowych kwestii związanych z ludzką egzystencją, mianowicie do źródeł strachu. Pisząc utwory odwołujące się do obecnego w filozofii Fryderyka Nietzschego lęku przed nastaniem nihilizmu oraz kreśląc nowe znaczenie tego, co boskie czy też „wyłącznie cudowne", by posłużyć się terminologią Rudolfa Otto, Lovecraft stworzył świat, który jest na przemian tajemniczy i przerażający, a także bezwzględnie zakorzeniony w naukowym determinizmie leżącym u podstaw materialistycznego ateizmu autora. W ten sposób, jak dowodzi autor artykułu, Lovecraft podważa nadzieję Nietzschego, który oczekiwał, że człowiek wzniesie się ponad „śmierć Boga" i wynikającą z niej nihilistyczną ucieczkę w zdyskredytowane idee religijne. W takim wszechświecie nie ma już transcendencji, w każdym razie nie ma w niej zupełnie miejsca na troskę o ludzką egzystencję lub dążenia człowieka. W gruncie rzeczy rola człowieka w takim wszechświecie nie ma nic wspólnego ze wzniosłym tragizmem, a wiąże się z wieczną komedią, która obnaża jego aspiracje do doniosłości. U Lovecrafta dionizyjskie „niezniszczalne życie" sprowadza się do rzeczywistości, która nie jest dla człowieka osiągalna, ani też się nim nie przejmuje.

Brian Reis

Tiefere Finsternis
Die Angst vor dionysischem Äußersten bei H. P. Lovecraft

Zusammenfassung

Die Horrorromane von H.P. Lovecraft betreffen die für das menschliche Leben wichtigen Probleme, nämlich die Angstquellen. Auf Friedrichs Nietzsches Angst vor Nihilismus beruhend und dem Göttlichen oder „nur dem Herrlichen" (nach Rudolf Ottos Terminologie) eine neue Bedeutung gebend schuf Lovecraft eine solche Welt, die abwechselnd geheimnisvoll und schrecklich ist. Diese Welt ist aber auch in einem wissenschaftlichen Determinismus verwurzelt, der dem materialistischen Atheismus des Autors zugrundeliegt. Im vorliegenden Artikel beweist der Verfasser, dass Lovecraft die Nietzsches Hoffnung erschüttert hat, dass ein Mensch über „Gottes Tod" und über die daraus resultierende nihilistische Flucht in unglaubwürdige Religionsideen emporsteigt. In solch einem Universum gibt es keine Transzendenz mehr, und mindestens es gibt in der Transzendenz keinen Platz mehr für die Sorge um menschliche Existenz oder menschliche Bestrebungen. Die Rolle des Menschen in solch einem Universum hat mit einer erhebenden Tragik nichts zu tun, sondern ist ewige Komödie, die alle seinen Ambitionen wichtig zu sein offenbart. Lovecraft beschränkt dionysisches „unzerstörbares Leben" auf die Wirklichkeit, die für den Menschen nicht erreichbar ist und die sich um ihn auch keine Sorgen macht.

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Mr. Turner's Fears and Fantasies: *The Turner Diaries* and White Fear in America

In the history of American literature, few books have become acclaimed as triggers of social action. Beyond doubt, it is impossible to estimate the degree to which their publication may have inspired readers to physically act, for better or worse, on the themes portrayed by authors, or to even decide to what extent the power of the narrative and the circumstances of a social, political or economic nature intertwined to produce concrete, measurable effects. Yet, even if one decides to disregard the unavailability of an adequate gauge, the cultural imprints of certain texts – and their reverberation in the various national mythologies of the United States – seem undeniable. The focal point of this essay is to examine one such text, William Pierce's *The Turner Diaries*. By placing the book within its historical framework and examining its contents as relates to the main theme of this book, fear, the article will shed light on white angst and paranoia and in particular, expose an understudied genre to a wider audience. Finally, as this essay aspires to show, the genre and the book itself have inspired horrific acts of violence.

Written over the course of a few years in the mid-1970s and finally published in book form in 1978, *The Turner Diaries* is racist tome, utopian discourse and White Nationalist "bible" that has been credited with more acts of domestic terrorism than any book in modern times. However, as this essay endeavours to show, *The Turner Diaries* is one link, albeit an important one, in a long line of books that fit into a special, mostly understudied field of fiction, one that is generally called "White Nationalist" fiction or "White Patriot" fiction.

The Turner Diaries and the other works included in this particular category of American fiction have been overlooked by most scholars of the field, when compared with other forms of "radical" literature. However, nativist/racist/White Nationalist fiction has a rich history starting with the anti-Catholic "convent" works of the 1830s. These books fed into a particular time in American history, one where massive Irish immigration, coupled with an economic depression and the first wave of Protestant-centered spiritualism, created a wave of convent "exposes." One of these books, *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk as Exhibited in a Narrative of Her Sufferings during a Residence of Five Years as a Novice and Two Years as a Black Nun in the Hotel Diem Nunnery at Montreal* (commonly known as *Awful Disclosures*) "became the best-selling book in American history until *Uncle Tom's Cabin*."[1] Admittedly, the anti-Catholic feelings of the society in the 1830s could be viewed through the lens of what René Girard has termed "scape-goating," and indeed, it does appear so on the surface. However, Gerard's term does not take into account the tradition of conspiracy and the fear of "alien" influence in American society. It is the fear of the "alien" that is the overriding theme of these tracts.

The anti-Catholic hysteria fed by these "exposes" became so intense that even the notable got swept up. Samuel F.B. Morse, all around Renaissance man and inventor of the telegraph, who was also a notable nativist pamphleteer, stated "We are dupes of our hospitality. The evil of immigration brings to these shores illiterate Roman Catholics, the tools of reckless and unprincipled politicians. In this way, our very institutions are at the mercy of a body of foreigners […]"[2] A contemporary of Morse, Reverend Lyman Beecher, father of Harriet Beecher Stowe reinforced the nativist cause with his "Sermon Plea for the West," which attacked German Catholic immigration west of the Mississippi. This sermon led *The Home Missionary* in 1839 to declare that "[…] the cause is the cause of the West. There the great battle is to be fought […] between Christianity […] and the combined forces of Infidelity and Popery."[3] This cosmic battle between the forces of good against an "alien" conspiracy would become a recurring theme within these novels. The irony behind many of the "convent" exposes is that many of these books sold as erotica in the 1960s, 70s and 80s because of their graphic descriptions of perversion and sadomasochism and as historian David H. Bennett points out "[…] none of the victims were men."[4] Indeed, it could be argued that these exposes were the pornography of their time.

[1] David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 42.

[2] Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, p. 40.

[3] Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, p. 41.

[4] Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, p. 42.

The convent "exposes" were published until the late 1850s, though controversies over slavery quickly overshadowed the first round of White Nationalist fiction. The passions unleashed by the American Civil War and the subsequent Reconstruction of the South bred a new type of White Nationalist fiction, the "Redeemer" or Ku Klux Klan apologia novels of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, which developed around stories of the breakdown of law and order in the South during Reconstruction and the subsequent rise of the first era Ku Klux Klan or the Reconstruction Klan, also known as Ku Kluxism in contemporary parlance. With the rise of the Klan and the mythos that surrounded it, southern authors such as Thomas N. Page, Ocatave Thanet, Jerome Thomas and Thomas Dixon Jr. re/constructed novels based on the mythology of the Klan's activities during Reconstruction. This tide's most famous author was Thomas Dixon Jr. His Reconstruction trilogy, *The Leopard's Spots*, *The Clansman*, and *The Traitor* formed the basis of the various apologias and the development of the mythos written about the Klan until the late 1940s. Of the trilogy, *The Clansman* was the most popular and served as the basis for the first national "blockbuster" (though the term was not coined until the late 1940s) motion picture, D.W. Griffith's silent epic, *Birth of a Nation*. These two works of art, the book and the movie based on it helped to launch the Progressive or second era Ku Klux Klan in 1915.[5] This revival of the Klan counted among its enemies not only blacks but Catholics, Jews, other minorities, and the "new culture" – cosmopolitanism and its music, Jazz. Its overt Protestantism was attractive to whites who rejected the changing values of the Jazz Era. The Klan was a traditional, conservative movement bent on stopping Flappers, Jazz, swimsuits and alcohol consumption, indeed, one of the oaths to the order stated that the member would "[…] correct the evils in my community, particularly vices tending to the destruction of the home, family, childhood and womanhood."[6] Dixon's novels fed into this time of changing morality. Dixon's depictions of sexually depraved blacks attacking the "honour" of white women and the white men who protect them, while at the same time trying to staunch the tide of immorality that seemed to be enforced by a corrupt and evil government controlled by outsiders (aliens – carpetbaggers, freed slaves and scalawags – their Southern allies) were to add to the recurring themes of the genre. These "aliens" (present-day White Nationalists read "Jews") use minorities, mostly blacks to upset the "God ordained" morality of racial segregation and push through racial integration,

[5] The best modern work regarding Dixon's works is Anthony Slide, *American Racist: The Life and Films of Thomas Dixon* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2004). For the rise of the second era Klan, see Nancy Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), particularly Chapter 2: "Where Money Rules and Morals Rot: The Vise of Modernity."

[6] Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, p. 99.

which, in their opinion, will eventually lead to miscegenation and the complete destruction of the white race.[7]

The current swell of White Nationalist fiction, of which *The Turner Diaries* is most representative owes its basic structure and themes to the Cold War anti-communist novel *The John Franklin Letters*, "in which the narrator describes an America of the 1950s 'Sovietized' by the Communists […]"[8] In the novel, the United States joins a Communist controlled World Authority (an allusion to the United Nations) while in Harlem "triumphant Negroes rise up and loot liquor stores while mobs of public housing residents move into the suburbs, where they take over homes and subject owners to torture by blowtorch and televised rock-and-roll music […]."[9] However, like Earl Turner, the main protagonist in *The Turner Diaries*, John Franklin and his friends are prepared and rise up against their oppressors. Franklin's letters to his uncle describe their struggle against the un-American aliens. Pierce seems to have borrowed this configuration for his novel of racial conflict while staying at American Nazi Party founder George Lincoln Rockwell's house on Hatemonger Hill in Arlington, Virginia in the mid-1960s.[10]

The story of the main character of *The Turner Diaries* is intertwined with the fantasies, ideology and prejudices of a particular sector of the white population in America, while playing on the fears of the majority of white America. By the time of the rebellion, Earl Turner had gone from college-educated electrical engineer to a member of the Organization, the White Nationalist (racist) group waging war against the system (ZOG – Zionist Occupation Government, also known as the Federal U.S. government). As the diaries progress, Turner is inducted into the Order, the inner circle of the Organization. However, through a lapse in judgment, he is captured by the System, interrogated, tortured and imprisoned. After an Organization sponsored breakout, Turner is brought before the Order and told that because

[7] Dixon's books were not the first novels to fictionalize the Reconstruction era KKK. N.J. Floyd's 1886 novel *Thorns in the Flesh* was the first and set the standard for future fictionalized Klan works.

[8] James Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: The Rise of the Survivalist Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), p. 48. *The John Franklin Letters* were written anonymously and published in 1958. Most present-day White Nationalists believe the novel was written by the late Prof. Revilo P. Oliver, a professor of Classical Philology and a noted right-wing philosopher. Indeed, Prof. Oliver is one of the most understudied but at the same time, most important figures within contemporary American White Nationalism.

[9] Coates, *Armed and Dangerous*, p. 48.

[10] Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce* (Bloomington, IN: 1st Books Library, 2001), p. 141. For more on Pierce's association with the ANP, see Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

he did not take his own life rather than be captured, as he vowed to do, he is to be given a suicide mission; namely, to fly a plane loaded with a nuclear warhead into the Pentagon, thus bringing about the collapse of the System. "He gained immortality for himself on that dark November day 106 years ago when he faithfully fulfilled his obligation to his race, to the Organization, and to the holy Order which had accepted him into its ranks. And in so doing, he helped greatly to assure that his race would survive and prosper [...]"[11] As the editor of the diaries relates, Turner's diaries are eventually found in the ruins of Washington, D.C. in the year 2099, 100 years after the Great Revolution. Because of his sacrifice, Turner "achieved a kind of immortality as one of the Great Martyrs. He will be honored by all the generations to come for his enormous dedication, courage and sacrifice and for the gift of a grand new way of being that he and others like him made possible."[12]

At first glance, the novel appears to be a pulp adventure, filled with gruesome murders, horrific descriptions of mayhem and jingoistic diatribes; however, what sets the book apart from the works of John le Carré or Jack London is its racism, attacks on various "isms" – consumerism, feminism, multiculturalism, and its rejection of modernist tendencies, namely the exaltation of the "spirit" over that of the intellect. This "spirit" is one's racial destiny, in the case of Earl Turner, a White destiny. This destiny includes a White Nationalist utopia, a utopia where only Whites exist. To Turner and his *comrades*, the barbarians are not at the gates, but within the walls of the city, destroying everything that they or their ancestors have built and the only way to save civilization is to destroy those who are attacking it. *The Turner Diaries* is an anti-modernist, tribal screed that exhibits the fears of certain sectors of white America.[13]

Taking into account that Pierce wrote the book in the mid-1970s, his account of a government "hell-bent" on enforcing the integration of society and "emasculating" the white population has been perceived by White Nationalists as quite ominous. One of the sparks that sets the "Great Revolution" aflame is the abolition of the private ownership of guns, something that traditionalists and political conservatives in the United States find appalling. Turner notes in the first entry of his diary,

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[11] Andrew Macdonald [pseudo. William Pierce], *The Turner Diaries*, 2nd edn. (Hillsboro, West Virginia: National Vanguard Books, 2002), p. 211.

[12] Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of A Dead Man's Deeds*, p. 144.

[13] "Spirit" in the White Nationalist sense is carried in the blood. In essence, it is one's ancient genetic code and soul combined, it has nothing to do with the intellect per se but according to White Nationalism, one's intelligence is determined by one's race, as is one's spirit. To contemporary American White Nationalists, consumerism, feminism and materialism are all "alien" (read Jewish) influences and are alien to the white spirit.

> I'll never forget that terrible day: November 9, 1989. They knocked on my door at five in the morning. I was completely unsuspecting as I got up to see who it was. I opened the door, and four Negroes came pushing into the apartment before I could stop them. One was carrying a baseball bat, and two had long kitchen knives thrust into their belts. My first thought was that they were robbers. Robberies of this sort had become all too common since the Cohen Act (the act that outlawed personal ownership of guns), with groups of Blacks forcing their way into White homes to rob and rape, knowing that even if their victims had guns they probably would not dare use them. Then the one who was guarding me flashed some kind of card and informed me that he and his accomplices were "special deputies" for the Northern Virginia Human Relations Council. They were searching for firearms, he said.[14]

The theme of private gun ownership and the right of private citizens to arm themselves runs very deep within conservative/libertarian circles within the United States. This theme is restated by John Franklin in his *Letters*: "No dictatorship has ever been imposed on a nation of free men who have not been first required to register their privately owned weapons […] Millions of Americans still have a deadly and trusted weapon which the Buros [Bureaucrats, U.S. Communist Government] tried too late to seize."[15] It is felt by the Right that private possession of firearms is the only thing standing between them and the abyss of dictatorship and social anarchy. Furthermore, there is an element of race in white ownership of firearms. Ever since Nat Turner's slave revolt in 1831, whites and in particular, white Southerners have been terrified of a black uprising. The fears expressed in the above quotes have deep roots in the American psyche. In Earl Turner's case, the blacks were supervised by a Mr. Tepper, a "Caucasian, though with an unusually dark complexion."[16] Here, the allusion is that the blacks are being used by the Jews to keep the white population under control. Indeed, it is the "alien" Jews that are the ultimate enemy of the white race and this ideology is expressed throughout the novel.[17]

[14] Andrew Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, pp. 1–2.

[15] Griffin, *The Fame of A Dead Man's Deeds*, p. 140.

[16] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, p. 2.

[17] The idea of "alien" influence harkens back to the Klan apologia novels of the 1890s and early 1900s when Northern carpetbaggers and "free-thinkers" were portrayed as urging blacks to overturn the old Southern order of white supremacy. Furthermore, opposition to private ownership of firearms has an element of rural conservatism vs. urbanism/cosmopolitanism liberalism. See Jan E. Dizard et al., eds., *Guns in America: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), in particular, part 3 "As American as Apple Pie: Guns as a Cultural Battleground."

According to Turner, "Most Americans are drowning in a flood of Jewish-liberal propaganda in the media, the schools and the churches, and don't even realize it. They have become soft, materialistic herd animals, true democrats, without racial identity and loyalty and without heroic toughness and spirit."[18] Thus, the "taming" of white America has been a constant complaint of the right since the beginning of integration and the end of segregation in the 1950s. Therefore, *The Turner Diaries* can be seen as a repudiation of the current values of multiculturalism and political correctness and is, in essence, a revolt of the "spirit" against that of the intellect. After all, the "dressed up decadence" that is part of present-day society is a "Jewish imposed ideology," as was integration and the contemporary trend of political correctness.[19] The media's corruption and collusion with the System is apparent once the Revolution begins. As Turner relates the bombing of the FBI building by his group, he states that the media has decided to portray the bombing as the "atrocity of the century." Then he continues to relate what many whites see as the media's reverse discrimination:

> But what a difference in the attitude of the news media! I remember a long string of Marxist acts of terror 20 years ago, during the Vietnam war [sic]. A number of government buildings were burned or dynamited, and several innocent bystanders were killed, but the press portrayed such things as idealistic acts of "protest." There was a gang of armed, revolutionary Negroes who called themselves "Black Panthers." Every time they had a shootout with the police, the press and TV people had their tearful interviews with the families of the Black gang members who got killed – not with the cops' widows. And when a Negress [sic] who belonged to the Communist Party helped plan a courtroom shootout and even supplied the shotgun with which a judge was murdered, the press formed a cheering section at her trial and tried to make a folk hero out of her.[20]

To the author of *The Turner Diaries*, it was the "[…] coming out of the closet of the civil rights Revolution – the attempt to bring social integration between the races on a large scale in America" and the Civil Rights acts that

[18] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, pp. 80, 101.

[19] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, p. 43. The most contemporary outspoken critic of this "Jewish-imposed ideology" is Harold A. Covington, author of several White separatist novels. For a full account of this idea, see Harold A. Covington, *The Brigade* (Longview, Washington: Northwest Publishing Agency, 2007), particularly chapters 7 "Someone Who Knows Who They Are" and 8 "Running the Game."

[20] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, p. 43.

"will eventually produce a mestizo or mongrel race in America."[21] Furthermore, Liberal Democracy is responsible for emasculating men, or at the very least, prolonging their childhood with its ideology:

> Liberalism is an essentially feminine, submissive world view. Perhaps a better adjective than feminine is infantile. It is the world view of men who do not have the moral toughness, the spiritual strength to stand up and do single combat with life.[22]

Interestingly enough, both *The Turner Diaries* and *The John Franklin Letters* predicted the current political correctness movement, as Franklin writes:

> As bad as blacks are, you can't criticize them because of the Javitts hate literature law [Jacob Javitts was a Jewish senator from New York in the 1950s] which prevents unfair propaganda against minority groups.[23]

Pierce carries the above concept of word and thought control to the extreme in *The Turner Diaries* when Earl Turner explains why rape as a crime has been reduced to "a punch in the nose." Turner continues:

> […] the Supreme Court ruled that all laws making rape a crime are unconstitutional, because they presume a legal difference in the sexes. Rape, the judges ruled, can only be prosecuted under the statutes covering non-sexual assaults. The result of this judicial mischief has been that the incidence of rape has zoomed. Black civil rights spokesmen, on the other hand, have had only praise for the Supreme Court decision. Rape laws, they said, are "racist," because a disproportionately large number of Blacks have been charged under them.[24]

In fact, protecting the "chastity" of white women is a constant theme of the genre. To further this goal, Turner's editor explains that:

> "Women's lib" was a form of mass psychosis which broke out during the last three decades of the Old Era. Women affected by it denied their femininity and insisted that they were "people," not "wom-

[21] Carol M. Swain and Russ Niele, eds., *Contemporary Voices of White Nationalism in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 261.

[22] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, p. 42.

[23] Griffin, *The Fame of A Dead Man's Deeds*, p. 140.

[24] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, pp. 57–58.

> en." This aberration was promoted and encouraged by the System as a means of dividing our race against itself.[25]

The problem with this ideology is that it teaches women to compete with men in the workplace and delay having children until later in life, thus undercutting the roots of the race with an ideology of feminism, competition, and materialism.[26] According to Turner, the only way to solve the problem is to revolt – against the System and their eternal enemy. The idea of conspiracy that the above quote alludes to runs deep in the novel and its influence has been felt in contemporary America through the acts of terror committed by various groups and individuals who have been inspired by it, the most spectacular being the Order and its wave of terror from 1983–1984 in the Pacific Northewest and the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on April 19, 1995, which killed 168 people.

The Turner Diaries was the first "hate" book to introduce the idea of white separatism, instead of the typical idea of white supremacy. As Turner states, "Blacks have exerted an increasingly degenerative influence on white culture; in order to live in a wholesome way that is natural to whites, whites need their own living-space, completely separate from blacks."[27] In contemporary America, several groups have adopted this idea. One group in particular, modeled itself on the Order in Pierce's book and advocated a separate White republic in the Pacific Northwest of the United States (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and the northern part of California), The Order. Founded by Robert Jay Matthews in 1983, the Order (or Silent Brotherhood – *Bruder Schweigen*) embarked on a two year campaign of murder, armored car robberies and counterfeiting. Like his hero, Earl Turner, Matthews died fighting his perceived racial enemy, he was killed in a shootout with the FBI, on Whidbey Island, Washington in 1984.

In conclusion, while *The Turner Diaries* seems to be one book in a long line of American White Nationalist works, the expression of anger and the outpouring of violence inspired by it makes it unique among contemporary novels, as Robert Matthews and Timothy McVeigh internalized Turner's fantasy world and

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[25] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, p. 45.

[26] The present-day cultural obsession with these three aspects of contemporary American society, according to American White Nationalists, stem from the same source, Jewish ideology and the Jewish view that mankind is an economic animal that is devoid of a spirit or soul. Mainstream Christianity, it is argued, supports this view, which is why many White Nationalists are turning to Odinism/Asatru or Christian Identity. See Mattias Gardell, *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1994) and James A. Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism*, paperback edition (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1995).

[27] Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, p. 59.

tried to make it a reality. Pierce's novel, while abhorrent, expresses the fears and trepidation of a certain sector of the white population in America, a group that has seen its power and morality eroded by minorities in league with "aliens."[28]

[28] For more information on the Order, see Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: The Chilling Inside Story of America's Violent, Anti-Government Militia Movement* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990). For more on Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing, see Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001).

John Eric Starnes

Lęki i fantazje pana Turnera *The Turner Diaries* i biały strach w Ameryce

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest powieści z nurtu białego nacjonalizmu pt. *The Turner Diaries* [*Dzienniki Turnera*] i skupia się na jej zasadniczych wątkach. Sytuując je w kontekście historycznym, autor artykułu ma nadzieję nakreślić wyrazisty obraz lęków i niepokojów, jakimi charakteryzuje się pewna część białej Ameryki. Lęki te dotyczą przede wszystkim prób obalenia władzy spoczywającej w rękach białych przez czarnoskórych mieszkańców Stanów Zjednoczonych oraz inne mniejszości przy pomocy „obcych", a także ograniczenia prawa do korzystania z broni. Ponadto autor artykułu omawia *The Turner Diaries* w kontekście długiej tradycji literatury spod znaku białego nacjonalizmu, tradycji, której do tej pory z rozmaitych względów poświęcano bardzo mało uwagi.

John Eric Starnes

Ängste und Fantasien des Herrn Turner *The Turner Diaries* und weiße Angst in Amerika

Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Artikel ist dem den Weißen Nationalismus darstellenden Roman *The Turner Diaries* (*Turners Tagebücher*) gewidmet und konzentriert sich auf wichtigste Motive des Werkes. Er hofft, im historischen Kontext ein ausdrucksvolles Bild der Ängste und Unruhen von einem Teil der weißen Amerikaner zu schildern. Diese Ängste betreffen vor allem die von den schwarzen USA-Einwohnern und von anderen Minderheiten mit Hilfe der „Fremden" ergriffenen Maßnahmen, die Macht der Weißen zu stürzen und das Waffenbesitz zu beschränken. Der Verfasser bespricht *Turners Tagebücher* im Zusammenhang mit langer Tradition der durch den Weißen Nationalismus gekennzeichneten Literatur, die bisher aus verschiedenen Gründen kaum behandelt war.

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Gender Implications of Literary Representations of Anxieties about Modernisation in Turkey: *Aganta, Burina, Burinata* (1945)

It seems possible to argue that the fear of civilisation has almost an inevitable existence in the imagination of all "belated modernities." In *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture*, Gregory Jusdanis offers a perspective going beyond the East-West dichotomy to analyse the relationship of "the models" (early modernised societies) with "the followers" which, in his argument, includes all modernities except for those of England, Holland and France.[1] He emphasises that the incongruity between the idealised model modernity and the local reality has been internalised as structural inadequacy. Underlining the role of literature (mainly with reference to nationalist literature) in the process of nation-state building, Jusdanis points out that construction of a national culture is considered, by modernisers, to be vital in promoting and ingraining the newly shaping ideology in the collective memory. As such, national culture constitutes an imaginary space where the various linguistic and ethnic differences as well as social bondings of the former era of empires are attempted to be homogenised. This process of homogenisation functions as a means to achieve legitimacy for the emerging nation-state. Such potency is attributed to this imaginary space that, as Jusdanis contends, it was thought to precede and facilitate the political and administrative unity in Germany and Greece. Being just another example of "belated modernities," Turkish

[1] Gregory Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Culture* (Minneopolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

modernisation may well be included in this list. Starting with the late Ottoman period, especially works of literature provided a somewhat convenient space to carry out discussions related to Westernisation and such discussions were profoundly gender inflicted.

In this essay, I would especially like to point out the gender implications of anxieties and fears about Turkish modernisation by focusing on a novel, entitled *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*[2] written around and published in 1945. My particular interest in this novel stems from its author, Halikarnas Balıkçısı (Fisherman of Halicarnassus),[3] who belonged to a literary group called the Humanist Anatolianists. The group's significance lies in their approach to the relationship between Turkish modernisation and Westernisation, which I will explain in a little more detail following a brief overview of Ottoman-Turkish modernisation.

Ottoman-Turkish modernisation started with the period of the Tanzimat reforms in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. These administrative reforms succeeded the earlier modernisation programmes dating back to the eighteenth century. Those earlier reforms were "the first systematic attempts to understand the difference between the Ottoman and the European military system."[4] Thus, right from the beginning, Westernisation and modernisation have been two processes completely intertwined in the Turkish context as in other non-western contexts. Westernism continued to play an influential role in shaping the reforms implemented in Kemalist nation-state founded in 1923, which can be regarded as the second stage in the process of modernisation. The ultimate goal, for Kemalist modernising elites, was to transform Turkey into a modern nation state which, in the words of Mustafa Kemal (the founding father of Turkish Republic), would "live as an advanced and civilised nation in the midst of contemporary civilisations." "Contemporary civilisations" implied that "the West" – or Western Europe, to be more precise – was the benchmark against which Turkey set its goals and defined itself. The nation was imagined to be rational and the importance of science and modern education was emphasised in order to create a modern industrial economy.

[2] This novel is among the 100 literary works recommended by the Ministry of Education on August 4, 2005. It is stated that the purpose is to recommend students some classic literary works that they can read in their free time; however, teachers are required to integrate them into the curriculum. The title of the novel is a nautical term, which roughly means "get the grip of *burina*" (so that the ship sails faster). Burina is the rope controlling the windward mast. Getting the grip of the rope, or in a broader sense, taking the control of one's (male subject's) life is of particular significance considering that the masculine identity in the novel is suffering from instability and lack of self-control.

[3] The pen name of the author, Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı.

[4] Ayşe Kadıoğlu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Paradox of Official Identity," in *Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics*, ed. Sylvia Kedourie (London, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), p. 179.

Therefore, modernisation involved, according to both Ottoman and Kemalist modernisers, taking technological and scientific innovations from "the West" and borrowing or exporting some "Western" cultural patterns and adopting them into Turkish context while holding on to what was regarded as "the authentic culture." In keeping with this, what was to be taken from "the West" was considered to be the "material aspect of Western civilisation." And the other aspect, thought to be more important, was spirituality or traditions, which constituted the "essence" of the nation; thus they were to be preserved and at times protected against "the West."[5]

Though the formulation of the division may suggest otherwise, realising it was certainly not without problems. And it is this problematic area that is profoundly gender-inflicted. To begin with, in the background of modernisation debates was the Ottoman Empire gradually and significantly losing power. The figure of the absent father in the novels written in the late Ottoman period was quite a prevalent character as the reflection of the sultan's loss of power. The absent father signifies a loss of traditional social order since he is essentially seen as the guarantor of tradition vis-à-vis the "West." As a result of the death of the father in the novels, the son either becomes a dandy (a most undesirable character) or his life is devastated because of overindulgence. A closer look into the father figure reveals a second and a completely opposite implication which lays bare the conflicts intrinsic to the lifeworld of the early modernisers. This other aspect was that the father was also a "hindering" figure of authority embodied by the Ottoman sultan, who represented the "old regime." Therefore, he had to be "dethroned" so that men of relatively low status could enjoy equality between men as comrades in the emerging nation-state. An example by Jale Parla, a literary scholar, provides some insight into this conflict. Parla refers to one of the novelists of the late Ottoman period, Ahmet Mithat, who argued that the lack of the "father" could be overcome with an emphasis on cultural values, which he believed to be strong enough to sustain the well-being of the country; however, it was important to have a strong leader when the country was going through a new phase of economic, social, and political changes with which it was not familiar at all.[6] Ahmet Mithat's emphasis on the need for a "father" is revealing since it clearly demonstrates a point of continuity with later "Turkish" nationalist literature, which also links social and economic changes to the perceived "crisis" of fatherless sons, who cannot cope with social changes in the absence of an authoritative and responsible father figure.

In the process of the elimination of the traditional sovereignty that the father represented, "the woman question" proved to be a major point distin-

[5] Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), p. 19.

[6] Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar*, p. 18.

guishing modernising ideologies from the traditional ones. Feeling restricted by traditional patriarchy, modernists advocated the equality of women in the society to create themselves a discursive space – a political sphere in which to exert power.[7] Along with the status of women in the changing Turkish society, the "super-Westernisation" of upper-class men was the primary issue that late Ottoman novels were predominantly concerned with.[8] It is quite interesting that Ottoman authors had contradictory views on this issue: While they were strong supporters of Westernisation of upper-class women, they were absolutely intolerant regarding the Westernisation of upper-class men. The significance of super-Westernised male characters was that they were too keen on the material aspects of Western civilisation, which implied, according to these authors, that they were losing touch with traditional Ottoman culture. For the fatherless sons, "the gravest danger" was perceived to be the sensuality "coming from the West." Accordingly, Europe was frequently depicted as a seductive *femme fatale*.[9] As I have mentioned earlier, indulgence in women and sexuality was the typical illustration of the harmful effects of the West and it unmistakably led to destruction. Such negative connotations were mainly the result of the complex and conflicting relationship of any non-western modernisation with its "role-model," and in the case of Turkey they continued to dominate the national imagination in the period of republic.

It is quite significant that the novel I analyse reflects very similar fears and anxieties about certain aspects of modernisation although it mainly problematises the relationship of citizen with the state by means of an analogy with the tense relationship between the father and the son. The question is, then, what links these early Ottoman-Turkish novels to this particular work written in the 1940s. I suggest that the conception of "crisis of masculinity," in the way Michael Kimmel uses the term, is quite helpful for making sense of the link between insecurity in gender identity and socio-political changes. Kimmel contends that in the mid-nineteenth century America, with the rise of

[7] Nükhet Sirman, "Gender Construction and Nationalist Discourse: Dethroning the Father in the Early Turkish Novel" in *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey*, eds. Feride Acar and Ayşe Güneş-Ayata (Leiden; Boston; Koln: Brill, 1999), pp. 162–176. Kemalism managed to transform the status of women in the public sphere vis-à-vis men and state institutions, leading to a significant change in the conditions under which women lived, especially compared to the pre-republican period. However, it should be noted that this considerable change was mainly due to the struggle of Ottoman women's movement coinciding with the alliance of young modernising men.

[8] Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991).

[9] It is noteworthy that "the East" has quite a long history of being depicted as a seductive woman and associated with sexual promiscuity in the Western discourse of Orientalism – Edward Said *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). That Turkish literature has taken the same approach in the depiction of Europe can therefore be regarded as a "counter-Orientalising" attempt.

capitalism, a new form of masculinity – marketplace masculinity – emerged.[10] He associates this new type with the "first crisis of masculinity" because this new man derived his identity entirely from success in a new realm of production which was highly unstable – capitalist market economy lacked the security that the land as the source of income provided. This instability; in other words, the loss of autonomy in the workplace, brought about a masculine identity which was no longer fixed or secure. In my analysis, I consider this crisis as a symbolic one in the sense that it reflects the power struggle about gaining state legitimacy in the new national milieu and, in keeping with Kimmel's analysis, "crisis of masculinity" emerges in the context of economic crisis in Turkey. Indeed, 1940–1950 was a period in which Turkey went through profound social, political, and economic changes. Compounded with the economic difficulties and the harsh measures implemented by the government as a result of the Second World War, discontent with the Kemalist ruling started to arise in the 1940s. The masses were particularly critical about the alliances between the bureaucracy and the landlords who were mainly responsible for the poverty of the peasants. Besides, it was difficult for the masses to identify with the national identity which left out some essential elements in people's everyday lives such as some of the Islamic traditions in order to achieve homogenisation. The discontent I have very briefly explained led to a change in the government from the ruling party of the modernising elites to a populist party. In my view, it is this power struggle over gaining state legitimacy in the new national milieu that reflects as a "crisis of masculinity."

In *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, the crisis is associated with the cosmopolitan urban space, urbanites (especially women) and Western elements in general. What makes the novel particularly worth analysing is that the negative representation of the West is ostensibly at odds with the Humanist Anatolianists' approach towards the problematic relationship between the West and Turkish modernisation. Taking a relatively unique approach, the Humanist Anatolianists endeavoured to overcome this dichotomy by eliminating the dichotomy itself through the "Anatolian" identity they theorised. With this distinct identity, they emphasised the importance of "embracing" all the Anatolian civilisations and they dedicated themselves to proving that the Western civilisations stemmed from Anatolia, so rather than rejecting the Western civilisation, they tried to put a claim on it. In order to provide a basis for this argument, Halikarnas Balıkçısı presumed a sharp distinction between Ionic and Hellenistic civilisations and he strongly argued that Ionic culture which he considered to be the only source of civilisation owed nothing to Greeks but a lot to Anatolians. This argument assumed a continuity in the terminology

[10] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

of the geography and its peoples in question and relatedly was predicated on the view of a homogeneous Anatolian people from whom modern Anatolians were descended, disregarding the existence of other civilisations in Anatolia. From this perspective, whatever should be taken from "the West" has already been "ours." This rather pragmatic approach allowed a significant amount of flexibility in terms of what to include and to exclude in defining the Anatolian identity. As Etienne Copeaux has pointed out, Armenians, for instance, do not seem to be one of the Anatolian civilisations they were willing to embrace.[11] It can also be observed that despite their relative get limited inclusiveness, they presuppose a hierarchy between civilisations. In this regard, Herkul Millas has argued that in the novels by Halikarnas Balıkçısı, Greeks are depicted positively as long as they acknowledge the superiority of the Turks.[12]

I would now like to turn to the text itself by focusing on a few examples with the purpose of illustrating the points I have made. In the first example, the protagonist's unrealised sexual experience reveals a connection between the urban space, degradation and the fear of losing one's manliness and masculine autonomy. In a chapter entitled "Adolescence," the protagonist, who is a young sailor working on fishing boats starts to discover the arousal of his sexual desires and he starts saving money to go to one of the "weird places in cities," which obviously is a brothel.[13] The protagonist arrives in Istanbul (the former capital of the Ottoman Empire), representing "the West inside," so to speak, with its cosmopolitan composition, and he heads to the streets where the brothels are, but seeing women with make-up ("their faces 'painted' black, red and white") makes him feel nauseated and he "escapes."[14] Getting drunk, he summons up the courage to try again. His description of the streets on his way to brothels serves to vilify the urban space by associating it with improper sexuality. The bodily connotations of the description to express degradation are quite striking: streets smelling of urine are very narrow and do not let any light in. The windows of the houses on both sides of the streets are like diseased eyes out of which pus oozes. He also hears women laughing "inappropriately" and singing which sounds more like screaming to him. What he sees is enough to derange his mind – he feels nauseated again. He hesitates before entering one of the brothels; he walks around the area trembling because he cannot help thinking he is about to do something "dishonourable." He encourages himself by thinking "That the women working in those houses

[11] Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006).

[12] Herkül Miklas, *Türk Romanı ve Öteki: Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı* (İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2000).

[13] Halikarnas Balıkçısı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayinevi, 2007), p. 132.

[14] Balıkçı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, p. 133.

are dishonourable does not mean that men going there are dishonourable, too. All the men going there are surely honourable."[15] He walks behind three tough-looking men going in the same direction, which can be perceived as an act of collaboration between men, though the latter party is unaware of this "solidarity." The protagonist knocks at the door of one of the houses and a prostitute, an "old square-built woman with one eye bulging out," opens the door for him. And this is not just any female body; it is the body of a Greek woman, which serves to illustrate another level of alienation. Despite being shocked, he enters the house to show that he is not scared, but after a while he finds himself outside feeling upside down because of repulsion, excitement, and shock. The way the experience is narrated implies that he did not have sex because obviously he was in the "wrong place." Indeed, right after this incident he yearns to go back to his hometown, which is a small Anatolian town. That he was able to control his sexuality implies that he managed to resist the West and its negative influences. The city is clearly associated with "deviant sexuality," but it is not even represented as indulgence; it is simply repulsive and, very typically, the social criticism is carried out through a non-Muslim female body, depicted as repulsively as possible.

As can be expected, the need to cope with the crisis of masculinity is accompanied by a reaffirmation of masculine identity and a construction of an ideal space where this reaffirmation can take place. In the novel, the nature (and the fishing boat as an extension to it) are reconceptualised as being pure, harmonious and homogeneous, enabling a male bonding without any hierarchies. This reconstructive space where men will regain their autonomy is defined in complete opposition to the cosmopolitan city containing Western elements. My second example, the passenger ship, is the equivalent of the modern workplace, where the protagonist has to work for a while. Two points about the ship company – that it is an Australian company and its office is in İstanbul – are combined with the modern disciplinary system applied on the ship, and thus allowing three different aspects related with modernisation to be criticised in one single example. The officers in the shipping company are depicted as dandies, hence as representatives of an "improper masculinity" with their "fantasy socks" they show off and their painstaking attempts to keep their well-ironed trousers tidy. Although it is a brief description, its sarcastic tone reminds the readers of the connection between modernisation, Western influence as a threat against traditions and the symbol of that threat, that is, the dandy. The second group of improper male "characters" – male passengers – go aboard "swaggeringly" and this manner, again with its connotation of the dandy, is an apparent criticism of their upper-class status and Western origins. Considering R.W. Connell has argued that "to be an adult

[15] Balıkçı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, pp. 133–134.

male is distinctly to occupy space, to have a physical presence in the world,"[16] the following description of passengers on the first class deck implies that they do not conform to the "ideal masculine standards": "Shadows on the deck appeared on the surface from the places they were hidden, and then withdrew into their hiding places as if they were terrified of their courage."[17] Male passengers are not referred to as human beings but as "shadows," and the lack of bravery attached to the description suggests that even mere existence is a matter of courage for a man.

Women's bodies also get their share of criticism as "upper-class foreign bodies." Generally speaking, they are allocated with the consuming function in the conventional gender division of labour: their expensive clothes, make-up and the cream they put on their faces become the subject of criticism of Western women. In this narrative, make-up and expensive clothes are metaphors for prostitution and are embedded in an "East-West" dichotomy, whereby moral values are attributed only to "the East," positioning "the West" on the side of "unchastity." Moreover, because of the manner of their walking (that is, the "inviting" way they move their hips while walking) their bodies once again symbolise "immorality." Besides sexuality, the other approach to Western women is related to age. Two of the female passengers in particular are described as "old wizened pile of flesh," lacking human qualities.[18] With this rather extreme attitude, the novel critiques modernisation by indicating that it distances man from the nature and so from an ideal form of masculinity.

This last point becomes apparent in the description of the structural features of the ship: class-based allocation of the space in the distribution of bodies (the passengers and the crew) immediately gives the protagonist a feeling of alienation from his new workplace. While the comfort of the passengers on the first class deck is ensured with "soft chairs," the third class deck is "too small and crowded. It is not even possible for one to turn around oneself."[19] Also significant in the description of the third deck is that it restricts the protagonist from the sea view. In fact, the whole structure of the ship sets a barrier between the protagonist and the sea – man and nature. For instance, before going aboard, the board of the ship seems like a "black wall" in front of the sailors and it is mainly the dark and dingy bunkers and passageways that the protagonist encounters on the ship. In addition to these, waiters can only use a specific passageway and there is only a certain point where the protagonist and his friend, one of the waiters, can observe the dining hall without being seen. The places where they work are compartmentalised and they cannot come into contact with each other while working; only when

[16] R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 19.
[17] Balıkçı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, p. 137.
[18] Balıkçı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, p. 138.
[19] Balıkçı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, p. 137.

they are off duty can they meet in the kitchen. Furthermore, they are constrained by a timetable as well as by the division of space. They come together in the kitchen and chat, but they cannot completely offload their minds to each other because their shifts start and they have to part. In this alienating workplace, the protagonist's body becomes a site where the social critique is carried out. It is possible to trace the negative effects of the protagonist's job (being a stoker) inflicted on his body: "I burnt my legs and feet many times with pieces of hot coal while feeding the furnace and because I went out to cool off a bit I got cold and started to cough rather badly."[20] In addition to the physical and, one might say, psychological damages, he describes his position as extremely degrading, which points out the difference between "where he belongs" and where he currently is.

Unlike the passenger ship – a modern working space – where only healthy bodies are employed, the sailing ship is represented as the ideal space for the protagonist because the relationship between men on the ship is based on fraternity and it also facilitates closeness to nature. The sailing ship is the complete opposite of the passenger ship in the sense that it involves no compartmentalisation, so the distribution of bodies is not even an issue. Although one assumes a hierarchy between the captain and the crew, what is emphasised in the novel is that they all work and eat together in the same space on equal terms. The discipline required to be a fisherman/sailor is associated with the responsibility to the fellow sailors and it is also depicted as a matter of survival, posing a stark contrast to the subduing discipline on the passenger ship. Insofar as being a good sailor necessitates "obviously the deployment of a set of skills, which in common with all such skills, are to do with the control and deployment of the body,"[21] it is no wonder that sailing is related with "proper" masculinity: [the protagonist speaking] "While our passengers were eating almonds and flirting with each other on the upper deck, my sailor fellows were fighting against the sea with the innocence of their bare chests; they were fighting like lions. If only I could join them."[22] It is significant that the image of the "lion-like, bare-chested" sailor emerges through the comparison of the passenger ship where machinery takes over with the sailing ship where it is still possible to "celebrate" the deployment of the naked, masculine human body. In that sense, sailing validates the image of the physically strong male body and the image is strengthened with the pleasures of adventure.[23]

To conclude, "the West" (imagined and/or otherwise) occupies a substantial space in the debates concerning Turkish modernisation. Along with

[20] Balıkçı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, p. 141.

[21] David Morgan, "You Too Can Have A Body Like Mine" in *Body Matters*, eds. Sue Scott and David Morgan (London; Washington: The Falmer Press, 1996), p. 77.

[22] Balıkçı, *Aganta, Burina, Burinata*, p. 142.

[23] Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 180.

many other examples, *Aganta*, *Burina*, *Burinata* indicates that this uneasy relationship with the West is perceived in gender terms, culminating especially in times of significant socio-political changes. Constant emphasis on the potential threat from the West became quite prevalent in the early modernisation period and continued to be an oft-repeated anxiety, especially in conservative thought. Therefore, quite commonly, this line of thinking can be observed in the works of conservative authors who were contemporaries of Halikarnas Balıkçısı. Peyami Safa illustrates this point quite well with his characterisation of Tango – a generic name to refer to all "Westernised" female characters. With the didactic tone of the 1920s, Safa targeted women whose lack of good judgement, in his view, would put them in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis Western influence. Balıkçı almost unconsciously depicts his Western(ised) characters and the Western/modern mode of life in much the same way with almost the same conservative anxiety in mind, which is quite striking considering his social and cultural background. His family, some of whose members included high-ranking state officials, diplomats and artists who were quite influential with their works of art mainly in the Western style, was a typical representative of an Ottoman-Turkish family of the modernisation period. His uncle, Cevat Şakir Paşa was a prominent figure as the grand vizier of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Cevat Şakir Paşa is described as a "renaissance man" with his great variety of interests, a characteristic certainly passed down to Balıkçı.[24] Possibly under the influence of his upbringing and his formal education,[25] Balıkçı, perceiving the world as a "Western subject," depicts in his autobiography many views in rural Anatolia by likening them to Western masterpieces, such as a scene from a Wagner opera.[26]

Education is the key element in establishing the Humanist Anatolianist thought as well as in constituting Balıkçı's mindset. The Humanist Anatolianists laid special emphasis on education based on Enlightenment thought and humanism through which they were sure that progress could be achieved. In accordance with the humanist thinking, the other two members of the group, Azra Erhat and Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, strongly argued for the teaching of ancient Western languages at schools and they translated a number of major Western classics into Turkish. Given this context, Balıkçı's ambiguous attitude towards the West points all the more to his understanding of gender relations. It is this very understanding which reflects essentialist nationalistic projects in their clearest form.

[24] Şirin Devrim, *A Turkish Tapestry: Shakirs of Istanbul* (London: Quartet Books, 1994).

[25] Balıkçı, like all children of upper-class families in his time, was educated in a Western way. Following his education in Robert College, a prominent American high school in Istanbul, he went to University of Oxford, where he studied for two years but could not graduate because of financial difficulties.

[26] Halikarnas Balıkçısı, *Mavi Sürgün* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayinevi, 2007).

Nurseli Yeşim Sünbüloğlu

Implikacje genderowe literackich przedstawień niepokojów dotyczących modernizacji w Turcji na przykładzie powieści *Aganta, Burina, Burinata* z 1945 r.

Streszczenie

Okres pomiędzy rokiem 1940 a 1950 to czas, w którym Turcja przechodziła głębokie przemiany społeczne, polityczne oraz gospodarcze. Reakcje na te przemiany obejmowały niezadowolenie, lęki i niepokoje na wielu płaszczyznach. W tym kontekście modernizacja była kojarzona ze „szkodliwym wpływem Zachodu" – kosmopolityzmem, technologią, niemuzułmańską częścią społeczeństwa (szczególnie kobietami). U źródeł tego rozgoryczenia i niepokoju leżał strach przed utratą męskiej autonomii, która przekłada się także na relacje pomiędzy obywatelem-mężczyzną a nowoczesnym państwem. Zawarta w artykule analiza powieści *Aganta*, *Burina*, *Burinata* z 1945 r. skupia się na literackich przedstawieniach powyższych zagadnień, z których część odnosi się do rzeczywistych sporów toczących się wokół pojęcia nowoczesności nie mającej swych korzeni w Europie Zachodniej. Autorka artykułu dowodzi, że powieść odnosi się do powyższych niepokojów poprzez rekonceptualizację przyrody jako przestrzeni alternatywnej: czystej, harmonijnej i jednorodnej, gdzie może nastąpić tak bardzo pożądana rekonstrukcja nowoczesnej męskiej tożsamości.

Nurseli Yeşim Sünbüloğlu

Die Gender-Implikationen der literarischen Darstellungen von den die Modernisierung der Türkei betreffenden Unruhen am Beispiel des Romans *Aganta, Burina, Burinata* aus dem Jahr 1945

Zusammenfassung

In dem Zeitraum zwischen 1940 und 1950 fand in der Türkei ein großer sozialer, politischer und wirtschaftlicher Wandel statt. Die Reaktion dagegen waren Unzufriedenheit, Angst und Unruhen auf mehreren Ebenen. Die Modernisierung des Landes war mit „schädlichem Einfluss des Westens" – Kosmopolitismus, Technologie und dem nicht islamischen Teil der Gesellschaft (besonders Frauen) assoziiert. Der Verbitterung und den Unruhen lag die Angst vor dem Verlust der männlichen Autonomie, und dem neuen Verhältnis zwischen dem Bürger-Mann und dem modernen Staat zugrunde. Die in dem Titel angedeutete Analyse des Romans Aganta, Burina, Burinata (1945) konzentriert sich auf literarische Darstellung der obigen Fragen, von denen einige die wirklich stattfindenden Streite um die in Westeuropa nicht verwurzelte Modernität betreffen. Der Verfasser beweist, dass sich der Roman auf genannte Unruhen auf solche Weise bezieht, dass er die Natur als einen alternativen Raum rekonzeptualisiert – einen klaren, harmonischen und einheitlichen Raum, wo die so erwünschte Wiederherstellung der modernen männlichen Identität erfolgen könnte.

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