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Contents

Dear Friends and Readers,

We would like to welcome you wholeheartedly to the first issue of the *Polish Journal of English Studies* in 2019. It is time for us to celebrate a minor jubilee as we begin the fifth year of our activity, hoping it is one of many more to come. For this issue we have prepared a selection of four scholarly articles dealing with literature from the United Kingdom and New Zealand, as well as translation of screenplays. We also have a report from the yearly conference recently organised by our society in Poznań.

The selection still seems quite modest so we invite you all to submit your papers as well as opinions and memories of conferences you organised or attended, and books that you read to our forthcoming 2020 issue. We will also be happy to help you promote conferences you organise by publishing calls for papers both in the journal and through our Internet outlets. If you have published a book, the *PJES* is the best place to promote it by publishing a review.

The second issue for this year, dedicated to campus novels is already largely completed and it should be available very soon. In order to commemorate our anniversary it will also be available in printed version. We hope you will find the present selection interesting, if you do, please, make sure to share it with your colleagues and friends. If you are on Facebook, make sure to follow our page to get the latest updates. We hope to see your papers, reviews, conference reports, and calls for papers in our forthcoming issues.

Jacek Fabiszak
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Space and Identity in J. G. Ballard's
Urban Disaster Fiction

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Abstract: The confluence of spatiality and identity has been one of the central issues in psychogeographical research. J.G. Ballard's fiction offers a valuable entry point into such considerations, especially when viewed alongside theoretical developments in the field of spatiality studies. In approaching the topic of identity disintegration in Ballard's *High-Rise* and *Concrete Island*, this article attempts to present the complicit role the environment plays in self-determination. Though psychoanalysis has traditionally served as the first-line approach to Ballard's work, spatiality studies offers an invaluable theoretical context, in which to further flesh out relationship that exists between the alienation, violence and isolation experienced by the characters and the particular environment they find themselves occupying.

Ballard's novels and short stories are known for how spatial determinants, i.e. the environment, both constructed and natural, serve as a trigger for the behavior of the characters immersed in these worlds. Unlike traditional sf, where exotic and alien environments were explored for the sake of sensationalism or philosophical debate, New Age sf, of which Ballard is perhaps the most famous exemplar, tends to use exteriority as a way into psychological phenomena much in the vein of gothic fiction, which is perhaps David Punter commented that Ballard's science fiction is not about technological development and future civilizations, but about "the slight relocation of perception, wherein the monstrosity of our environment might at any movement spring into focus" (9). Because self-identity is inextricably bound to the social codes which allow identification possible, Ballard's disintegrating, unhinged and dislocated places raise questions as to the interdependence of identity and the environment, especially in the context of postmodern decentralization of codes.

The two novellas that I intend to discuss are part of what Peter Brigg refers to as the urban trilogy (Brigg 1985, 69) or Rachele Dini as the urban disaster

trilogy (Dini 2016, 113), published in the 1970s, *The Concrete Island* (1974) and *High-Rise* (1975). The omitted part is the first book of this trilogy, the infamous *Crash* (1973). These three books signal a clear departure from Ballard's earlier, more overtly science fiction work, concentrating instead on the consequences of rampant urbanization. This new subject matter is approached through familiar aesthetics; the "ballardian" landscapes of manmade dystopian environments, desolation and technological detritus are brought into sharp focus. The psychological makeup of the characters is also in line with his previously established models of psychopathological detachment.

A few preliminary remarks should be mentioned in order to provide a context to the analysis that is to follow. A very important consideration to keep in mind when approaching Ballard's work was articulated by Toby Litt: "As soon as one takes the external world which they inhabit as their subconscious, as soon as one sees sublimation as being replaced by efflorescence, by architecture, then one begins to see Ballard aright. In this reading, there remains no barrier between external and internal worlds" (2008 ix). This is certainly in line with Ballard's own "manifesto", Which Way to Inner Space?", where he bemoans the "juvenile" form science fiction has taken and advocates for a change in direction away from such topics as space and interstellar travel towards a more experimental and abstract approach to "*inner* space", the role of psychology in apprehending experience (Ballard 1997, 197) This is a more synergistic approach than the one which has dominated psychogeographical research, where the focus is on the psychological effects of the built environment, a concern that can be found almost a hundred years earlier in Georg Simmel's *Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903) and later in Guy Debord's *Spectacle of Society* (1967). Certainly, Ballard's work incorporates similar Malthusian themes of overpopulation and media-saturated consumerist society, and applies a microscope to the psychological effects these architectural structures and landscapes exert on his characters. However, the way in which the built environment is often depicted in Ballard's work is also an expression of the protagonist's psyche, a theme that brings his work close to surrealist art. The synergy between these two approaches lends itself well to an analysis along the lines of the spatial turn in literary theory, a term inaugurated by Edward Soja and one that has been applied to an array of disciplines, such as geography, sociology, etc. As Marc Augé argues, the question of space has come to the fore because it is "difficult to make time into a principle of intelligibility, let alone a principle of identity" and given the interest in the dialectic linages

between identity, space and capitalism critics have turned to spatial considerations in an effort to better represent the power dynamics at play in a postcapitalist environment.

It is not space as a theoretical concept that pervades Ballard's work, though Foucault's concept of heterotopias is applicable to his environment; instead, Ballard's focus is on the effects of modernist architecture and urban development on the human psyche. The development of spatial theory is concomitant with broader considerations concerning the effects of capitalism, as is attested to by both Soja's and Harvey's theories, which involve a distinct Marxist approach to urbanization, outlining the development of cities as running parallel with the development of capitalism itself: David Harvey writes:

> the city is the high point of human achievement, objectifying the most sophisticated knowledge in a physical landscape of extraordinary complexity and splendor at the same time as it brings together social forces capable of the most amazing sociotechnical and political innovation. But it is also the site of squalid human failure, the lightening rod of the conflict. It is a place of mystery, the site of the unexpected, full of agitations and ferments, of multiple liberties, opportunities, and alienations; of passions and repressions; of cosmopolitanism and extreme parochialisms; of violence, innovation, and reaction. The capitalist city is the arena of the most intense social and political confusions at the same time as it is a monumental testimony to and a moving force within the dialectics of capitalism's uneven development. (1989, 229)

The idea of cities being the sites of repressions and liberties, of alienation and social identity is also to be found in Ballard's fiction, which often plays with these two contrasting forces. It is not surprising, therefore, that most cultural analyzes of urbanization are cast in a Marxist perspective, emphasizing the capitalist forces of developing and disintegrating identity formation. Ballard's fiction, especially his urban trilogy, sits well in this theoretical context, as it too represents the consequences of urbanization with regard to individuality and identity.

Ballard's 1975 *High-Rise* was written partly as a reaction to the rationalized, modernist social planning project in and around London in the 1950s and 1960s, specifically the high-rise projects. The eponymous "high-rise" is a modern 40-story

London building occupied by a representative assortment of professional classes. It is presented as an almost utopian enclave, catering to the most discerning needs of its residents. Equipped with restaurants, a swimming pool, gym, shops, the high-rise is constructed in a way to be an almost self-sufficient microcosm.

Soon, however, with no reason, the residents began to turn on themselves. Arguments over petty annoyances like noise and broken elevators, soon escalates to outright violence, and by the end of the novel the whole high-rise is engulfed in tribal warfare, with residents pitted against one another, occupying various territories of the building. Ballard is clearly presenting the devolution of the species, which is taking place in stark contrast to the ultra-modern environment, which seems to be having some ominous effect on the residents. "The dominant narrative movement of the novel therefore consists of a progressive breakdown of the social order of the high-rise, a breakdown made possible by the very architectural features that seemed at first to reinforce that order" (Spurr 2012, 228). The novel never moves away from the environment of the high-rise. Though the residents do leave the building to work, the narration focuses primarily on the events taking place in the high rise. Throughout the book the high-rise is compared to a zoo and a prison, which further stresses its carceral aspect, even though the illusion of choice is carefully maintained, allowing the residents to willingly decide to imprison themselves in a gradually disintegrating building. Apart from appearing to be prison, the high-rise is also presented as a laboratory, where a human experiment is being conducted, or what Spurr referred to as "a kind of experiment designed to tests the limits of psychological and social cohesion in the artificial environment of created by the high-rise" (Ballard 2012: 228). The key word here is "artificial", as architecture by its very nature is artificial, though the particular type of architecture alluded to by Ballard is especially laden with criticisms of artificiality and technological dehumanization.

The aesthetics as well as the ideological assumptions underlying the architectural structure of the high-rise are reminiscent of Le Corbusier's utopian project of the "vertical village", or Radiant City in Marseille, a point that has already been highlighted by most critics (Groes 2012, 134; Spurr 2012, 226; Gasiorek 2004, 120). On the one hand, Le Corbusier's project took form in the years following World War I at a time when the there was a concerted effort to uplift the living standards of the populace from nineteenth-century squalor. This was to take place by means of more rational and measured urban

planning, which would stress hygiene and order. If Ballard's high-rise is to be seen as a beneficiary of these aspiration, it is ironic that, as Rachele Dini in her study on the significance of waste in fiction, notices that "the casual flinging of garbage from the apartment balconies is explicitly likened to the customs of nineteenth-century tenements" (Dini 2016, 125) The social experiment that takes place in this high-rise laboratory has to do with the effect such Corbuserian architecture has on its tenets, which by extension should perhaps be seen as the effect of a technocratic social structure. In the high-rise, "A new social type was being created by the apartment building, a cool, unemotional personality impervious to the psychological pressures of high-rise life, with minimal needs for privacy, who thrived like an advanced species of machine in the neutral atmosphere" (Ballard 2012, 46). This is exactly the type of person that is attracted to this type of environment, the cool, and emotionally detached resident here represented by Dr. Laing, who is emotionally recovering from a divorce. The death of affect is a recurring theme in Ballard's work and is found to apply to most of his protagonists. There is also a hint of irony in this description of the residents as "an advanced species of machine", as Ballard often presents the high-rise in anthropomorphic, or biological, terms. "There was something in this feeling – the elevators pumping up and down the long shafts resembled pistons in the chamber of a heart. The residents moving along the corridors were the cells in a network of arteries, the lights in their apartments neurons of a brain" (Ballard 2012, 51). There is an interesting conflation here between Corbusier's house-machine and the people inhabiting the high rise as a species of machine.

One of the primary functions of this engineered social space was to relieve the inhabitants of obligation to define themselves as individuals by imposing predefined identities on the basis of social status. The building is divided along social lines, with the rich occupying the top floors, with each social class represented in descending fashion down to the ground floor. As Duff notes: "Ballard emphasizes the structure of the building as significant to identity formation, and ultimately the conquest of space within the building becomes a mode by which the residents can define, and redefine, themselves in relation to each other" (Duff 2014, 69). With the disintegration of social order amid the violence and warfare, personal identities, based as they were mostly on class identities, also begin to unfurl, exposing a dismal, animalistic psychological substrate that offers little in the way of redemption to the protagonists.

Emotional detachment that is both provoked and encouraged by this architecture is seen to trigger repressed impulses which are given free rein, as if the almost totalitarian order of the high-rise environment has created optimal conditions for subversive amoral behavior. And it is this amoral behavior that is very often seen in terms of a liberation from the repressive social structures imposed on people. This is where we can see Ballard drawing from R. D. Laing's theories, which ask us to consider the difference between the self and the self that is mapped onto us by the environment. Laing was an existential psychiatrist working in the existential vein, positing the idea that the experience of one's own identity is radically different in various environments. In the case of *High-Rise* there is a constant reminder of the tenants' social status, their profession, their place in the hierarchy, which renders the difference between individual identity and collective identity tentative at best. Individual coherence and self-identity are sacrificed in exchange for a sense of stability, even if it comes by way of complete isolation:

> isolated as is the self as a defence against the dangers from without which are felt as a threat to its identity, it loses what precarious identity it already has. Moreover, the withdrawal from reality results in the 'self's' own impoverishment. Its omnipotence is based on impotence. Its freedom operates in a vacuum. [. . .] The self becomes dessicated and dead. (Laing 1969, 157)

These are precisely the affectless protagonist which populate Ballard's fictions, entities that are devoid of agency and dynamism. The cost of their withdrawal from any relationships is a kind of psychological death, which Ballard referenced earlier in his *Atrocity Exhibition* as "the death of affect". Drawing further parallels between Laing and Ballard, Gregory Stephenson notes that both of them:

> share the notion that we are profoundly ambivalent with regard to our individual identities and our collective social identity, that we are clinging determinedly, apprehensively, to an illusion while at the same time forces within our psyches are working to overturn that illusion. Both writers share the belief that "breakdown" and "break-through" are inextricably intertwined, that what may appear to be madness or disaster may be, as Laing phrases it, 'veritable manna from heaven'. (1991, 7)

Laing argued that psychosis and loss of identity is a coping mechanism to modern culture, one that by-passes cultural programming, allowing the subject to discover deeper, archetypal, levels of self-awareness. There is a visible nostalgic element to this primivitism, which could be regarded as reactionary, if not slightly outmoded by today's standards. Nonetheless, this line of argument seems to predominate much of Ballardian scholarship, placing Ballard in the role of a new age Freudian prophet discontent with civilization.

The protagonist of *Concrete Island* finds himself in a similar situation as Laing in *High-Rise*. Also a middle- aged professional, in this case an architect, Maitland one day while homebound veers off the exit lane of the Westway interchange in west London, crashing his Jaguar through the ramps onto a patch of deserted wasteland beneath and between the motorways. There is no clear reason for this accident, though it is suggested that perhaps it was a deliberate act, a subconscious push away from a staid life that needed reinvention. This island is described as "a small traffic island, some two hundred yards long and triangular in shape, that lay in the waste ground between three converging motorway routes" (Ballard 2011, 11). It is a forgotten by-product of urban development, a negative space that has been discarded from the homogenized space of the urban environment. Dini refers to this space as "a monument to obsolescence and to tenacious survival" (Dini 2016, 120). In a manner similar to *High-Rise*, this island is also described as if it were a biological entity: "A thin yellow light lay across the island, an unpleasant haze that seemed to rise from the grass, festering over the ground as if over a wound that had never healed" (Ballard 2011, 14). There is an air of sickness surrounding this space, indicating its function as a reservoir of the rejected and traumatic, which also serves to establish the connection with Maitland's state of mind. Very much in line with Toby Litt's comment quoted earlier, Maitland eventually begins to see the island as "an exact model of his own head" (Ballard 2011, 69) and later even declares that "I am the island" (52).

After a series of predictable but ultimately futile escape attempts, Maitland begins to explore this land in hopes of mapping it, finding help, food and shelter, but the landscape is so overgrown that Maitland is unable to find his bearings. Incapacitated by his injuries and weakened by hunger, he is found by Jane Sheppard and Proctor, who nurse him back to health and keep him captive. However, as time goes by, Maitland discards any attempts at escape, resigning himself to life on this deserted island. With time the last remaining vestiges of his habitual bourgeois behavior are shed and he becomes like his captors, who

are also socially marginalized figures. Jane is a prostitute and Proctor an ex-circus performer, and both seem unable to permanently leave the island.

The question that runs through the story hinges on the psychogeographical relation of this space to Maitland's sense of belonging. Especially provocative in this regard is the depiction of his gradually shifting behavior – at a certain point he is no longer concerned about his life beyond the embankments and is no longer desperate to leave; he instead passively resigns himself to his new situation and embraces this new environment as his own. There is a haunting effect this space exerts on Maitland, as it drains his will, deprives him of his previous identity – that of a well-mannered, upper-class architect – now Maitland proclaims that his goal is to exert dominion over his new territory, a theme that coincides with the story's two most important intertexts – *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tempest*.

The task in approaching this novel, therefore, is to explain the nature of this environment in terms of its effects on Maitland's mindset, and how this environment is perhaps indicative of urban processes of wider implications. In the commentaries that have appeared about *Concrete Island*, Marc Augé's notion of non-spaces has been often utilized as a theoretical framework to present this space in its ideological relevance. Non-spaces develop a result of postmodern, postcapitalist, posthistorical transformations in spatial construction, where the excess of events and signifiers disintegrates organically created social spaces. These are usually presented as transitory spaces, which have no stable meaning (e.g., airports, service stations, supermarkets), and are predicated on intermediary existence and as such they erode human interaction and enforce solitude. Non-places are not occupied by inhabitants, but traversed by shoppers, migrants, and commuters. Upon entering a non-place, a person "is relieved of his usual determinants and becomes no more than what he or she does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer or driver" (Augé 1995, 103). As they do nothing to integrate earlier places and localizations, they are themselves divorced from any kind of cultural master narrative, suspended in a kind of meaningless vacuum: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé 1995, 77). Taking into account the pace of globalization and the effects of what David Harvey terms the "space-time compression"[1], individuals

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1   See David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1991), 260-307.

have become consigned to the role of inactive witnesses, their identity no longer resulting from organic social conditions, but are instead products of what Augé calls the "solitary contractuality" of non-places. "As anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality" (Augé 1995, 76).

Insofar as the island is bereft of any relational markers and is a blank spot on the city map, then indeed it can be viewed as a non-place, especially when the effects on Maitland's sense of personal identity are taken into account. However, what initially appeared as a non-place later begins to reveal ghostly traces of an earlier urban topography. Eventually, as Maitland explores the island, he is able to notice that it "was far older than the surrounding terrain, as if this triangular patch of waste ground had survive by the exercise of a unique guile and persistence, and would continue to survive, unknown and disregarded, long after the motorways had collapsed into dust" (Ballard 2011, 69). On the ground there is evidence of past life, a pre-War World II churchyard, Edwardian terraced houses, air-raid shelters, the ground plan of a post-war cinema (Ballard 2011, 68-69). Seeing history architecturally imprinted on what at first seemed ahistorical wasteland elevates the island's significance as a mindscape. This is noted by Gasiorek: "Maitland's realization that the island is a historical site marks the beginning of a more perceptive mapping of the terrain on which he is ostensibly trapped and leads him to relate the sedimentation of history disclosed by the island's topography to his own past" (Ballard 2011, 113). Therefore, it this aspect of the past encroaching on the concrete island that puts into question the applicability of Augé's notion of non-place as a context in which this particular space can be described, as non-places are manifestly ahistorical, acultural, whereas here we are dealing with a spectral historicity that further aligns this space with markers of the past. Perhaps this classification would prove more useful if understood as a narrative devise used to illustrate the social alienation endemic to supermodernity. As Gasiorek states: "Non-places are never straightforwardly demarcated from places, nor do they exist in some pure state, but they offer a useful way of thinking about how the contemporary organization of space may create or exacerbate social alienation" (2004, 110).

The discovery of a hidden city underneath the desolate surface of the island corresponds to Maitland rediscovering his own past. This point that was developed by Samuel Francis, who noted that the island "evokes actual childhood memories as well. One notable effect of the island upon Maitland is to cause him to regain something of his childhood self" (Ballard 2011, 78). The connection be-

tween the island and Maitland's childhood past is reinforced throughout the text with his body "more and more beginning to resemble that of his younger self" (Ballard 2011, 92) and his relationship with Jane resembling that of a mother and child. This childhood identity, however, is only one of the many layers that have already peeled off during his time on the island and does not constitute an endpoint of any kind.

High Rise and *Concrete Island* represent the two opposite poles of how spaces affects identity formation and it is this difference that best communicates Ballard's understanding how space functions in relation to identity. Both Maitland and Laing are trapped and isolated on their respective islands and, at the same time, liberated from their respective social identities. In the case of *High-Rise*, the structured and predetermined space is responsible for the disintegration of identity, whereas in *Concrete Island*, the protagonist is allowed the possibility to redefine his identity only when the cultural and rationalistic influences on space are suspended. These effects are inseparable from Laing's understanding of psychotic experience, though, as is the case with most of Ballard's work, the psychosis to which the tenets succumb and which Maitland endures is a type of transcendental experience insofar as it suspends the structures of identity that have been constructed in social environments. Ballard shows a similar process that takes place in contrasting environments. The high-rise represents civilizational achievement and modern luxury, whereas the concrete island is a primitivist retreat from the demands of modern society. Both are to be found in the urban environment, but each has a unique effect.

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Existential Laughter in The Fiction of Marilyn Duckworth

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Abstract. The present paper traces the motif of laughter in the novels of Marylin Duckworth, a prominent contemporary New Zealand writer, in terms of its existential import. The first part provides an overview of the most significant existentialist and existentially-tinged perspectives on laughter, while the second one employs some of them to bring to light the underlying meaning and function of the recurrent outbursts of laughter in Duckworth's fiction. It is demonstrated that they usually accompany the heroines in the moments of existential crises, generated by the experience of alienation and self-alienation, when their most cherished notions of external reality and themselves fall into disarray. As such, laughter becomes a harbinger of enhanced self-awareness and insight into the truth of existence. Most importantly, it also betrays anxiety arising at the prospect of unrestricted freedom and concomitant responsibility for shaping one's own life. Finally, it may serve also as a tool of interpersonal communication: either a weapon through which one may assert superiority over the other person or, quite the contrary, a facilitator of reciprocal recognition that binds people together.

Key words: laughter, existential, alienation, body, freedom

1. introduction

In common parlance and perception, laughter expresses primarily amusement, contentment or playfulness. In some cases, it conveys derision and ridicule. Rarely is it considered to be an appropriate response to matters of grave importance, let alone to communicate any profound meaning, as evidenced by the phrase 'no laughing matter.' Contrary to these most obvious associations, it may, however, carry existential import, unveiling the truth of the human condition. The present paper aims to demonstrate that this is the case by tracing the motif of laughter in the fiction of Marylin Duckworth (b. 1935), a prominent New Zealand female writer. Throughout her career, Duckworth has portrayed the everyday life of women, focusing on their problems with constructing an authentic

self-identity in the face of social pressures and conflictual interpersonal relationships. The thematic texture of her works is permeated by distinct existential undertones, which the writer attributes not to conscious inspiration by the philosophy of existentialism, but rather to the influence of the existentialist zeitgeist of her times (Benson 2000, 207). She tends to place her heroines in "absurd, sometimes even paranoid, abnormal situations" (Sarti 1998, 23), where their taken-for-granted assumptions about external reality and their own existence fall into disarray. Quite surprisingly, it is usually in these moments of crisis that they erupt into laughter. The remainder of this paper attempts to bring to light the underlying meaning and function of their reaction. It is divided into two parts: the first one provides an overview of existentialist and existentially-tinged perspectives on laughter, while the other one employs some of them to analyse Duckworth's novels.

2. Laughter and Existentialism

Although no existentialist philosopher formulated any systematic theory of laughter, Friedrich Nietzsche[1] and Jean-Paul Sartre offered some penetrating insights into its nature. In his *The Will to Power*, the former posits a link between the uniquely human ability to laugh and vulnerability to pain: "Perhaps I know best why man alone laughs: he alone suffers so deeply that he *had* to invent laughter" (Nietzsche 1968, 74; emphasis in original). This dictum does not mean, however, that laughter is a mere palliative against anxiety. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, it stands as the emblem of an existential attitude, while self-laughter specifically is hailed by Zarathustra as a skill to be developed and cherished: "learn to laugh at [yourselves] as one must laugh!" (Nietzsche 2003, 226). According to Nietzsche, the power of laughter lies in its potential to overthrow the spirit of gravity: "Not by wrath does one kill but by laughter. Come let us kill the spirit of gravity" (2003, 30). Whereas the latter obfuscates the human condition

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1   The status of Nietzsche as an existentialist philosopher has been disputed by some scholars (McBride 1997, xii), mainly due to his "denial of free will" (Michelman 245). Nevertheless, in consideration of his "critique of social conformity and conventional morality, his emphasis on individual creativity and 'self-overcoming,' and his suspicion of the objectivity and the project of rationalism" (Michelman 2010, 245), he is classified among the "big four" existentialists, together with Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre (Solomon 2005, ix), and included in anthologies and studies on existentialism, for instance William Barret's classic *Irrational Man*. For the purposes of this paper, this line of interpretation is followed.

and entails paralysis in ready-made values, the former plays a revelatory function. Laughter exposes but also allows one to accept the hardship of existence. Katrin Froese contends that "Nietzsche's laughter represents an affirmation that embraces all of existence, with its warts and blemishes and not just those aspects which we find palatable" (2017, 75).

With its emphasis on self-awareness and affirmation, Nietzsche's vision contrasts with that presented by Sartre in *The Family Idiot*, his monumental study of Gustave Flaubert, in the context of an imaginary scene of the young writer contemplating his own reflection in the mirror. This act of self-examination is interpreted as the man's attempt to "see himself from the outside" as "the object he is for everyone else" (Sartre 1987, 27), and the outburst of self-laughter that follows it as "withdrawing solidarity from one's singularity insofar as singularity is perceived as a vestige of revolt against integration" (Sartre 1987, 30). Laughing at oneself, so Sartre asserts, is not only a means of surrendering one's potentially subversive individuality. It doubles as a protection against the anticipated risks of being laughed at by others (Sartre 1987, 31). It may be noted that this position is akin to the superiority theory, which holds that laughter arises from a sense of being better than a person whose shortcomings have manifested themselves. In a similar vein, Sartre's laughter castigates one's failure to conform to the accepted norms of conduct. Those who laugh do so in order to preserve their own self-comfort: "a group threatened with danger withdraws solidarity from the man in whom the danger is incarnate" (Sartre 1987, 29).

The picture of laughter in existentialism should be complemented with the contribution of Samuel Beckett. His notion of mirthless laughter, described by the writer in *Watt* as "the laugh of laughs, the risus purus, the laugh laughing at the laugh, … in a word the laugh that laughs − silence please − at that which is unhappy" (Beckett 1959, 48), in a sense combines the characteristics of the Nietzschean and Sartrean concepts. While analysing Beckett's works, Wolfgang Iser quotes the foregoing passage and indicates that mirthless laughter lays bare human misery and simultaneously alleviates it (1993, 173-174). He adds that "this laughter has no cathartic effect, but in its mirthlessness is still a response to the human condition, which is lit up by laughter …" (Iser 1993, 174). It may thus appear paradoxical, performing, as it does, two contradictory functions: self-revelatory, just as Nietzsche's, and "self-protective" (Simpson 2017, 12), just as Sartre's. As succinctly summarised by Hannah Simpson, it constitutes a "method of both accepting and withstanding the human condition" (2017, 14).

The echoes of existentialism reverberate also in various non-existentialist expositions of the subject, notably the incongruity theory (Morreall 2013, 189), whereby laughter is engendered by discrepancy between human assumptions and reality:

> We live in an orderly world, where we have come to expect certain patterns among things, their properties, events, etc. We laugh when we experience something that doesn't fit into these patterns. (Morreal 1983, 15-16)

In his *Critique of Judgment,* Immanuel Kant, considered to be an early proponent of the theory (Morreall 1983, 16), associates laughter with the sense of the absurd:

> In everything that is to excite a lively convulsive laugh there must be something absurd (in which the Understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). *Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing*. (2007, 133; emphasis in original).

On this view, laughter may be deemed an anxiety-ridden response to reality that suddenly strikes one as unhomely. One laughs when existence reveals itself as suffused with contradictions and perplexities that surpass immediate and conventional understanding.

It may be thus claimed that, at the underlying level, laughter often accompanies the collapse of human illusions about full mastery over the external world and themselves. This sense of vulnerability is central also to the correlation between laughter and the body indicated by a number of scholars. Simon Critchley emphasises that, with the accompanying muscle contractions, laughter is essentially "a bodily phenomenon" (2004, 8). While laughing, one gains a heightened awareness of one's body, but simultaneously becomes alienated from it: "If we laugh with the body, then we often laugh at the body, the strange fact that we have a body" (Critchley 2004, 44). Similarly, in his *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, Henri Bergson states that laughter typically arises when "our attention is diverted to the physical in a person when it is the moral that is in question" (2005, 57) and when "the image of *the body [takes] precedence of the soul*" (2005, 26; emphasis in original). Couching this in existentialist terms, it is triggered by the juxtaposition of human transcendence against the imma-

nence of the body. Involving a partial loss of self-control, it exposes the limitations of human agency.

Apart from highlighting the physical dimension of laughter, Bergson takes account also of other aspects relevant from the point of view of existentialism. He notes that "the laughable element … consists of a certain *mechanical inelasticity*, just where one would expect to find the wide awake adaptability and the living pliableness of a human being" (Bergson 2005, 5). According to the philosopher, laughter may be inspired by the sight of "*a person* [who] *gives us the impression of being a thing*" (Bergson 2005, 28; emphasis in original) and "anything rigid, ready-made, mechanical in gesture, attitude, and even facial expression" (Bergson 2005, 55). Michael Proudfoot and A.R. Lacey note that these observations are consonant with "Sartre's view of bad faith" (2009, 32), whereby one "[behaves] as a mere thing" (2009, 32) with a pre-given essence, refusing to exercise one's freedom in an active and creative manner. What laughter does, in turn, is to "re-adapt the individual to the whole, in short, to round off the corners wherever they are met with" (Bergson 2005, 86). It unmasks bad faith, in which lies its potential to break the chains of self-deception.

To conclude the discussion, it is necessary to reference also the concept of grotesque laughter, which incorporates various elements of the approaches discussed previously. It certainly overlaps to a certain extent with the incongruity theory, being provoked by "juxtapositions, disjunctions, ambiguities, deformities, hybridities, exaggerations, caricatures or disorders" (Edwards and Graulund 2013, 94) – everything that is out of sync with well-known conventions and, as such, disturbs the human sense of harmony. Further, it is also closely associated with corporeality or, more specifically, a body that is deformed, incontinent and overgrown, raising doubts to its own humanity and inspiring repulsion. Its primary distinguishing mark is purposeful subversiveness. Grotesque laughter not only affirms but also celebrates incongruity as a means of undermining the established order. Closely linked with the rituals of carnival, it goes hand in hand with "the overthrow of authority, the dismissal of the sacred, the dissemination of counter discourses" (Edwards and Graulund 2013, 104).

3. Laughter in Marilyn Duckworth's Fiction

Prior to analysing Duckworth's fiction, it is worthwhile to devote a measure of attention to her memoir. Although laughter is mentioned only twice and very

briefly in *Camping on the Faultline* (2000), in both cases it is pregnant with existentialist meaning, resonating with the incongruity theory. In the first case, the writer recounts an episode from her childhood:

> Walking home from the tram stop I passed a neighbour mowing his lawn. He looked so serious about it. All at once I was stricken by the sheer absurdity of life. I wanted to laugh. And then I knew this reaction was out place. Perhaps I wasn't normal. I wondered if I was going mad. I wound myself up and confessed this fear to Mother. She reassured me that many people found life absurd from time to time. (Duckworth 2000, 61)

Her urge to laugh at a seemingly inconsequential sight may be apparently attributed to the experience of defamiliarisation. The girl saw her neighbour and his commonplace activity in an entirely unexpected light. She noticed the discrepancy between the insignificance of lawn-mowing and the gravity accorded to it by the man, whose appearance literally bespoke the Sartrean spirit of seriousness − "a consciousness that … takes itself and its world excessively seriously" (Rae 2011, 34). Interestingly, the incident itself may evoke associations with the famous restaurant scene in Sartre's *Nausea*, where Roquentin is watching customers utterly engrossed in their petty activities:

> I glance around the room. What a comedy! All these people sitting there, looking serious, eating. No, they aren't eating: they are recuperating in order to successfully finish their tasks. Each one of them has his little personal difficulty which keeps him from noticing that he exists; … And if I knew how to convince people I'd go and sit down next to that handsome white-haired gentleman and explain to him just what existence means. I burst out laughing at the thought of the face he would make. (1964, 111-112)

Duckworth's laughter debunked this spirit of seriousness, emphasising the ridiculousness of the man's pretensions to self-importance. Not least importantly, it also carried a note of rebelliousness, standing at odds with what was expected of her.

In the other case, a pretext for laughter was provided by a stroke of painful existential revelation experienced by Duckworth as a mature woman. The writer

confesses how she was coerced by her husband into pretending to be a self-ful-filled housewife and redefining her identity according to his expectations (Duck-worth 2000, 167). Submissive as she was, she had an acute sense of disjunction between her inner self and the mask adopted to gain social approval: "They [her friends] think I can drive and they think I'm happy and go shopping for yellow stockings. I wanted to laugh because I was such a sham" (Duckworth 2000, 168). At that point, her laughter marked a glimpse of self-awareness. It exposed the authenticity into which the writer had fallen by allowing to have an identity imposed upon her instead of forging it on her own.

The correlation between laughter and a feeling of alienation or self-alienation drawn in *Camping on the Faultline* is foregrounded also in Duckworth's fiction, including *A Gap in the Spectrum* (1959). In her debut novel, the writer ventures beyond the limits of realism by imagining a dreamlike situation in which nine-teen-year old Diana Clouston has been mysteriously catapulted into London, "without the faintest idea of where or what London is or how she got there" (Duckworth 1959, 208). The second chapter ends with the bewildered heroine, doubtful of her own sanity and incapable of conveying her strange condition to anyone, breaking into laughing and going to sleep: "With a brief, hysteri-cal laugh, I turned over and drifted into dreams confused by the radio which continued to play on the chair beside me" (Duckworth 1959, 23). This outburst may be construed as the woman's pent-up response to the unsettling experience of being thrown into an utterly alien space without any reasonable explanation. Throughout the day, she has been roaming through London, a space of pure chaos that eludes any predictable rules: "Anything could happen, I thought, not for the first time. Anything, anything" (Duckworth 1959, 22). The pervading im-pression of absurdity is reinforced through the emphasis on the uncanny and grotesque in the portrayal of the city: "This world was full of horrible, meaning-less things … This was a world of extremes" (Duckworth 1959, 21-22). Equally grotesque are its inhabitants, including a bizarre news-seller, whose physical deformity elicits Diana's disgust and horror: "He had only one eye and his cheek was drawn up into an agonizing twist, leaving his mouth a lipless hole in his torn face" (Duckworth 1959, 21). What also attracts the heroine's attention is the conspicuous disproportion in the appearance of Londoners: "Some of them were exaggeratedly thin, some terribly fat. … here and there an extreme stood out and these seemed to me sinister, even deformed" (Duckworth 1959, 22). Diana thus finds herself in a world turned upside-down, one that defies all well-established

patterns, thereby arousing "a sense of danger and insecurity" (Duckworth 1959, 21), which subdues the "spirit of adventure" (Duckworth 1959, 21) blooming in the face of the unknown.

The woman is haunted also by the sense self-estrangement as a result of a partial loss of memory. The feeling increases gradually throughout the chapter as she strives to reconstruct her own identity out of disparate bits and pieces of evidence, for the image of Diana Clouston that emerges from them does not correspond to her inner self: "The photos didn't seem in character with myself at all" (Duckworth 1959, 13). Also, some old letters from her family and former sweethearts now do not present any emotional value (Duckworth 1959, 14). Consequently, the heroine becomes deprived of the elements that typically constitute the core of human identity: a sense of self-coherence and interpersonal connection. She faces the nothingness at the root of her existence, or, to use de Beauvoir's phrase, the "lack of being … which is precisely existence" (1948, 13): "Then a swift shame came over me. … Could I be lacking in something?" (Duckworth 1959, 19). It may be asserted in Sartrean terms that the strange situation illuminates the fact that "… life has no meaning a priori. … it is up to you to give it a meaning" (Sartre 1947, 58). Instead of acknowledging her own existential indefiniteness, Diana, however, desires to dispel the sense of inner vacuity at the cost of existential freedom. Rather than undertaking action through which she could define herself anew, she strives to re-assume her former self, which is, to a large extent, an amalgam of socially constructed patterns.

Her hysterical laughter thus appears to serve functions similar to those of Beckettian mirthless laughter. Its frantic quality signifies a loss of physical self-control, corresponding to the overall experience of reality slipping beyond her understanding and command. Seeing that neither anything in the external world nor any other people could assist her in the process of self-determination, the woman realises that the brunt of responsibility for giving her existence meaning lies entirely with herself. She resembles the adolescent invoked by de Beauvoir in *Ethics of Ambiguity*, whose gradual entry into adulthood from the insouciance of childhood elicits tremendous anxiety:

> … it is not without great confusion that the adolescent finds him-
> self cast into a world which is no longer ready-made, which has
> to be made; he is abandoned, unjustified, the prey of a freedom that
> is no longer chained by anything. (1948, 39)

At the same time, apart from bringing an existential insight, it also performs the role of a self-defence mechanism. Significantly, it is followed by the heroine's retreat from reality into the realm of dreams.

A collision with a world that offers no ready-made values forms the context of laughter also in *Rest for the Wicked* (1986). Fatigued by the daily drudgery of being a full-time housewife and mother to two children, thirty-eight-year-old Jane temporarily leaves her family to participate in an experimental project at the Sleep Research Centre. The decision, however, only magnifies her frustration, eliciting a sense of guilt. At one point, while the heroine is thinking with dread about her husband's wish to have her back at home, she catches a sight of her own face in a bathroom mirror and, stricken by its look, is suddenly gripped by a desire to go out:

> She pulls at the door to get away. It won't open. She tugs harder on the chrome handle, beginning to sweat … The door opens suddenly outward and she almost falls into the passageway. She shakes with hysterical laughter. (Duckworth 1986, 79)

The closed bathroom symbolises Jane's imprisonment in the social expectations imposed upon her as a woman, mother and wife. On the one hand, she experiences them as a limitation upon her subjectivity and autonomy, and desperately yearns for escape. On the other hand, these pre-given schemas enable her to avoid the burden of shaping her own life. Consequently, the moment of being thrown out of the closed space into freedom does give her any relief but rather a sense of anguish at the challenges that await her beyond the shelter of social roles. Just as Roquentin's nausea in *The Stranger* is a "physical expression" of his "dread of liberty" (Grene 1948, 54), so Jane's laughter betrays her anxiety of responsibility and choice. Similar to the sub-man described in de Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity*, she "is afraid of … being in a state of danger before the future, in the midst of its possibilities. [She] is thereby led to take refuge in the ready-made values of the serious world" (1948, 44). Further, its hysterical tinge, just as in *A Gap in the Spectrum*, reveals a loss of self-control. Iser remarks that "we normally laugh when our emotive or cognitive faculties have been overtaxed by a situation they can no longer cope with. The disorientated body takes over the response from it" (1981, 221). This is the case with the female protagonist, who finds herself overwhelmed

by the conflicting feelings of desire for liberation from the straitjacket of social
scripts and fear of unlimited freedom.

Laughter occasioned and accompanied by the experience of self-alienation
surfaces as a motif also in *Matchbox House* (1987) and *Married Alive* (1985). The
heroines of the two novels, similar to Flaubert in *The Family Idiot,* laugh while
contemplating their own reflections in the mirror:

> I must be mad, she thought, and laughed at herself in the sink mir-
> ror. (Duckworth 1987, 136)

> She … catches sight of herself in a plastic mirror. Her face looks
> stricken, bruised. It must be the night air on her skin. Feeling can't
> be so close to the surface. While she watches, a sneeze convulses
> the muscles of her face. The mirror rocks on its nails. She laughs,
> reaching out to steady her moving image. How little it takes to put
> things out of kilter. Even something as frivolous as a sneeze. (Duck-
> worth 1985, 25)

It was mentioned earlier that, as emphasised in Sartre's account, the act involves
a position of critical self-detachment: "Moreover, the unreality grows: the object
seen is his image, it is not him; …; and he himself is unrealised without knowing
it a haughty observer of himself" (1987, 33). Indeed, each woman posits her-
self in the role of not only an active perceiving subject but also a passive object
judged as if from an external perspective. Their laughter, however, appears far
from "[saving] the spirit of seriousness" (Sartre 1987, 63). It rather implies with-
drawal of self-compassion and exposes their shortcomings.

As for Jean in *Matchbox House*, the heroine's reaction should be analysed from
the perspective of her descent into a world of daydreams away from the drab re-
ality of being a mother to her baby son and a wife to an unfaithful husband. The
woman begins to act in an erratic manner once she becomes a temporary caregiv-
er for the three school-age children of her sick friend and develops an attraction
to their father, Gerald. She is deluding herself that the man secretly reciprocates
her feelings and intends to marry her when his wife dies. As the plot progresses,
she starts to identify Gerald with his eldest son and, unable to act upon her de-
sires towards the man, makes advances on the boy, simultaneously neglecting
her duties towards the other children. The quoted outburst of laughter occurs,

however, at a rare moment of lucidity when the woman recognises the impropriety of her conduct. She notices that her fixation on the idea of replacing Gerald's wife makes her grotesque and somehow deformed, also in appearance:

> This optimism in Jean was not new, but it was becoming more noticeable in her make up. Before long it would stand out as one of her prominent features – so exaggerated as to be slightly misshapen. She knew it was wrong to have misshapen features in one's characters, but how to prevent it? (Duckworth 1987, 136).

At this point, Jean is able to assess herself critically. Her laughter is reproachful and even self-disciplinary. It mocks her social maladaptation and berates the transgression of the accepted norms, serving as a warning call to amend her ways.

The passage from *Married Alive* comes from an early part in novel when the heroine is grappling with the feelings of anxiety and insecurity triggered by the epidemic of insanity that sweeps across New Zealand in the wake of flu vaccine contamination, demolishing comforting ideas about the world as a homely and safe space. The laughability of the situation appears to lie in the discord between the sense of gravity with which the woman is examining her face and the levity of her physiological reaction. With the sneeze, to use Bergson's phrase, "attention is suddenly recalled from the soul to the body" (2005, 25), and Francie's pretensions to self-importance are unexpectedly pitted against her facticity as a physical being. The faltering image in the mirror symbolises the fragility and changeability of her existence, which may be destabilised in a moment even by an entirely trivial factor. Francie's laughter, in turn, articulates her sense of vulnerability to forces beyond her control. It should be noted, however, that it lacks the hysterical quality underscored in all the previously analysed novels. Despite bringing the awareness of existential frailty, it appears to be rather affirmative.

A palpable experience of human facticity incites laughter also from the female protagonist of *Barbarous Tongue* (1963). While visiting her lover's sister, pregnant Frieda is assailed by a pang of acute pain:

> Then I did a crazy thing. I giggled. I couldn't help it. 'Moaning and groaning,' I gasped. 'Here we are moaning and groaning,' I choked, 'and shivering and gasping and groaning.' I was so shaken with

> mirth that when Barbara began to shake and so I thought she was
> joining me in the joke. (Duckworth 1963, 141)

In line with Nietzsche's concept, laughter becomes here literally intertwined
with suffering and communicates Frieda's anxiety at the confrontation with her
own animal physicality. It undoubtedly enables the woman to distance herself
from pain, but also exposes her weakness and even ridiculousness in reliance
on the body.

Apart from disclosing personal states, laughter has its place also in the portrayal of interpersonal relationships in Duckworth's fiction. In another scene
in *Barbarous Tongue*, Frieda and her lover lie alongside each other after a sexual
intercourse when the man suddenly starts to laugh:

> I felt him laughing in his chest. Waves of laughter came out from
> him, rolling over my face in tobacco breath and that new breath
> in which I caught my own animal scent. I felt that if he didn't stop
> I would drown. (Duckworth 1963, 24).

The sea imagery throws into relief the violent and threatening character of John's
laughter, emphasising the imbalance of power in their relationship, a prime concern of the entire novel, which depicts Frieda's journey out of submission to male
authority into budding autonomy. It marks his indisputable position of ascendancy over Frieda and aims to objectify the woman, reminding her of her brute
corporeality and instilling in her a sense of inferiority.

Whereas in *Barbarous Tongue* it manifests domination, striking a chord with
the superiority theory, Duckworth offers also more positive instances of laughter
that builds a sense of community between people. One of them can be found
in *Married Alive*, when the heroine and her lover are driving back home soon
after getting married:

> They have driven some distance in silence and are almost at the
> spot where the tui died before Francie begins to laugh. Gently first,
> then wildly, with an edge of hysteria. Sidney pursues his lips and
> frowns concernedly. Then he begins to laugh too. Tears fill his eyes
> and blot the view ahead. The van veers drunkenly to the centre
> of the road and back again. He blinks and snorts. 'Well, anyway,

> we're married,' he says at last. 'Don't forget.' How could I possibly forget?' (Duckworth 1985, 97)

It is necessary to indicate that the novel creates a vision of human relationships as a site of unremitting threat and conflict. In epidemic-stricken New Zealand, any bond with another person involves the risk of infection, insanity and possibly death, a situation that breeds mutual hostility and incites people to violence: "The injuries of love until now have remained decently internal. On the whole. Now they blossom on cheek and brow, in scars and bruises" (Duckworth 1985, 14). The echoes of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic are taken to extremes in the scene of the couple's wedding ceremony, which draws an explicit parallel between marriage and death, with a bizarre clerk grotesquely mistaking the words of the oath: "By the authority invested in me! – the old man declares belatedly – I pronounce you all – dust to dust" (Duckworth 1985, 97). As the dialogue between Francie and Sidney implies, their ride back home brings the realisation of their new condition. Each of them has to confront the threatening presence of the other, to which they are now condemned as husband and wife. While Francie's laughter initially appears malicious, its character changes once she is joined by Sidney. It evolves into a collective act, whereby the newly-weds reciprocally acknowledge their mutual existential condition: they are both mortal and exposed to the insurmountable hazards resulting from the encounter with a foreign consciousness.

In *Seeing Red* (1993), Vivienne and Isla become even more prominently united in their laughter. Throughout the novel, the relationship between the sisters is negatively influenced by their ties with other people. The latter has not come to terms with the death of her female lover, while the former is involved in a stormy affair with a man locked in an incestuous liaison with his own sister. Further, their bond is tainted by an undercurrent of rivalry going back to their adolescent competition for the affection of their father. This mutual tension is broken, if only for a moment, towards the end of the novel, when they unwillingly catch each other at their most vulnerable:

> Vivienne pushes her way past Isla's bulk and heaves above a foaming lavatory bowl. Stick strings of bile snake from her nostrils and she towels them away viciously. In the mirror alongside her she catches sight of Isla, concerned witness, bug-eyed with tears.

> Isla would like to be private about her tears. Vivienne would like
> to be private about her retching, but this time it isn't allowed. This
> time a smile crawls onto Isla's bloated face and an answering smile
> claws at Vivienne's top lip. Linked by messiness, like pedestrians
> caught in the same downpour, they have the sense to laugh at each
> other. (Duckworth 1993, 166)

Given to a fit of vomiting and crying, Vivienne and Isla find themselves in a sit-
uation where their bodies take over control, reminding the women of their fac-
ticity and the restrictions that it imposes upon them. The focus on the biological
dimension of existence is especially prominent in the case of Vivienne, who, being
pregnant, senses her physicality with particular force. The pregnant body itself
is often associated with the grotesque (Russo 1995, 65), primarily due to the porous
boundaries between self and other. Here, vomiting, described in quite graphic
detail, makes it appear ungainly and incontinent. For Isla, in turn, crying signi-
fies an exposure of weakness that she has been striving to hide under the guise
of "a false strutting naked bravado" (Duckworth 1993, 120). Consequently, both
sisters lose a part of their self-dignity: first by encountering themselves as mere
objects at the whim of uncontrollable forces, and second by unwittingly reveal-
ing this vulnerability to the other one. Their laughter, in turn, expresses solidarity
in mutual misery. In Beauvoirian terms, it opens space for reciprocal recognition[2]
since each woman experiences her own existential ambiguity as "a sovereign and
unique subject amidst a universe of objects" (de Beauvoir 1948, 7) and "an object
for others" (de Beauvoir 1948, 7) by stepping into the role of both a laughing sub-
ject and an object laughed at. It is thus cathartic in the sense of allowing them, just
as Nietzschean laughter, to affirm their existential condition and establish a bond,
if only a fleeting one, based on the sense of community in suffering.

3. Conclusion

The paper has demonstrated that laughter in Duckworth's fiction is heavily
charged with existentialist overtones, usually accompanying the heroines in the
moments of existential crisis. In most of the novels, it is triggered by the expe-

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2   Understood by de Beauvoir as "free recognition of each individual in the other, each one posit-
ing both itself and the other as object and as subject in a reciprocal movement" (2011, 159).

rience of alienation, when the world strikes the women as absurd, unhomely and hostile, or self-alienation. Shaken out of self-complacency, they laugh when their pretensions to power and self-control clash with their vulnerability and facticity as human beings. As such, laughter functions as a harbinger of enhanced self-awareness and insight into the truth of existence. Most importantly, just as nausea in Sartre's famous novel, laughter in Duckworth's fiction figures also as a physical expression of anxiety arising at the prospect of freedom and responsibility for shaping one's own life. Finally, apart from playing a revelatory role, it serves also as a tool of interpersonal communication: either a weapon through which one may assert superiority over the other person or, quite the contrary, a facilitator of reciprocal recognition that binds the characters together.

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The Goldsmiths Prize and Its Conceptualization
of Experimental Literature

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Abstract: In the aftermath of a critical debate regarding the Man Booker Prize's adoption of 'readability' as the main criterion of literary value, Goldsmiths College established a new literary prize. The Goldsmiths Prize was launched in 2013 as a celebration of 'fiction that breaks the mould or extends the possibilities of the novel form.' Throughout its six editions, the prize has been awarded to such writers as Ali Smith, Nicola Barker and Eimear McBride, and has attracted a lot of media attention. Annually, its jury have written press features praising the shortlisted books, while invited novelists have given lectures on the condition of the novel. Thanks to its quickly won popularity, the Goldsmiths Prize has become the main institution promoting – and conceptualizing – 'experimental' fiction in Britain. This article aims to examine all the promotional material accompanying each edition – including jury statements, press releases and commissioned articles in the *New Statesman* – in order to analyze how the prize defines experimentalism.

Literary experimentalism is a notion both notoriously difficult to define and generally disliked by those to whose work it is often applied. B.S. Johnson famously stated that 'to most reviewers [it] is almost always a synonym for "unsuccessful"' (1973, 19). Among other acclaimed avant-garde authors who defied the label were Raymond Federmann and Ronald Sukenick (Bray, Gibbon, and McHale 2012, 2-3). Nonetheless, recent years have seen a modest resurgence of that rather elusive term, which has been used extensively in *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* (2012), edited by Joe Bray, Alison Gibbons and Brian McHale, in Julie Armstrong's *Experimental Literature: An Introduction for Readers and Writers* (2014) and in *Experimental Literature: A Collection of Statements* (2018), edited by Jeffrey R Di Leo and

Warren Motte. In *Avant-Garde Possibilities – B.S. Johnson and the Sixties Generation* (2014), Julia Jordan speaks of a 'rehabilitation' of the notion of experimental literature (4).

To begin with a most concise definition, J.A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* conceives of 'experimentalism' as an 'intellectual/ imaginative/creative activity which entails the exploration of new concepts, techniques, etc., which go beyond convention' (2013, 261). The editors of *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* begin their consideration of the vexed term by stressing the breadth of its scope, which encompasses a number of polar opposites: 'unfettered improvisation and the rigorous application of rules, accidental composition and hyper-rational design, free invention and obsessively faithful duplication, extreme conceptualism and extreme materiality, multimediality and media-specificity, being "born digital" and being handmade' (Bray, Gibbons, and McHale 2012, 1). In spite of its multiple realisations, Bray, Gibbons and McHale argue, experimental literature is invariably committed to 'raising fundamental questions about the very nature and being of verbal art itself': 'What *is* literature, and what could it be? What are its functions, its limitations, its possibilities?' By doing so, it demonstrates its weariness of the received conventions of mainstream fiction and 'lays everything open to challenge, reconceptualization and reconfiguration.' Experimentation ensures that literature remains a live organism – it is 'the engine of … change and renewal' (1). Since experimental literature is all about defying conventions and reinventing oneself, it cannot be subsumed under a firm definition or reduced to a closed set of formal devices. However, an examination of the contents of the earlier mentioned critical works makes it possible to distinguish several recurrent formal features and techniques that are closely associated with literary experimentation. Among them are linguistic innovation, unusual points of view and narrative patterns, metafiction, proceduralism, appropriation, multimodality, all forms of hybridity and the use of digital media (Armstrong 2014, 8-9; Bray, Gibbons, and McHale 2012, 3-16).

In Britain, the institution which has recently had the greatest influence on conceptualizing literary experimentation is the Goldsmiths Prize, established in 2013 as a celebration of 'fiction that breaks the mould or extends the possibilities of the novel form' (GP 2013). In order to determine the meaning of that vague description, I shall analyze the promotional material accompanying each edition – including jury statements, annual lectures, the Fantasy

Prize (awarded in retrospect to older works which would have been worthy of the Goldsmiths Prize) and the commissioned articles in the prize's media patron *New Statesman*. Following an overview of the first six editions of the prize, I will establish which features of literary experimentation are singled out most often in the promotional material and which canonical authors of the avant-garde are deemed particularly influential for the shape of the experimental British novel today.

Before embarking on the outlined tasks, it is necessary to acknowledge other academic attempts to examine the politics and the cultural functions of literary prizes. To my knowledge, the only book-length studies of British literary prizes are Richard Todd's *Consuming Fictions: The Booker Prize and the Fiction in Britain Today* (1996) and an edited volume by *Wolfgang Görtschacher* and Holger Michael Klein titled *Fiction and Literary Prizes in Great Britain* (2006). Reflecting on the major success of the Booker Prize in generating enormous sales figures for its winners (such as A.S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance*), Todd diagnoses the steady commercialisation of 'serious literary fiction' as a result of the way it was marketed and received in the 1990s (1996, 128). A decade later, James F. English and John Frow note in 'Literary Authorship and Celebrity Culture' that literary prizes, particularly the Booker, 'have become so ubiquitous since the late 1970s that jokes about there being more prizes than authors are now a cliché of literary journalism' (2006, 46). They argue that 'the explosive growth of book awards' has made them a vital part of the 'institutional apparatus' that 'has been transformative of the British fiction scene.' According to English and Frow, literary prizes have had a significant influence not only on the sales figures of the awarded novels but also on the formation of the contemporary canon (2006, 47). The latter aspect of literary prizes is the focus of my article 'The Man Booker Prize and the Emerging Canon of Contemporary British Fiction' (2014), in which I consider the so called 'Booker effect' in relation to a given work's inclusion in the critical and the curricular canons of British literature. Most recently, Katy Shaw has assessed the current cultural function of literary prizes in a chapter in *The Routledge Companion to Twenty-First Century Literary Fiction* (2019). Shaw reports on the controversy around the 'exponential expan[sion]' of literary awards, which hinges on the prizes' perceived alliance with commerce rather than culture (2019, 335). It is precisely the context which gave rise to the establishment of the Goldsmiths Prize, to which I shall now turn.

Entry rules and regulations

The founder of the Goldsmiths Prize is the Goldsmiths College of the University of London in association with *New Statesman*. Its annual commitment is to judge submitted novels (collections of short stories are not eligible) in English written by authors resident in the UK or the Republic of Ireland (for the minimum of three years) and published by a UK-based publisher between 1 November and 31 October of the following year.[3] A shortlist of six novels is chosen by a four-person judging panel and announced in September, whereas the winner receives the prize at a ceremony in November ("Goldsmiths Prize").[4] As a result, the Goldsmiths shortlist is announced relatively early – before those of Costa and Baileys, but usually a couple of weeks later than the Man Booker. The early announcement gives it an edge over most other prizes in terms of media attention and offers it the chance to set a certain prize trend in a given year, as was definitely the case with the inaugural victory of Eimear McBride's *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing*. The Goldsmiths' prize money – 10,000 pounds – made it the twenty-third most lucrative prize in the UK and Ireland in 2013, far behind the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award (worth 100,000 euros) and the Man Booker (50,000 pounds) (Stock and Rigden 2013).

Rationale for the prize

In the mission statement on the official website, the founders of the Goldsmiths Prize declare that the aims of the prize are 'to celebrate the qualities of creative daring associated with the University and to reward fiction that breaks the mould or extends the possibilities of the novel form.' They also commit to selecting each year 'a book that is deemed genuinely novel and which embodies the spirit of invention that characterizes the genre at its best.' The word 'experimental' is used only once, in inverted commas. That common label, it is suggested, is misleading, as it implies that formal innovation is merely an 'eccentric deviation' rather than an ongoing process inscribed in the very definition of the novel – that 'most flexible and varied of genres' (GP).

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3   Originally, during the first six editions of the prize, only British and Irish authors were eligible. Foreigners resident in the UK and Ireland will be eligible beginning with the 2019 edition.

4   From now, the official website of the Goldsmiths Prize will be indicated as GP in all parenthetical references.

There are three quotations serving as epigraphs to the mission statement:

> 'All great works of literature either dissolve a genre or invent one' (Walter Benjamin) 'I have laid a plan for something new, quite out of the beaten track' (Laurence Sterne) Novel, n. Something new (OED)

In each of them, emphasis is placed on novelty, originality and invention. The quotation from Sterne is employed not only because of its content but also on account of its author. Sterne, alongside Denis Diderot, is invoked as the artistic patron of the prize. The founders emphasize that the Goldsmiths was established in the tercentenary year of their birth and is designed to 'champion fiction that shares something of the exuberant inventiveness and restlessness with conventions manifest in *Tristram Shandy* and *Jacques the Fatalist*' ('About'). The connection with Sterne is further indicated by the logo of the prize, which is an illustration of the line in the air traced with a stick by one of the characters in the novel.

The mission statement ends with an assertion of yet another goal – to revive a wider public discussion about the novel. It does not mention, however, that the context out of which the prize originated was the acrimonious and surprisingly heated debate in the media about the Man Booker Prize shortlist in 2011. What sparked the controversy was the omission of several of that year's most acclaimed novels (including Alan Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child*) followed by the chair of the judges Stella Rimington's statement about having adopted 'readability' as the main criterion of selection and a fellow judge Chris Mullin's remark about favouring novels that 'zip along' (Flood 2014). As a result, the Man Booker was widely accused by writers and literary editors of 'dumbing down,' while the jury was charged with 'self-congratulatory philistinism' and 'aggressive populism' (Lawless 2011, Robson 2014). Within a year after the shortlist controversy, two new literary prizes were established – the Goldsmiths and the Folio Prize, both in direct response to the Man Booker's recently tarnished reputation. The Folio's mission statement was explicit about that connection – the founders announced that the prize would favour 'quality and ambition' where, as '[the Man Booker's] administrator and this year's judges illustrate, it now prioritises a notion of 'readability'' (Singh 2011). *New Statesman*'s Leo Robson

maintained that both prizes had been initiated 'with the aim not of stealing the Booker's throne but of excelling where the Booker ha[d] failed' – in rewarding 'great but unfriendly book[s].'

In an accompanying article in the *New Statesman* entitled 'There Can Never Be Too Many Literary Prizes,' writer and Goldsmiths College professor of creative writing Blake Morrison extended the list of the new initiative's literary patrons by listing works that would have competed for the award in the past: *Ulysses* and *Jacob's Room* in 1922, *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Golden Notebook* in 1962, and *Flaubert's Parrot* in 1984.[5] Morrison also enumerated contemporary authors who would have probably won the prize in recent years: David Mitchell, Ali Smith, Nicola Barker, Geoff Dyer and Tom McCarthy.[6] Morrison also made an important point about what differentiates the Goldsmiths from the multitude of other literary prizes in Britain. Whereas prizes such as the Man Booker, the Costa, the Baileys, the James Tait Black, the Somerset Maugham, the Guardian First Book Award are committed to 'excellence' and aim to reward the best novel by an English-language writer, female author, debutante or about a certain topic, the Goldsmiths 'highlights what's innovative, ground-breaking, iconoclastic' (Morrison 2013a).

2013

The shortlist for the inaugural edition was composed of the following novels: Jim Crace's *Harvest*, Lars Iyer's *Exodus*, Eimear McBride's *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing*, David Peace's *Red or Dead*, Ali Smith's *Artful* and Philip Terry's *tapestry*. The prominence of little known authors, their independent publishers and the minor overlap with the earlier announced Man Booker shortlist (*Harvest* alone) confirmed the Goldsmiths' distinct identity and its dedication to championing novelty and innovation. Each shortlisted novel was given a brief endorsement by a member of the jury, a tradition which has been cultivated in all the subsequent editions. The two notes most directly appealing to the stated aims of the prize were Jonathan Derbyshire's praise of *Artful* and Gabriel Josipovici's statement on *tapestry*. Smith's novel was described as a work of 'restless shape-shifting' which 'invites us to think again about what the novel can

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5   The first three went on to win the Goldsmiths' Fantasy Prize.

6   Morrison assessment of these authors' experimental credentials was quite prophetic. Both Smith's and McCarthy's first novels after the launch of the prize were shortlisted, whereas Smith's second won in 2018, Barker also won the prize.

be.' Terry's book, called 'strange,' 'weird' and 'odd' at different points of the three-sentence note, was situated in the lineage of Italo Calvino and Raymond Queneau and praised for its linguistic eclecticism (GP 2013).

In a *Times Literary Supplement* blog, Toby Lichtig (2013) called the shortlist 'genuinely intriguing' and 'bursting with innovation, individuality and fresh ideas about the possibilities for fiction.' He declared that the shortlist fulfilled the promise contained in the Goldsmiths' mission statement and rather than attempting to take the place of the Man Booker it aimed to reward 'genuinely novel novels.' In *New Statesman*, Philip Maughan (2013b) quoted extensively from David Shields's anti-novelistic manifesto *Reality Hunger* and noted that the Goldsmiths Prize might breathe life into the novel and save it from the prophesied demise. Maughan offered his own prediction about the effect of the newly established prize: 'It will encourage young writers to write boldly, to remain faithful to their instincts, and to be formally inventive. It will provide a breakwater against the common fear of a culture in which artists are dogged by the constant fear of Amazon reviews.'

On 13 November the first winner was announced in the New Cross campus of Goldsmiths College. The judging panel chaired by Tim Parnell selected McBride's *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing*. Parnell called the Irish author's debut 'boldly original and utterly compelling … just the kind of book the Goldsmiths Prize was created to celebrate' (Bury 2013). In her acceptance speech, McBride talked about her disenchantment with the publishing industry, which for nine years consistently rejected her novel. 'To have a prize like this is a really wonderful thing to encourage writers to be adventurous … to encourage publishers to be adventurous … and readers to be adventurous,' she declared (Bury). Several press reports commented on McBride's Joycean inspirations and her invention of an individualised language spoken by the narrator as she develops, in the course of the novel, from a two-year-old child to a woman in her twenties. The only sceptical account of the inaugural edition of the prize was Jon Day's article in *The Telegraph*. Although Day (2013) did not express reservations about the jury's choice, he questioned the very idea of the 'promotion of experimentalism as an end itself,' which he saw as 'paradoxical' and potentially 'self-defeating.' 'What good is iconoclasm,' he asked, 'if it isn't of any worth in and of itself?'

If one of the central objectives of the Goldsmiths was attracting wider attention to (otherwise frequently overlooked) innovative fiction, the inaugural edition of the prize could not have been more successful. McBride's appearance on the short-

list and her later victory elicited a number of reviews in the most important English-speaking newspapers and literary magazines. When McBride went on to beat Donna Tartt, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Jhumpa Lahiri and win the Baileys Prize, critical interest in *A Girl* surged again. The novel continued to win consecutive literary prizes in 2014: the Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year, the Desmond Elliott Prize, the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize; it was also included on the shortlist for the first edition of the Folio Prize. That staggering success of McBride's challenging debut must be attributed primarily to the Goldsmiths Prize.

2014

In the shortlist for the second edition of the prize, Ali Smith was recognised once again – for her new novel *How to Be Both*. The remaining five nominees were Rachel Cusk's *Outline*, Will Eaves's *The Absent Therapist*, Howard Jacobson's *J*, Paul Kingsnorth's *The Wake* and Zia Haider Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know*. Although that shortlist also contained two debut novels (by Kingsnorth and Rahman), it was less niche than the previous one. It also had a greater overlap with the selection of the Man Booker judging panel: three weeks before the announcement of the Goldsmiths' shortlist, both Jacobson and Smith were shortlisted for the Man Booker, whereas Kingsnorth had appeared on the Booker's longlist. In their eulogies, two jurors traced the influence of modernism in the shortlisted works: Tom Gatti called *The Absent Therapist* 'a slim but remarkable novel, somewhere between a modernist poem and an 'Overheard on the Underground' collage,' whereas Kirsty Gunn referred to *How to Be Both* as a 'renovation of the novel genre' and 'a stunning example of literary inventiveness,' whose structure is indebted to Virginia Woolf's compositional 'corridors.' In his note on *The Wake*, Geoff Dyer appears to concede that formal inventiveness comes at a cost – at first, he warns, the novel may strike the reader as 'unreadably off-putting' (GP 2014).

Most press coverage of the shortlist cited the speech of the head of the Goldsmiths' jury, Francis Spufford, who emphasized the prize's dedication to reward innovative writing and described the six chosen novels as 'captur[ing] so much of the versatility with which the novel, these days, is being stretched, knotted, rejigged, re-invented' (GP 2014). One month after the announcement of Smith's and Jacobson's Man Booker defeat against Richard Flanagan, *How to Be Both* was awarded the Goldsmiths Prize. In the chair of the judges' speech, Spufford declared

that the decisive criterion adopted by the panel was the books' success in making 'formal innovation' contribute to the 'the reader's pleasure' (GP 2014). The emphasis on the pleasure of reading may sound reminiscent of Rimington's contentious remark about the Man Booker's appreciation of readability. Yet Spufford clearly indicated that what was rewarded was the ability to bridge experimentation and delight rather than the book's capacity for simply engaging the reader. Another member of the panel, Tom Gatti (2014), made a similar point in his commentary in *New Statesman*, where he conceded that the jury decided not to 'reward writers simply for novelty: these books also had to have a life and truth of their own.' Spufford's and Gatti's remarks may be interpreted as a defence against Jon Day's earlier noted criticism (of rewarding innovation for its own sake) and an assertion of the prize's dedication to innovation leading to excellence rather to innovation for its own sake. On receiving the award, Smith highly praised the founders of the Goldsmiths for celebrating the 'multivariousness' of the novel (Flood 2014).

Most accounts of the 2014 verdict accentuated the experimental structure of *How to Be Both* (its order of reading depends on chance), which is indebted to interactive fictions like Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* and card-shuffle novels like B.S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates* (a frequent reference in reviews in the British press). The novel was met with unanimous critical praise and went on to be shortlisted for the Folio Prize and to win the Baileys Women's Prize (like McBride the previous year) and the Costa Award for Best Novel. As a result, Smith won both the Goldsmiths and the Costa, awards which are located on the two extremes of the literary prize spectrum – one rewarding innovative (and hence 'difficult') fiction and the latter recognising, in Leo Robson's (2014) words, the 'most enjoyable' book of the year. Smith's victory could thus be interpreted as evidence that formal experimentation does not preclude readability and mass appeal.[7]

2015

The 2015 shortlist contained no names of winners or nominees from the previous editions of the prize. Alongside the novels of three young but already acclaimed authors – Tom McCarthy's *Satin Island* (the only nominee that year to have made

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7   Before the announcement of the Baileys and Costa Awards, Leo Robson (2014) declared in *New Statesman* that Smith is a rare kind of author whose single work might win such diverse prizes as the Man Booker, the Goldsmiths, the Folio and the Costa. He called that phenomenon 'the strange case of Ali Smith.'

the shortlist of the Man Booker), Adam Thirlwell's *Lurid & Cute* and Kevin Barry's *Beatlebone* – the shortlist featured two novels of experienced but relatively little-known writers, Richard Beard's *Acts of the Assassins* and Magnus Mills's *The Field of the Cloth of Gold*, and one debut – Max Porter's *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*. It was the first shortlist without novels submitted by independent publishers or, even more surprisingly, without books written by female authors. Several articles quoted the official statement of the chair of judges Josh Cohen, who praised all the nominated books for their boldness and originality, and noted that the one thing that those six 'fascinatingly diverse novels' had in common was their 'very contemporary concern with life at its furthest edges' (Armitstead 2015). Four out of six jurors' endorsements emphasized experimental qualities of the nominated works. Jon McGregor commended *Acts of the Assassins* for being 'structurally daring' and for challenging 'received ideas' about religion and narrative. Leo Robson, in turn, calls *Satin Island* a 'thrillingly inventive' and radically hybrid novel, which creates a 'genre of its own.' Stylistic originality and linguistic inventiveness were praised by Cohen and Eimear McBride in their notes on *Lurid & Cute* and *Beatlebone*, respectively (GP 2015).

The latter work was announced the winner on 11 November. The second novel, from the 2013 winner of the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for *City of Bohane,* is a fictional account of John Lennon's retreat into his private-owned little Irish island, where he plans to undergo primal scream therapy. The chair described *Beatlebone* as an achievement in 'weaving and blurring fiction and life – a novel of stunning lyric and cerebral intensity' (GP 2015). When accepting the award, Barry called it 'a really cool prize, because it rewards innovation.' 'And if the novel lacks innovation,' he added, 'it's fucked' (Gatti 2015). Interestingly, both in critical and commercial terms *Beatlebone*'s post-Goldsmiths career was outdone by *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers*, which was later shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award and won the 2016 International Dylan Thomas Prize, and elicited much praise in Britain, Ireland and the US.

2016

Rachel Cusk's *Transit*, Deborah Levy's *Hot Milk*, Eimear McBride's *The Lesser Bohemians* (all from major publishing houses), Mike McCormack's *Solar Bones*, Sarah Ladipo Manyika's *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun* and Anakana Schofield's *Martin John* (the last three released by independent publishers)

were on the shortlist of the 2016 edition. After previous year's critique of an all-male cast of nominees, the jury (for the first time composed of more women than men) selected five works by female authors. Three out of six endorsements – of *Transit*, *Hot Milk* and *Solar Bones* – underlined the apparent realism and conventionalism of the work in question, which, on closer reading, is revealed to offer an inventive play with language and style. *The Lesser Bohemians* was praised (by chair of judges Blake Morrison) for linguistic originality consisting in the employment of a 'fractured syntax.' Bernardine Evaristo described *Like a Mule…* as a novel that renounces plot and uses multiple narrators and 'subtle shifts in points of view,' while Joanna Walsh commended *Martin John* for a 'virtuoso evocation of troubling states of mind' through the application of the stream-of-consciousness mode. Most of the press coverage of the shortlist quoted remarks from Morrison's official statement, which stressed that all six novels 'show the same desire to push boundaries and take risks' and credits the Goldsmiths Prize for overcoming the 'stigma of 'difficulty'' from which 'innovative novels used to suffer' (GP 2016).

In the chair of judges' speech during the announcement ceremony, Morrison continued to ruminate on the prize's legacy. He remembered his initial scepticism about its chance of coming into being and asserted its notable success, which he attributed to the founders having 'found a niche and met a need.' While the plentiful other prizes 'celebrate the best,' Goldsmiths 'celebrates the new.' What that quality consists in, Morrison admits, is 'tricky' to pinpoint by any available labels:

> 'Experimental' is a term that even authors to whom it's attached tend to disavow, because of the associations with difficulty, impenetrability, art more to be endured than enjoyed. 'Novelty' won't do, either – proverbially, novelty soon wears off, and its associations are with trifles and cheap knick-knacks. 'Innovation' is better, though when you hear it on the lips of politicians and business leaders it loses its lustre. I prefer Laurence Sterne when he talked of the new being something 'quite out of the beaten track.'

Besides Sterne, the patron of the prize, Morrison mentioned Joyce, to whom two of the novels on the shortlist, both by fellow Irish writers, are clearly indebted – *The Lesser Bohemians* and *Solar Bones* (GP 2016).

The speech concluded with the announcement of the latter novel's victory. As a result Mike McCormack became the third Irish winner out of four. Most articles emphasized that fact and noted that despite the prize's English background, there had not been a single English recipient. In an interview with *New Statesman,* the author of *Solar Bones* argued that British fiction was 'dominated by an intellectual conservatism,' while Irish literature was experiencing a 'rejuvenation of the experimental pulse' as a result of having 'digest[ed] the legacy' of its towering modernists: James Joyce, Flann O'Brien and Samuel Beckett (GP 2016). The formally innovative aspect of the winning novel which most newspapers highlighted (often in the very title of the article) was its single-sentence structure.

2017

The jury chaired by Naomi Wood selected the following shortlist: Nicola Barker's *H(A)PPY*, Sara Baume's *A Line Made by Walking*, Kevin Davey's *Playing Possum*, Jon McGregor's *Reservoir 13*, Gwendoline Riley's *First Love* and Will Self's *Phone*. The result was a balanced mixture of established authors (Barker, McGregor and Self) and lesser known figures, with independent publishers gaining the upper hand. For the first time, there was no overlap with the shortlist of the Man Booker Prize, with *Reservoir 13* being the only nominee to have made the Booker's longlist. Speaking on behalf of the jury, Wood declared that all the chosen books challenge 'the received idea of how a novel should be written' and 'break the rules on continuity, time, character arcs, perspective, voice, typographical conventions and structure.' Individual jurors also praised the 'linguistic experimentation' and 'acrobatics' of *First Love*, *Phone* and *Playing Possum*. A.L. Kennedy's endorsement of *Playing Possum* placed the most emphasis on its formal innovativeness; besides the linguistic daring, she noted its generic hybridity, temporal instability and 'mosaic plot,' which amount to a 'joyful exploration of the novel's boundaries as a form.' In his endorsement of *H(A)PPY*, Barry called it a 'novel-as-object' whose typographical experiments and unique design 'always ha[ve] a narrative purpose' – that of evoking a 'believable future world … enslaved by the blandness of its technology' (GP 2017).

On 15 November 2017, Wood announced that Nicola Barker was the first English winner of the prize. From the shortlist dominated by 'wildness' and the idea of 'transformation,' the chair explained, *H(A)PPY* was chosen as the book that had – in line with the rubric of the prize – best 'expanded the possibilities

of the novel form.' Wood was also quoted calling the winner a '3D-sculpture of a novel' which 'makes the case for the novel as a physical form and an object of art.' The chair also referred to *H(A)PPY* as a perfect example of the kind of book that the prize was established to celebrate – one where 'innovation of form' serves to 'enrich the story,' as if in defence of the possible charge of promoting experimentation for experimentation's sake (GP 2017). Wood's apparent insistence on the accessibility of Barker's work was indirectly countered by the author herself, who told *New Statesman* after receiving the prize: 'I'm a niche writer and see no harm in it. I *like* niches' (Bourke 2017). Sam Leith (2017), writing for *The Spectator*, praised Barker as a writer whose every work so far had been 'completely original.' 'If anyone is writing fiction that deserves to be called experimental at the moment,' he declared, 'it's Nicola Barker.'

2018

Rachel Cusk's *Kudos*, Will Eaves's *Murmur*, Guy Gunaratne's *In Our Mad and Furious City*, Gabriel Josipovici's *The Cemetery in Barnes*, Olivia Laing's *Crudo* and Robin Robertson's *The Long Take* were the six novels on the shortlist chosen by the jury chaired by Adam Mars-Jones. Among the nominees were three novels from independent publishers and one which had already been shortlisted for the Man Booker – the verse novel *The Long Take*. In the customary endorsements, only one book was noted for its linguistic ingenuity: Elif Shafak praised Robertson's 'mixture of verse and prose,' calling 'the beauty of the language' instantly seductive. Deborah Levy commended *Kudos* for introducing a narrator who is 'new to literature' – 'working hard for her readers, yet never present[ing] herself as less vulnerable than her co-narrators.' *Murmur* was deemed by Levy a 'fully achieved literary experiment, digging deep into all the dimensions of human consciousness,' its originality rooted more in the 'multiple ideas' it artfully combines rather than in a specific formal device. Finally, *Crudo* was described by Mars-Jones as 'novelistic fusion cuisine' – a hybrid of 'life writing and literary ventriloquism,' indebted more to the 'anarchic voice of Kathy Acker' than to the restrained tone of Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway (GP 2018).

Commenting on the shortlist in *The Guardian*, Mars-Jones (2018) quoted a passage from Proust which the jury had adopted as a guideline – 'artificial novelty' is often 'less effective than a repetition designed to reveal a new truth.' Therefore, what the jurors chose to reward was not 'innovation as such,' but texts 'able

to take fresh possession of the form's resources.' When announcing Robertson's victory, Mars-Jones reiterated that Goldsmiths Prize 'sets out to reward … new possibilities for the novel, which doesn't mean novelty for its own sake.' *The Long Take* met that criterion by managing to 'tap into a wide range of poetic forms, traditions and tones of voice' (GP 2018).

Guest lectures

Since 2016, the announcement of the Goldsmiths Prize shortlist has been accompanied by a guest lecture delivered by an established author associated with literary experimentation. The first such speech was given by Howard Jacobson. A former Goldsmiths nominee and Man Booker Prize winner, Jacobson (2016) defended his genre of choice – the comic novel, arguing that 'the novel is never more itself … than when its heroes fall drastically short of that heroism whose function is to right wrongs, settle scores and put the fractured times together again.' He argued that failure is the main subject of some of the greatest nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels, as exemplified by the works of Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Joseph Conrad and James Joyce. The novel is at its best, according to Jacobson, when it relies on comedy to expose the futility of the world and reject myth. By 'exult[ing] in the meaninglessness of things,' the novel is able to 'liberate' its readers from the illusion that 'we are here for some sacred purpose.' Conspicuously absent from Jacobson's lecture was any mention of experimentation, which is perhaps indicative of his scepticism about the notion itself. Except for Joyce, the author of *The Finkler Question* failed to invoke any usual suspects of the literary avant-garde, focusing primarily on Shakespeare, Jane Austen and Saul Bellow.

In 2017, the annual Goldsmiths lecture was offered by Ali Smith, who made more effort to engage with the politics of the prize. The driving question of her speech was why the novel matters in the age of Donald Trump. When the world of politics imposes fictions upon us, Smith (2017) argues, 'fiction lets us read and understand such fictions.' The novels best suited for that purpose are those that 'invite, or demand, that their reader take part in their making, be present in them, be creative in response to them.' Without applying any label to such works, she echoed Roland Barthes's privileging of writerly to readerly texts. On the other hand, she stated, without elaborating, that the novel also matters 'because it's a really good read,' which gestures towards the readerly and the

less demanding. That paradox is arguably embodied in Smith's own writing, which, as has been noted, was capable of winning the Goldsmiths Prize and the Costa, which are on the opposing poles of the literary spectrum. In order for 'word' to affect 'world,' she implies, literature should challenge the status quo without alienating its readers by inessential formal tricks. Unlike Jacobson, she made copious reference to literary figures associated with various aspects of experimentation: Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, Muriel Spark and Georges Perec. Among the many answers to her question about the novel's continued relevance was one mirroring Jacobson's argument: 'The novel matters because it does and it doesn't matter in a world where we do and don't matter.'

The lecture given in 2018 by British-Turkish writer and Goldsmiths juror Elif Shafak was in many ways an elaboration on Smith's argument. Shafak (2018) suggested several more answers to the question why the novel matters: because 'it turns empathy into resistance,' 'gives a voice to the voiceless' and 'punches little holes in the wall of indifference that surrounds us.' Her highly autobiographical and political speech called for an engaged literature, which constitutes 'a free, egalitarian space where a diversity of voices can be heard' and which defends 'our core values,' such as 'pluralism, freedom of speech, minority rights, separation of powers, democracy.' Shafak's lecture does not address literary form, reducing the novel to a vehicle for social and political activism in defence of the right causes. Her statement that 'novels have to swim against the tide' comes closest to addressing the principles of the Goldsmiths Prize but its context makes it clear that the remark referred to literature's political rather than aesthetic stance. It is interesting to note that out of the three Goldsmiths lectures organized so far, two have practically ignored the specificity of the literature that the prize had been established to promote.

Fantasy Prize

In 2015, the Goldsmiths committee launched an ongoing competition entitled the Fantasy Prize, whose aim is to reward texts which 'embody the spirit of the Goldsmiths Prize' but were published before its inception. The selections are made by the prize's 'judges, nominees, winners and friends.' Eligible works need to have been written between 1759 (the publication year of *Tristram Shandy*) and 2013 by British or Irish authors. Although the official introduction speaks of the wish to celebrate examples of 'daring and innovative fiction that has had less

attention than it deserves,' several of the twenty-two works rewarded to date are widely considered milestones of experimental literature. Sterne's classic is, by definition, the oldest winner. Its 'restlessness with conventions,' argues Tim Parnell in a short eulogy, demonstrates the 'near-limitless possibilities' of the novel. The other predictable winners are *Ulysses* (1922) and Flann O'Brien's *At-Swim-Two Birds* (1939)[8]: the former called 'the greatest single event in the history of the modern novel' (bar Proust) and a dominant influence on works as diverse as William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and Georges Perec's *Life a User's Manual*, while the latter was credited as the 'brilliant forerunner of whole swathes of formal innovation,' particularly metafiction as practised decades later by Italo Calvino and others (GP, n.d.). As for other canonical works but not necessarily associated with formal experimentation, there is Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1920) and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1921).

The 1920s, customarily regarded as the decade of literary high modernism, and the 1960s – the decade of the British post-war avant-garde – prove the two most productive time-frames for experimental novels. The earlier-mentioned works by Joyce, Lawrence and Woolf are representatives of the former, while Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), Ann Quin's *Berg* (1964) and B.S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates* (1969) exemplify the latter. If J.G. Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970) is also recognized as a product of the sixties, that decade gains the upper hand. Burgess's novel is praised by Blake Morrison in his brief critical eulogy primarily for its 'linguistic brilliance.' Andrea Levy calls *Berg* Quin's 'homage to the Nouveau Roman novelists she admired,' while Jon McGregor insists that *The Unfortunates* is far more than a card-shuffle experiment and that its 'real boldness … lay in its evocation of the dislocation wrought by grief.' *The Atrocity Exhibition* is one of the very few laureates to receive a double laudation. Leo Robson calls Ballard 'a descendant of Sterne,' 'a disciple of Joyce and Kafka and Borges' and 'a source of inspiration to any novelist' who recognizes the limitations of realism. Will Self, in turn, refers to Ballard as 'incomparably the most important English novelist of the postwar period' and a 'flinty-eyed innovator,' who followed in the footsteps of Tristan Tzara and Alfred Jarry. The last winner associated with the 1960s avant-garde is Christine Brooke-Rose, awarded the

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8   Flann O'Brien is the only double winner of Fantasy Prize. His *The Third Policeman*, written in the late 1930s but released only in 1967, is the second one.

Fantasy Prize for her last novel *Life, End Of* (2006) – the most recent of the 22 celebrated works. In her note of praise, Ali Smith deems Brooke-Rose 'a writer's writer's writer's writer,' whose 'novels are unlike anyone's writing in English before her.' 'She frees up the sentence,' Smith adds, 'by attention to and by playfulness with its grammatical component parts' (GP, n.d.).

Conclusions

An analysis of the variety of promotional material surrounding the Goldsmiths Prize since its inception in 2012 reveals a body of founding figures of experimental literature in Britain and Ireland, which – with the exception of Laurence Sterne – consists exclusively of twentieth-century authors. That group includes canonical modernists – such as James Joyce (a considerable influence on Eimear McBride and the other Irish winners of the prize), Virginia Woolf (often referenced in the context of Ali Smith's fiction), Flann O'Brien and Samuel Beckett – as well as the representatives of the 1960s avant-garde: B.S. Johnson (quoted as an influence on *How to Be Both*), Christine Brooke-Rose and J.G. Ballard. Among American authors who are occasionally referenced as important to contemporary fictional innovation are William Faulkner, Henry James and Kathy Acker. It is too early to speak of the emerging canon of contemporary experimentalists, but if Goldsmiths shortlists over the first six editions of the prize were to be a marker of avant-gardism, then that list would need to feature Eimear McBride, Ali Smith, Rachel Cusk and Will Eaves.[9]

In their shortlist eulogies, winner speeches and companion articles in the press, the jury often speak of novels 'pushing boundaries' and 'extending the possibilities' of the genre. The aspects of formal experimentation most frequently recognized in those texts are – in the given order – linguistic ingenuity, a challenge to generic categories (in line with the prize's earlier cited motto from Benjamin) and interweaving numerous voices. While only one endorsement praises the 'innovative subject matter' of the shortlisted novel (*Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun*), about a third of them stress the works' successful treatment of socially or politically challenging themes, their exploration of human consciousness or even their 'bright ring of truth' (GP 2016; GP 2014). Five eulo-

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9   Each of those writers won a place on the shortlists for their two consecutive works. Cusk achieved that distinction three times in a row – for each part of her *Outline* trilogy.

gies emphasize the emotional effect of the nominated novels by describing them as 'moving,' 'painful' or 'devastating.' A lot of emphasis has been placed on the non-conformity of the selected novels, which have been described as 'bold,' 'daring' and 'out of the beaten track' (the latter phrase also comes from one of the mottos – this time from Sterne). Nevertheless, following a disparaging remark made by Jon Day during the inaugural edition (about the 'promotion of experimentalism as an end itself'), one can observe a note of caution in the jurors' texts not to present the selected works as liable to such a charge. Since 2014, judges have accentuated the accessibility of their choices, talked of the need to bridge experimentation and readerly pleasure (Spufford), stressed that formal ingenuity should 'enrich the story' (Wood) and distanced themselves from praising 'novelty for its own sake' (Mars-Jones). Bernardine Evaristo's remark that the 2016 winner *Solar Bones* offers a 'wholly enjoyable reading experience' could also be seen in this light (GP 2016).

The otherwise slightly baffling insistence on calling the shortlisted novels 'funny' (including the phrases 'alarmingly funny' and 'horrifyingly funny') and 'hilarious' – the two adjectives have been applied to as many as twelve nominated works – appears to be another strategy not to confine them to a niche, where 'experimental' means serious, overly difficult and pretentious. In other words, entirely understandably, the prize industry wishes to present the novels it celebrates as accessible to a broader audience and thus expand their marketing potential. So far, it has succeeded several times to attract a surprisingly wide readership to novels such as *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing* and *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers*. While that ambition is commendable, it creates a paradoxical situation – a prize launched to counter the Man Booker's privileging of readability over formal audacity is appearing to try hard to assert the accessibility and entertaining qualities of its decidedly demanding winners.

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Polish Screenplay
in English Translation

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Abstract: Screenplay is the script of a film, including acting instructions and scene directions. There is a long way from finished screenplay to the moment when the film is distributed and the audience can watch it on the screen in the cinema. If the film is a co-production engaging foreign actors and foreign financing, one of the stages in the process is translation of the screenplay from native to another language, for instance English. Screenplay itself is a literary text, but its final product is a film. Screenplay has a specific formatting style, and it is written according to set guidelines. It combines specialized text and literary text. Screenplay is both a work of art, inspiring all the people engaged in the process of film production, and a technical blueprint for the future movie. This article describes the task of the translation of a screenplay for production and shooting purposes, discusses the elements that must be taken into account while translating it, and focuses on possible issues connected to translation of this type of modular text.

Keywords: screenplay, translation, specialized translation, literary translation, text-type

Introduction

Screenplay, according to *Dictionary of Film*,

> is a literary text that is a project of the future film. It includes plot, set, and action description, characteristics of the characters, dialogues, and sparingly, information regarding shooting and editing. Screenplay is only a raw material therefore the movie may deviate more or less from its previous presuppositions. (Twardosz 2005, 161)

As to my knowledge, translation scholars have not written much about screenplay translation. Sometimes the screenplay as an integral part of a movie is mentioned in the context of audiovisual translation, where the information concerning the screenplay translation is limited and usually concentrates on dialogue translation, subtitles, dubbing (Garcarz, Widawski 2009), audiovisual translators' training (Martinez-Sierra 2012; Cattrysse, Gambier 2008), or the context of text-type (Igelstrom 2014; Price 2010; Korte, Schneider 2000). An article by Trainor (2017) deserves to be noted, since it discusses screenplay translation in more detail, analyzing it with the help of Vermeer's *skopos* theory.

This paper, on the other hand, is based mostly on experience acquired during the translation of numerous screenplays from Polish into English and it aims to analyze screenplay translation from a practicing translator's point of view, taking into account the text-type, actual obstacles present during the process of translation, and the constraints the screenplay poses on the process of translation and on the translator as a text-type.

This analysis will combine concepts discussed within translation studies, literary studies, and film studies. We will present an unpublished working screenplay translation that is used during film production for various production purposes, including, among many, casting, role learning, location scouting, fund raising, etc. The paper will include mostly Polish screenplays that were translated into English language during the pre-production and production stage.

Limited access to copies of screenplays

Perhaps one of the reasons why screenplay translation has drawn little scholarly attention in Poland is the limited number of screenplays that are being translated into English, which is why there are not many texts available for the analysis. The second reason is the limited access to such texts, exclusive only to people closely connected to the Polish movie industry. Working screenplay translations are rare in cinematic archives because only a few copies are usually printed during the production stage or distributed among crewmembers and actors during shooting. The third reason is the limited number of screenplays that actually get into production in Poland compared to other countries. According to Central Statistical Office of Poland, in 2017 only 52 feature cinema movies and 17 feature TV movies were produced (stat.gov.pl). In the US, by contrast, the feature movie production amounted to 1,127 in the year 2017.

Screenplay as a text-type

Perhaps another reason why scholars fail to focus on screenplay translation is the unusual nature of the screenplay as a text. According to Price, "the screenplay is neither a blueprint, at one end of the scale, nor 'literature in a flux' at the other. Instead, it occupies the middle position: the screenplay is a *modular* text" (2013, 236). Trainor states that its "precursory, mutable and multifunctional nature poses a serious challenge to functionalist translation theories" (2017, 1). Cattrysse and Gambier also stress the ambiguous position of the screenplay as

> a document that helps the crew produce a movie. It offers an intermediate type of text, not unlike the text of a theatre play, which is supposed to be performed later. In this respect, a screenplay differs from a novel or a technical manual in the sense that both present final types of texts, supposed to be read as such by readers. (2008, 43-44)

Korte and Schneider write about screenplay as

> an essentially intermedial text type, a verbal text originally written as a blueprint for a production using another medium (which is itself multimedial), an intermedial competence is essential in grasping the screenplay's special artistic demands and artistic merits. (2000, 97)

Price, in his earlier work, postulates that screenplay should be considered as a text in its own right and that it is crucial for screenplay researchers to quit viewing the screenplay through the prism of the potential film (2010, 32-33). One could assume that since a screenplay at the pre-production stage is strictly a literary text, we could treat it as such without thinking about what happens to it next and translate only its language layer. Therefore, at the stage of the screenplay being a literary text we should be able to apply purely literary translation theories and approaches. Nothing is more misleading, because first of all, screenplay translation is constrained translation since there is set formatting and designed length connected directly to the specificity of the final product, that is the movie. Additionally, other elements are essential for the translator to know in order to properly translate the text. Garcarz and Widawski write that, while a film is a multimedial text, its elementary ingredient, screenplay, is a strictly literary

text that "becomes part of the movie at the front of the camera" (2009, 41) (all translations are mine, unless otherwise specified A.T). The idea that a screenplay at the pre-production stage is a text with a potential to transform into something different should be kept in mind by the translator.

Screenplay as a short-lived text

The life of a working screenplay is short. Once the production of the film is over, the screenplay is no longer useful or important. It finds its way to the archive of the film production house; some copies may collect dust on the shelves in private collections, and some are stored as electronic version on the hard discs of film crew's computers. Trainor (2017, 2) calls screenplays "disposable working documents" and Price refers to them as "industrial waste products" (2013, 219). According to Serceau, the screenplay "is never anything but an intermediary programming his own disappearance" (preface to Belaubre 2016, 16 after Trainor 2017, 2). Carriere states that screenplays are created "to disappear, to blend into another form [...] at the end of the shootings we generally find the screenplays in the bins of the studios" (1996, 144-146 after Trainor 2017, 2). The screenplay therefore is only a transitional product in the long process of movie production.

Screenplay

The word script has wider meaning and refers to a written text of a play, film, or broadcast. In this paper we will only discuss the screenplay for the feature film; therefore, we will use the word *screenplay*. The purpose of the screenplay is to become a movie; this is its main objective and also the main condition for a text to be identified as belonging to the *screenplay text-type*. If the text does not have the potential to become a movie, it is not the screenplay (Igelstrom 2014, 30).

According to Wereśniak, director, screenplay writer, novelist, author of the screenplay for the movie titled *Kiler* (1997) (the rights to the screenplay were sold to Hollywood Pictures for $600,000),

> a good screenplay is one from which a good film was made. This sounds simple but not entirely. The relationship is this: you can make a good movie or a bad movie from a good script. You cannot

make a good movie out of a bad script. That this is impossible has unfortunately been confirmed many times. (2000, 2)

Rather than art and inspiration, scriptwriting is mainly a craft. First of all, as Wereśniak writes, a good screenplay writer needs to know the proper structure of the screenplay, to have enthusiasm, patience, and lastly inspiration. He compares the screenplay to a chair: "it is best to sit in a chair from a good carpenter. Try to sit on a chair from an avant-garde gallery and you will experience what I am talking about" (2000, 2).

Screenplay formatting

According to Trainor (2017, 4), different cinematic cultures, even in the era of typescript screenplays, used various composition, presentation, editing, transformation, and usage styles. Wereśniak states that screenplay formatting and style should be simple and modest. Only the content counts; the form should be invisible. The page layout should resemble the classical, old-fashioned typescript screenplay (2000, 20). The American film industry has set an entire scope of standards and guidelines for movie production because they make more than a few hundred movies per year. Having such norms simplifies the work immensely. Like with a blueprint, if something needs correction, it is done according to standards, so that every member of the movie industry can read it easily. There is a saying in movie industry that "you don't write the screenplay, you correct it", meaning that a screenplay is never final until the movie reaches the cinema screen, and hence the need for a clean and simple form. The movie industry in Poland is small, so there are no exact norms established (Wereśniak 2000, 19).

Original formatting of the screenplay is important during the translation because, like with any other text-type, it must be kept in the target document. Therefore, the best option for the translator is to use one of the few CAT tools available, for example *Trados*, which will take care of the formatting for the translator.

Wereśniak states that in a good screenplay there should be no scenes exceeding three pages; instead, there should be a lot of small scenes with several lines, with one or two dialogue lines. One page of a properly formatted screenplay counts as one minute of on-screen time. The screenplay of a full-length feature film should, therefore, have between 100 and 120 pages, type 12 Courier New (2000,

23). This will basically amount to 120 minutes of a screen time. This is another norm that the translator must know and respect, since it makes the translation of a screenplay constrained translation in that the target text should be approximately of the same length as the source text. Yet, from our experience, when translating from Polish into English, the target text turns out to be 7% longer on average than the source text, with 0.14-13.51% more characters with spaces.

It is also important whether a screenplay or its translation will be officially used as the working screenplay during shooting. A page of the screenplay is also measured in order to estimate how long it will take to film each scene. Each page is divided into eight parts, each of them 1 inch long. A seven percent increase in legth is not significant; nevertheless, it must be taken into account that the lenght of the screenplay is limited. Therefore, the lenght of the translated version of the screenplay may have a direct influence on the shooting time.

Screenplay structure

As Trainor states, a "commonly used analogy" for the screenplay "is the technical blueprint" (Trainor 2017, 4); "[s]creenplays are functional objects — they exist to provide a blueprint for filmmakers to construct their films" (O'Thomas 2010, 237). The architectural metaphor is appropriate for other reasons. "A good architect must be a bit of an engineer, a bit of an artist — just like a scriptwriter who must be a bit of a precise craftsman and a bit of an inspired artist" (Wereśniak 2000, 3). According to Wereśniak "[t]he screenplay is a film on paper. […] The screenplay inspires the director, cameraman, and actors. The script gives producers a kick to look for cash. In short, the script is the most important" (2000, 3).

The structure of the screenplay is a coherent whole after it is finished and modifying scenes and other elements will change the whole structure, making it into a totally different movie (Wereśniak 2000, 3). This directly relates to the work of the translator, who needs to pay attention to this quality of the screenplay to make sure nothing is compromised in the process of translation.

According to the author, a screenplay consists of images constructed with words (Wereśniak 2000, 4), which influence the imagination of the reader. The images created with words tell the story; then, together with the sound, they create the mood. Finally, there are the dialogues, but according to Wereśniak, "word at the cinema is always the weakest" (2000, 4). A translator should fol-

low the same advice; however, paradoxically, for the translator the word is the strongest weapon. Being strong linguistically enables a translator to recreate all the elements that will recreate the screenplay in the new language.

Screenplay elements

Like any other text, a screenplay consists of essential elements that make it a screenplay text-type. These elements include the Scene Heading or the slug line, Scene Description, Character Name, Dialogue, Parenthetical, Extensions, Transition, and Shot. The first six elements are included in the Master Scene Screenplay Format and after the screenplay has been approved for the production, the next two, Transitions and Shots, are added in the Shooting Screenplay (also known as Continuity Screenplay) under the supervision of the director and DOP (Director of Photography). Now I will present each element in more detail with a commentary concerning its translation.

Scene heading

Scene Headings are aligned left, with a margin of about 3.9 cm from the edge of the paper, which makes the pages easy to bind and read. Standard margins, 2.5 cm, are used at the top, bottom, and on the right. Scene Headings are sometimes long enough to reach the page margin. They are written in ALL CAPS. Scenes are numbered in the final Shooting Screenplay (aka Continuity Screenplay). There is a full stop after the abbreviations 'INT.' or 'EXT.', although it is sometimes omitted, as in *Inglorious Basterds* (2009) by Quentin Tarantino. The font is bold, and there is an en dash between the abbreviations and the other elements of the heading. The Scene Heading is sometimes called a slug line. It tells the reader where the action takes place, whether it is set indoors or outdoors, it names the location, and includes the time of the day. The information included in the slug line helps the reader to imagine the whole scene. Example (1a) presents a typical American-style Scene Heading in a Master Scene Screenplay. Different Scene Heading styles used in Polish film industry are illustrated by examples (2a), (3a), (4a), (5a) followed by my translations. In all the following examples, I kept original formatting.

(1a)   **EXT – DAIRY FARM – DAY**[10]

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10 *Inglourious Basterds* (2009)

(2a)   3. WNĘTRZE. KOMENDA POLICJI, POKÓJ PRZESŁUCHAŃ. DZIEŃ.[11]
(2b)   3. INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM. DAY.

(3a)   **Scena 4. WN. Radiowóz.**[12]
(3b)   **4. INT. PATROL CAR.**

(4a)   SCENA 1   PLENER. OKOLICE SZKOŁY – DZIEŃ[13]
(4b)   1. EXT.   SCHOOL PREMISES – DAY

(5a)   **3. WN. LOTNISKO, DRZWI WYJŚCIOWE / PL. PRZED LOTNISK-
IEM, PARKING - ZMIERZCH (WROCŁAW, LIPIEC 1997)**[14]
(5b)   **3. INT. AIRPORT, EXIT DOOR / EXT. THE FRONT OF THE
AIRPORT, PARKING - DUSK (WROCLAW, JUNE 1997)**

As we can see, Headings can vary in terms of formatting, which is not significant for the translation, as long as the translator knows that formatting must be kept in the target text.

(6a)	PLENER	(6b)	EXT.
(7a)	PL.	(7b)	EXT.
(8a)	WNĘTRZE	(8b)	INT.
(9a)	WN.	(9b)	INT.
(10a)	DZIEŃ	(10b)	DAY
(11a)	NOC	(11b)	NIGHT
(12a)	ZMIERZCH	(12b)	DUSK
(13a)	ŚWIT	(13b)	DAWN

Scene Description

Scene Description, also known as Action or Blackstuff, is written from left to right margin, occupying the full width of the text. When the speaking character is introduced for the first time, his/her name is in ALL CAPS (John

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11 *Kryminalni* (2007)
12 *Dziewczyna z Szafy* (2012)
13 *Felix, Net i Nika oraz Teoretycznie Możliwa Katastrofa* (2010)
14 *Dom pod Dwoma Orłami* (2019)

Costello 2004, 111). The Scene Description establishes the setting for the story and introduces the characters. The Scene Description must present the actions as they unfold; whatever takes place in the scene, takes place *now* and is narrated in active voice and the present tense. This information is essential for the translator. The same tense and voice must be used in the target text.

Additionally, what is important for the translator is that the Scene Description includes only elements that can be seen on the screen. The sentence structure is simple, with no metaphors at this stage, no irony, no jokes, no neologisms, and no foul language. Paragraphs are short. Example (14a) presents a sample Scene Description in a Polish screenplay:

(14a)
```
We troje w milczeniu dochodzą do drzwi, nie mogą jednak
wyjść z budynku, bo leje jak z cebra. Patrzą w niebo
z rezygnacją. Większość PASAŻERÓW jest w takiej samej
sytuacji jak oni. HELENA nie może powstrzymać się przed
komentarzem:[15]
```

(14b)
```
The three of them reach the door in silence, but they
can't leave the building because it is pouring. They
are looking up at the sky with resignation. Most of the
PASSENGERS are in the same situation as they are. HELENA
can't refrain from commenting:
```

Wereśniak suggests writing Scene Descriptions as if for three-year-olds, insisting it is best to keep them simple, with simple sentences and a limited number of words, and to be laconic and modest. He advises screenwriters to write only what one can see on the screen, and use the style of police reports (2000, 19). Of course the same suggestions go for the translator, who should copy the style of the source text. Trainor notices that the way the scene descriptions are written "tends to favor an active cognitive response, prompting a heightened sensory (in this case visual) awareness" (2017, 15).

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15 *Dom pod Dwoma Orłami* (2019)

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are used extensively in the film industry since they are compact, meaningful and straight to the point. Abbreviations in screenplays are used to save space. We have already discussed many of them in appropriate sections of this article, here we present additional examples include 'b.g.', meaning background, and 'f.g.', meaning foreground; both are used in Scene Descriptions to indicate where the action takes place. 'CGI' stands for action that cannot be filmed on the set and will require computer-generated images. 'SFX' refers to a special sound effect and 'SPFX' means that a non-CGI special effect will be needed (Farnham 2011, 35-36).

Character name

As previously mentioned, a Character NAME is written in ALL CAPS when they first appear in a Scene Description (Costello 2004, 111). When the CHARACTER CUE (Character Name) signifies dialogue, it is indented 5.4 cm (3.5'') from the left margin, not centered (Costello 2004, 111-112). Character names they can be actual names, like WŁADEK (15a), nicknames (16a), like KICIU, descriptions (17a), like PANI Z PIESKIEM, or occupations (18a), like PRAWNIK, etc. Proper names are not translated, unless the director/screenplay writer provides approved equivalents. Otherwise, they are kept in the original form, with only diacritic signs omitted in the English version of the screenplay, as in example (15b). Nicknames are not translated, as in example (16c), unless they convey some meaning significant for the plot and are approved by the director/screenplay writer to be translated. The names of historical or mythical characters' are translated with language-specific equivalents.

(15a)	WŁADEK	(15b)	WLADEK		
(16a)	KICIU	(16b)	KICIU	(16c)	KITTY
(17a)	PANI Z PIESKIEM	(17b)	WOMAN WITH A DOG		
(18a)	PRAWNIK	(18b)	LAWYER		

Dialogue

Unlike Scene Descriptions, Dialogues are not stylistically constrained; they should resemble natural speech, so they can include all possible stylistic forms of the language. As Costello advises, a scene should never start with dialogue alone. Dia-

logue is placed about 3.4 cm (2.5″) from the left margin; however, this is flexible, since a dialogue line can have 30-35 characters (2004, 111-112). Dialogue formatting is used whenever the character on screen speaks to other characters, to himself, or off the screen. Those strict rules regarding formatting and space constraints make the translation of a screenplay a case of constrained translation, as the translator is obliged to stick to rules regarding formatting and language style.

Wereśniak advises screenwriters to devote all literary artistry and literary ambitions to dialogues instead of the scene description (2000, 19). Good dialogues may be remembered by the viewers and leave the cinema screen, entering daily use and becoming iconic, as the viewers willingly repeat them for humorous effect or for allusions. Great dialogue is a window to a character's soul. The audience should feel like an insect on the wall that hears characters exchanging lines. It is important to read the dialogue out loud to hear how it sounds. This tip applies to translators as well.

Dialogues are used in screenplay to tell the story through them (Wereśniak 2000, 15). The dialogue can have different functions in the screenplay: it can define a character, move viewers, lend credence to the scene, diverts, and at last inform (Wereśniak 2000, 16). Dialogue styles must be mixed, and each character should speak differently. The way character speaks, the rhythm, diction, and articulation, is a very important element building a character (Wereśniak 2000, 16). This is important for the translator, because in many cases the building of character relies on the use of language, that is, certain words, catch phrases, invectives, jargon, sentence structure, etc. A translator needs to pay close attention to these stylistic features to be able to recreate them.

Dialogues are built around conflict. Wereśniak says that they resemble throwing a hot coal that burns hands at each other. A character must always be pitted against another; there must be friction, an issue. If the characters just carry on and gab about nothing to kill time, it is a waste of time and money (Wereśniak 2000, 16). Costello suggests to

> keep the dialogue short and to the point - thrust, parry, counter-thrust; argument, counter-argument. Questions are often answered with another question. The more action oriented the script, the less dialogue. Even character-oriented scripts should avoid too many large blocks of dialogue, or worse, monologues - break it up using action/scene description (Costello 2004, 113).

Young screenplay writers use too much dialogue, and their screenplays are waffly. They often think that the dialogue is good for everything. This is not true. Sometimes silence communicates more in the scene that any dialogue. To properly use dialogue one must master it, but there are only few that can, according to Wereśniak. Dialogues written by Quentin Tarantino at first seem verbose and wordy, but they are not. There is not even one line that is redundant. Wereśniak states that to write attractive and meaningful dialogue about nothing is the most difficult.

The dialogue is like music; like a musical composition, it has its own rhythm, melody and harmony, and one must know how to compose it. To write dialogues one must listen to the streets, be attentive how people speak and what they say (2000, 16-17). The qualities of a good screenplay writer — the knowledge of acting rhythm, creativity, imagination, and skills in using rhetorical devices — are also necessary for a good translator. When translating dialogue, a translator should have linguistic dexterity, should be sensitive to dramatic and cinematographic effect. The final screenplay translation should deliver the same artistic effect, have the same technical standards, and fulfill the requirements of the film industry.

Parentheticals

Parenthetical or Character Directions are written in parentheses under the name of the character. Used only when necessary for understanding the context of the dialogue, they should be kept to a minimum, to the point, descriptive and, as Costello writes, leave it to the actor to decide how to play the part (2004, 113). A Parenthetical includes an attitude, verbal direction, or action direction for the actor. They shade the meaning of the dialogue delivery.

(19a) `(zmienia temat)`   (19b) `(changing the subject)`
(20a) `(śmieje się)`   (20b) `(laughing)`
(21a) `(czyta gazetę)`   (21b) `(reading from the newspaper)`
(22a) `(poirytowany)`   (22b) `(irritated)`
(23a) `(ma łzy w oczach)`   (23b) `(tears in her eyes)`

The advice regarding Parentheticals also applies to the screenplay translation. A translator should take into account the conventional use of tenses in Polish and English language. A translator needs to remember about the present tense of the directions; all

the action takes place *here* and *now*, regardless of the setting. In most cases the Present Continuous Tense is used in Parentheticals where describing action direction.

Extensions

Dialogue Extensions are technical notes placed next to the Character Name. They explain the way the Character's voice is heard by the audience in the particular scene (Farnham 2011, 31). The Extensions include: 'O.S.' meaning Off-Screen, 'O.C.' meaning Off-Camera (used in TV scripts), and 'beat' that indicates a longer pause in the speech of the character. 'V.O.' meaning Voice Over is used both when the character whose voice is heard appears in the scene but does not open his mouth, or when a character that is not in the scene physically speaks the dialogue. It is often used to convey narratives, internal monologues, comments in thought, or telepathy. 'Contd.' (meaning 'Continued') is used when a character's dialogue has been interrupted by a Scene Description or a page division.

(24a)	(OFF)	(24b)	(O.S.)
(25a)	(O.S.)	(25b)	(O.S.)
(26a)	(OFF)	(26b)	(O.C.)
(27a)	(V.O.)	(27b)	(V.O.)
(28a)	(pauza)	(28b)	(beat)
(29a)	(CD)	(29b)	(Contd.)

It is worth noting that some vocabulary in Polish film industry has been borrowed from English language, modified in some way, naturalized, or shortened, and used extensively. These borrowings, illustrated by examples (25a), (27a), and naturalized borrowings, illustrated by examples (24a), (26a) and (29a), should be used in the target text.

Transition

The term Transition refers to transitions between scenes. Whenever there is a change of location or a shift in time, the screenplay writer can use scene Transitions. They are positioned justified to the right on the screenplay page. Since the main function of the Master Scene Screenplay Format is readability, scene Transitions should

be used with caution, and when they are absolutely important for the story. They will be included later in the Shooting Screenplay (aka Continuity Screenplay). Below we are presenting the most common Transitions used in Polish screenplays:

(30a)	CIĘCIE DO:	(30b)	CUT TO:
(31a)	PRZENIKANIE:	(31b)	DISSOLVE TO:
(32a)	ŚCIEMNIENIE NA:	(32b)	FADE TO:
(33a)	ŚCIEMNIENIE:	(33b)	FADE IN:
(34a)	ROZJAŚNIENIE:	(34b)	FADE OUT:
(35a)	PRZEJŚCIE:	(35b)	TRANSITION:

Shot

A Shot indicates "when the focal point within a Scene has changed" (2011, 33). Farnham suggests using Shots in the screenplay sparingly, since they are about directing and the screenplay is really about storytelling. A screenwriter should only use a Shot description if it is really necessary (2011, 33). Actually, the Shots are absent in the Master Scene Screenplay Format and after the screenplay has been green lit they are included in the Shooting Screenplay (aka Continuity Screenplay) under the guidance of the director.

We can divide Shots in the movie into two kinds: objective Shots, when the camera follows the Action from the perspective of the third person, and subjective Shots, called in Polish 'subiekt' (subject) and 'POV'. They are used in Polish screenplays interchangeably, and for some authors 'subiekt' equals 'POV', although there is a significant difference between the two. In 'POV' the camera sees the events from the actor's viewpoint, standing alongside him, so it still remains objective, but it "is as close as an objective shot can approach a subjective shot—and still remain objective" (Mascelli, 1965, 22), whereas a 'subjective' Shot refers to the Shot where the camera registers the image as if through the actor's eyes. The Shots found in Polish scripts are:

(36a)	(efekt subiektu lunety)[16]	(36b)	(the telescope subject)
(37a)	POV Pawła:	(37b)	Pawel's POV:
(38a)	POV kamery Tomahawka[17]	(38b)	Tomahawk's camera POV

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16 *Dziewczyna z Szafy* (2012)

17 *www.1939.com.pl* (2015)

A translator needs to know the specialized vocabulary and film terminology and the subtle difference between the two terms. Quentin Tarantino uses both 'subject' and 'POV' terms to differentiate between the two different camera shots, so they are definitely not the same term.

(39b) `Shosanna, the camera subject, stands on boxes looking down into it.`[18]

(40b) **`WE SEE THE SCREEN AND THE AUDIENCE FROM MARCELS POV:`**[19]

Consequently, while translating from English into Polish, a translator cannot use 'POV' as a translation for 'subject' and vice versa. In order to correctly translate specialized vocabulary, a translator needs to use the glossary of film terminology and find functional equivalents. Below we present more examples of terminology used in screenplays:

(41a)	ZBLIŻENIE	(41b)	CU (CLOSE-UP)
(42a)	DETAL	(42b)	ECU (EXTREME CLOSE-UP)
(43a)	PLAN BLISKI	(43b)	MCU (MEDIUM CLOSE-UP)
(44a)	PLAN ŚREDNI	(44b)	MS (MEDIUM SHOT)
(45a)	PLAN AMERYKAŃSKI	(45b)	MWS MEDIUM WIDE SHOT
(46a)	PLAN OGÓLNY	(46b)	LS (LONG SHOT)
(47a)	PLAN TOTALNY	(47b)	XLS (EXTREME LONG SHOT)
(48a)	PLAN PEŁNY	(48b)	FS (FULL SHOT)
(49a)	PANORAMA	(49b)	PAN TO (PANNING)
(50a)	WSTAWKA/WRZUTKA	(50b)	INSERT
(51a)	RETROSPEKCJA	(51b)	FLASH-BACK
(52a)	PRZESKOK AKCJI	(52b)	JUMP SHOT
(53a)	UJĘCIE NIEME	(53b)	MOS (MIT OUT SOUND)

Vocabulary

Movie production involves many groups of professionals: technical shooting crew, responsible for shot planning, sound recording, etc.; administrative shoot-

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18 *Inglourious Basterds* (2009)
19 *Inglourious Basterds* (2009)

ing crew, responsible for logistics, actor management, props, etc.; performative artistic shooting crew: e.g. by actors; post-production crew, responsible for montage, sound effects, CGI (computer-generated imagery), etc.; post-editing crew, subtitling and dubbing crew. Each group searches for different information in the script, and has its own vocabulary connected to the aspect of the production for which it is responsible. Therefore, the translator needs to use functional equivalents within this special vocabulary group; this part of the translation belongs to a specialized translation type.

Receivers of the screenplay

Looking at the screenplay as a text-type we noticed that it is a mixed text-type including technical terms and specialized language as well as metaphorical, highly elevated literary style of language. We decided to divide it into two layers: technical layer and literary layer. The screenplay as a text and each of its layers will have different receivers in the consecutive stages of filmmaking.

Receivers of the screenplay as a text can be divided into two groups. One group is limited to film professionals involved in the making of a movie. Some receivers from the professional group, such as gaffers, DOP (Director of Photography), focus puller, or make-up artist, will read it as a specialized text, while others, like actors or the director, will read it to act it out as a literary text.

The second group that does not belong to professionals is far greater and this is the audience of the movie. The audience will only have access to the literary layer of the screenplay, that is, the dialogues, but only after the film has been finished and enters distribution.

Claudia Sternberg identifies "three types of screenplay readers, the property reader, the blueprint reader and the reading stage reader" (Sternberg 1997, 47). The property reader is the producer of the movie; the blueprint reader interacts with the screenplay and transforms the screenplay into a film. The reading material stage belongs to non-professionals and researchers that read the text for study and pleasure (Sternberg 1997, 50).

Translation

The aim during screenplay translation is always equivalence on all possible levels. Without a clear understanding of how a screenplay text is constructed and how each

part of it corresponds to a future product, that is a movie, there can be no successful translation of the working screenplay. Since the screenplay is closely connected to a prospective cinematographic work and its purpose is clear, a translator needs to construct the potential movie in his or her mind. His task is to successfully communicate the allusions that the screenwriter included in the text and also communicate the potential movie in another language. As Martinez-Sierra similarly states,

> a good translator of humorous texts has to have a good sense of humor (not that he or she should be a comedian); similarly, a good film translator should have a sense of the nature of scriptwriting (not that he or she should be a scriptwriter). (2012, 5)

Therefore, people responsible for screenplay translation should know the characteristics of film language (Ávila 1997, 78) and its function within a screenplay. Cattrysse and Gambier also stress the importance of the characteristics and functions of the text for the translator, to the point that "it might be useful for translators of screenplays to be trained, at least partly, in aspects of screenwriting" (2008, 39-40), because "it helps if a translator knows how and why a script was written the way it was before starting to translate it" (2008, 45-50).

Screenplay dialogue only resembles real-life dialogue, but is in fact fictive, and the translation process may destroy the illusion. A translator needs to know that screenplay dialogue relies on subtext, never expressing anything explicitly. Cattrysse and Gambier write that translation may change the effect of the fourth wall and by "conspicuous word choice, voicing, sentence construction" (2008, 14) concentrate attention on the dialogue itself. Therefore,

> [a]s a consequence, readers/viewers can perceive the narrative act as more or less overt or covert. On the basis of this strategy, aesthetic pleasure can be equally reflexive, cognitive, conscious or just the opposite. (Cattrysse, Gambier 2008, 14)

Garcarz and Widawski state that in order to preserve the construction of the scene in a movie, the receiver of the translation must have the same number of implicatures and explicatures as in the original (2009, 43). A shooting Screenplay as a text having two layers, an artistic layer and a technical layer, should keep its features after the translation. All the meaningful elements in the source

text should be present in the target text, with no condensation or deletion of the dialogue, as no modifications of any kind should be applied at this point.

Conclusion

Knowing the structure of the screenplay and the style of the screenplay language may improve the quality of the translation and improve the chances of its success. Translation of the screenplay combines specialized translation and literary translation. A translator must be swift with words and be able to write good dialogues in the target language, and also know the technical terms included in the technical layer of the screenplay. A translator also needs to be able to shift from one style of language to another, from the style of concise, straight to the point, explicit description of the visual elements of the Scene to the metaphorical, emotional, implicit language of the Dialogues.

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The 28th PASE conference

Diversity is inclusive. Cultural, literary and linguistic mosaic
27-28 June 2019
http://pase.edu.pl/

The leitmotif of the conference was triggered by the divides and differences which are noticeable in the Western cultures, societies and politics. Therefore the conference organisers decided to ask colleagues from English studies to emphasise the need for inclusiveness and diversity; as Gerard Manley Hopkins in his famous poem "Pied Beauty" wrote that "All things counter, original, spare, strange; / Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?) / With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim". Whether or not he was (un)wittingly following Darwin's discoveries, which were a praise of diversity in nature, Hopkins's argument is as irrefutable as Darwin's. The two great minds of the Victorian times confirm, from two perspectives, that of science and religion, knowledge and faith, the necessity for difference, vital for the survival of life, be it humankind, fauna or flora. Commonplace and grandiose as it may seem today, this fundamental principle has too often been brushed aside in the ways people treat each other and nature. The world we are living in today displays a tendency to build walls against the Other, whoever or whatever that may be. But there is no just black or white: languages display a wonderful variety in which there is no hierarchy. Philologists are only too much aware of this. It is impossible to study one language and its cultural manifestations without the context of other languages. On a micro scale, English, being a most widespread language, also embraces, too, multiple dialects, literatures, cultures, which – significantly – talk to each other.

The 28th PASE conference took place in June in Poznań. It was organised by the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. It gathered 80 participants, mainly from Poland, but also from all over the world. The plenary speakers were Nicoleta Cinpoeş, Professor of Shakespeare studies from the University of Worcester, Professor Guenther Senft, from Max Planck Institute, Nijmegen, Holland, Professor Christiane Dalton-Puffer from the University of Vienna, Professor Agnieszka Rzepa from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and Professor Magdalena Wrembel from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The keynote speakers represented a variety of English studies: literary studies (Shakespeare and Canadian literature), acquisition of English language and linguistics.

For the first time in the history of PASE conferences, scholars were asked to present papers in general sessions as well thematic ones (two such sessions were organised). Both types of sessions proved successful, plenary lectures and the variety and large number of sessions (22 altogether) addressed issues of current scholarship in English studies.

This conference did witness the tendency we have been observing for some years now, which is also visible in the number of PASE members: a decreasing number of participants (many of the conference delegates were employees of the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań – as many as almost half of the total number of conference speakers). The organisers of the conference observed, too, a rather meagre response to the first call for papers, which required extending the deadline for sending paper proposal. It is worth noting that all abstracts underwent the process of blind review before they were accepted by the conference organisers. For some of them, the organisers used the platform EasyChair, which helped effectively manage the process of reviewing and responding to the applicants.

Authors' Biodata

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