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Introduction to the First Issue of the *Polish Journal of English Studies*

On behalf of the Board of the Polish Association for the Study of English (a branch of the European Society for the Study of English), myself and that of the co-editors, Jacek Fabiszak and Krzysztof Fordoński, I am delighted to present the first issue of the *Polish Journal of English Studies*. The Polish Association for the Study of English was founded twenty-five years ago and the inaugural issue contributes meaningfully to this anniversary. During these twenty-five years the Association has been involved in diverse academic activities, organising conferences, seminars, workshops, and discussion panels. PASE has sponsored the publishing of monographs through university and commercial publishers and initiated the series we remember as *Pase Papers*. The Journal has been nearly two years in the making – a perilous journey which led to the joint editorship of our two colleagues from Poznań and Warsaw. In spite of its difficult beginnings, involving editorial changes and heated discussions on the aesthetic aspects of the publication, the *Polish Journal of English Studies* appears as a natural outgrowth of members' regular annual meetings that commonly attract over 100 participants and yield a plethora of publications every year.

The Board of the Polish Association for the Study of English decided that the journal should be published as an open-access online journal and accept a wide spectrum of articles on literature in English, culture and area studies as well as theoretical and applied linguistics. Articles should come from both members and non-members of the Association. In addition to standard articles, the journal will offer space for “area reviews”, book reviews and conference reports. Furthermore, the Board felt that we should accept a friendly and widely used publication system instead of developing our own format.

The inaugural issue of the bi-annual consists of papers in the areas of literature in English, culture and interdisciplinary studies. This issue owes much to many people. Thanks are due first to the members of the Board of our Association, where the idea originated and who made decisions both on funding and on the general shape of the Journal by providing valuable insights in the initial period of discussions. The Polish Association for the Study of English remains the founder and patron of the Journal. Thanks

are also due to the members of the Editorial Board, notably to Prof. dr hab. Jadwiga Uchman, who offered her experience and expertise in the processing of the first issue. Thanks go to the anonymous reviewers who, for obvious reasons, cannot be addressed by their names. On behalf of the PASE Board, thanks go to Weronika Szemińska (Managing Editor) and Łukasz Karpiński (Technical Editor) for their professional efficiency in processing the first issue.

Most of all, thanks are due to the chief co-editors, Krzysztof Fordoński and Jacek Fabiszak, who have generously given their time and made the project happen. Celebrating its 25th birthday, The Polish Association for the Study of English is a mature organization and it is also a thriving intellectual community. On behalf of the Board I would like to express the hope that the *Polish Journal of English Studies* will offer a platform for both the Polish and the European academic community.

Prof. dr hab. Ewa Kęłowska-Ławniczak
PASE President

Editorial

Dear Readers, Friends, and Colleagues,

The editors of the *Polish Journal of English Studies* would like to welcome you to the first issue of our journal. We would like you to join us in this enterprise – first as readers and then as authors, as our journal is always looking for new submissions. It is intended as a joint effort of all the members of the Polish Association for the Study of English. Consequently, we welcome your input into the direction we should take; any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

We welcome research papers, book reviews, conference calls and reports from conferences, as well as proposals of thematic issues. The range of subjects embraces all types of research within the broadly understood English studies – it certainly includes English language literatures, cultures, translation studies and all branches of linguistics – however, we are ready to consider proposals which go even beyond such limits. Your assistance as reviewers will also be greatly appreciated – please, contact us if you are ready to join the team. It is only with your active participation that we can succeed.

The present issue with which we set off concentrates on literary and cultural topics. We begin with Wojciech Drąg who presents in his article David Markson's four novel cycle *Reader's Block* (1996), *This Is Not a Novel* (2001), *Vanishing Point* (2004), and *The Last Novel* (2007). Drąg argues in his article that in his tetralogy Markson has resurrected the recently forgotten genre of the anti-novel. Ewa Kowal also discusses a very recent work, James Lasdun's memoir *Give Me Everything You Have. On Being Stalked* published in 2013. The article concentrates on the formal aspects of this unusual work, combining elements of prose and digital texts and materials.

Marcin Tereszewski chose a more classic, although hardly dated, subject: the novels of Samuel Beckett in his paper entitled: *The Neutral Voice of the Subject: Samuel Beckett and Maurice Blanchot*. With Justyna Dąbrowska's paper *Faced with Otherness: a Few Remarks on Brian Friel's 'Dancing at Lughnasa'* we remain within the field of Irish studies; however, we move from the novel to the stage. Dąbrowska attempts in her paper to decode the message of Friel's play through the concept of "the Other".

Two final articles in this issue deal with the art of cinema. Katarzyna Mosionek analyses the role and place of music in Thomas Vinterberg's most recent adaptation of the novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy. The musical score of the movie is compared with the references to various

musical pieces in Hardy's novel. Piotr Szczypa selects three American films produced in the early 2000s in order to discuss the importance of the father figure in the representation of the Irish Americans in contemporary cinema. The selection is certainly heavily biased towards literary and cultural studies but the bias only reflects the subject matter of the submissions which we have received so far. You can change it by submitting papers in other fields of English studies.

We finish this issue with a report from our annual PASE conference which was held in Wrocław last spring. Naturally, it will be a permanent feature in our journal. We will certainly include a report from our 2016 conference, which was held in Szczyrk, in the forthcoming issue. You can find the call for papers for the coming PASE conference, with some other calls, in the following section. If you intend to organise a conference, always make sure to send your call to us as well.

The journal will be delivered to the mailboxes of all the members of the PASE. We will be extremely grateful if you could share it with all your friends and colleagues who may be interested. We see this as a way of promoting both the journal and the association, as our aim is to reach as broad a reading public as possible. It will be available from our website www.pjes.edu.pl, where you can also find some more information about how to submit your work for publication. You can also get the latest developments via our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PASEPJES/>. We begin as an Internet journal but we intend to offer the printed version as well – each year's issue will be published as a single volume.

The first issue of the *Polish Journal of English Studies* is ready. Our task is completed although it is only the first issue of many we hope to see published. We would like to end by expressing our gratitude to all those who made it possible – the authors, the anonymous reviewers, other members of our editorial board. We are looking forward to your comments, suggestions, and submissions.

The Editors

Jacek Fabiszak
Krzysztof Fordoński

“A Novel Against the Novel”: David Markson’s Antinovelistic Tetralogy

Wojciech Drąg

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Abstract: The antinovel is a niche genre which positions itself radically and emphatically against what might be called the conventional novel. It chooses to dispense with such novelistic devices as linear plot, cause-and-effect relation of events, richly delineated setting, verisimilitude and characterisation. Instead, the antinovel favours anti-mimetic strategies, fragmentation, digression and repetition. This article examines the generic status of David Markson’s tetralogy composed of *Reader’s Block* (1996), *This Is Not a Novel* (2001), *Vanishing Point* (2004) and *The Last Novel* (2007). Although each book contains the word “novel” either in its title or subtitle, a case is made for classifying them all as antinovels as theorized by Jean-Paul Sartre, J. A. Cuddon, M. H. Abrams and others. A critical and historical introduction to the genre is followed by a commentary on the thematic and formal structure of the tetralogy and a detailed consideration of its antinovelistic elements – the renunciation of plot and character, the prominence of metafiction, and fragmentary construction.

Keywords: novel, antinovel, experimental literature, fragmentary writing, metafiction

The antinovel is an elusive, precarious and contested category. Although its origins go back to 1633, when French author Charles Sorel subtitled his novel *Le berger extravagant* “anti-roman,” the term did not enjoy considerable popularity with critics except in the 1950s and 60s in France – at the heyday of the *nouveau roman*. In a much-quoted preface to Nathalie Sarraute’s *Portrait d’un inconnu* (1948), Jean-Paul Sartre numbers the book among the “tough and totally negative works which one might call anti-novels.” He goes on to describe those “strange” and unclassifiable works as evidence

not so much of the crisis of the novel but rather of the novel's shift towards "reflecting on itself" (Jefferson 1984, 194). In contemporary Anglophone criticism the antinovel is a virtually extinct critical concept, even in the domain of experimental literature. The recently published *Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* (2012), by far the most comprehensive study in the field, completely ignores the antinovel, which may only boast a single entry, where it is mentioned in passing as a text "made up of fragments" (Bray, Gibbons and McHale 2012, 479). That definition is a very apt description of a tetralogy by the contemporary American novelist David Markson, which is composed of *Reader's Block* (1996), *This Is Not a Novel* (2001), *Vanishing Point* (2004) and *The Last Novel* (2007). I want to argue that Markson's fragmentary books could all be classified as textbook examples of this rather forgotten literary category. In order to point to certain analogies, I shall examine the distinctive features and the rationale (or politics) of the antinovel as a genre. I will begin by formulating a definition of this obscure notion and outlining its relationship with the novel.

Longer discussions of the antinovel in English can only be found in dictionaries of literary terms. Oxford's brief entry defines it as "a form of experimental fiction that dispenses with certain traditional elements of novel-writing like the analysis of characters' states of mind or the unfolding of a sequential plot" (Baldick 2008, 17). J. A. Cuddon indicates that the antinovel is not concerned with "creat[ing] an illusion of realism" but rather with "establish[ing] its own conventions." To the list of characteristic features of the genre Cuddon adds "experiments with vocabulary, punctuation and syntax, variations of time sequence" as well as "alternative endings and beginnings." Among the most "extreme" devices he lists "detachable pages; pages which can be shuffled like cards; coloured pages; blank pages; collage effects [and] drawings" (Cuddon 1998, 43). For a more detailed treatment of the genre one must turn to French literary criticism. In "Pourquoi l'antiroman?" (2011), Pierre-Olivier Brodeur distinguishes between two distinct understandings of the term: Gérard Genette's narrow conception of the genre as featuring a Quixotic hero unable to differentiate between fiction and reality, and Sartre's much more inclusive – and popular – approach, which points to a negativity towards the conventional novel and self-reflexivity as the antinovel's defining qualities (Brodeur 2011, 28-29). Brodeur notes the curious fate of this eclectic genre – informed by pastiche, parody, polyphony and meta-

fiction – whose "expansion was accompanied by its virtual dissolution," as a result of which "confusion reigns" as for its current condition (30, 28).

Part of the reason for the confusion is the antinovel's indeterminate position in relation to the novel. On the one hand, the relationship appears to be highly antagonistic. Brodeur describes the antinovel's attitude towards its mother genre as "marked by an essential violence and aggressiveness"; instead of commenting on other works, this inherently confrontational genre chooses to "attack" them (30). In their seminal *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham speak of the antinovel's "deliberately negative construction," which echoes Sartre's proclamation of negativity as a constitutive element of the antinovel – evident in the very prefix "anti-" (1999, 195). The rationale for this radical rejection of the conventional novel is often a disenchantment with its limitations and its artificiality. In his manifesto "Une voix pour le roman future" (1963), Alain Robbe-Grillet sets the *nouveau roman* against the deceptively ordered fiction of a Balzac, whose narrative progression he dismisses as a gimmick and whose logic he considers out of touch with human experience.¹ He announces the need for "radical change" in the face of "the destitution of the old myths of 'depth'" and the "stagnation" of literature, which appears to have overlooked that disillusionment (Robbe-Grillet 1989, 17, 23).² Not only does the antinovel violently attack its enemy, it also – Sartre points out – does so cunningly. It retains the "outlines of the novel" (telling a story about a fictive character) "only the better to deceive us": "the aim is to pit the novel against itself, to destroy it under our very eyes (at the same time as it would seem to be erected), to write the novel of a novel that does not, that cannot develop" (Sartre 1955, 40).

Whereas the above remarks indicate that the antinovel has a radically different set of objectives from that of the novel, several French critics have

¹ Robbe-Grillet may be echoing here the famous passage from Virginia Woolf's essay "Modern Fiction" (1921), written in reaction to the writing of H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennet and John Galsworthy: "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?" (Woolf 2012).

² Ann Jefferson locates daring formal innovations in "a developing tradition in twentieth-century fiction whereby the burden of realism is gradually shifted from content to form." The adoption of new form is an attempt to reflect more faithfully either the "organization of society" or the "structure and patterns of human consciousness" (Jefferson 1984, 3).

recently disputed that claim. Ugo Dionne and Francis Gingras argue that although unarguably many features of the antinovel are irreconcilable with the older conventions of the novel, the very gesture of flouting convention is inherent in the novel. “The salutary rejection of worn-out ideas” is not, they maintain, an “exclusive, occasional feat of rebellious geniuses” but rather “a constant of the genre.” Dionne and Gingras conclude that “in the light of the history of the genre, our ‘old novels’ are (always) already antinovels” (2006, 6; translation mine). In a different article, Dionne emphasises the interpenetration of the two categories: “one would need a very wise person to determine where one begins and the other stops, where the boundary lies between these two ‘genres’ which may perhaps, from the outset, be one” (158, translation mine). A similar argument is advanced by Áron Kibédi Varga in an earlier paper, whose title summarises its main point – “Le roman est un anti-roman” (1982). Brodeur also concurs with the idea that the antinovel is difficult to sustain as a category distinct from the novel. “The antinovelistic demolition,” he points out, “is always a proposition to reconstruct the novel with new foundations” (2011, 31; translation mine). The confusion around the status of this unstable category could be attributed to what Brodeur refers to as the central paradox of the antinovel – “the desire to be a novel against the novel” (31).

After outlining the theoretical background of the antinovel, I wish to offer a concise overview of some of the more noted works that have frequently been highlighted as antinovels. The invariable prime example of the genre – at least in Anglophone criticism – is Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67), with its self-consciousness and digressive structure on the one hand, and its blank and black pages as well jokey graphs, on the other. The first major artistic movement to breed an abundance of works driven by the antinovelistic impulse was Modernism. Gertrude Stein’s *Tender Buttons* (1914), Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* (1931), James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and Samuel Beckett’s *Murphy* (1938) and *Molloy* (1951) feature as textbook examples of antinovels in numerous dictionaries of literary terms. Despite the profusion of Modernist antinovels, it is the *nouveau roman* which remains the literary current whose tenets were most in line with those of the genre. It is not coincidental that the very concept of the antinovel was revived (if not simply born) to accommodate the various departures from the standard

novelistic techniques as practised by Robbe-Grillet,³ Sarraute, Michel Butor and Claude Simon: the use of repetition, omission and contradiction, the rejection of narrativisation and of the *telos* of reading. Most importantly perhaps, the *nouveau roman* postulated the abandonment of the compromised notions of plot and character. Sarraute, a practitioner as well as a theoretician of the movement, compares the former to a “bandage” wrapped around the character, which lends them an “impression of coherence and life” as well as “the rigidity of a mummy” (Jefferson 1984, 115-16). The most resonant examples of the plotless and characterless products of the *nouveau roman* are Sarraute’s *Tropismes* (1939), Robbe-Grillet’s *The Voyeur* (1955) and *Jealousy* (1957), Butor’s *La Modification* (1957) and Simon’s *La route des Flandres* (1967).

The A to Z of Postmodernist Literature and Theater includes the antinovel as one of the key concepts of postmodernism, since “the principles on which it is based draw attention to the fictionality of the text.” Among the antinovelistic devices redolent of the postmodernist are the uses of “permutational structures” (the procedural or combinatory writing as practised by the OuLiPo group), renarration and denarration (multiplying variations of what has already been described or unsaying the already said), the mixture of fantasy and fabulation, and the privileging of narrative and language instead of verisimilitude (Mason 2007, 10-11). Many of those techniques are the staple diet of the fiction of such American writers as Robert Coover, John Barth and the so called surfictionists – Donald Barthelme, Raymond Federman and Ronald Sukenick. The paucity of British contributions to experimental writing in the second half of the twentieth century – ferociously attacked in Gabriel Josipovici’s much-discussed *What Ever Happened to Modernism?* (2010) – remains a puzzle in view of British literature’s particularly rich Modernist legacy. The only British writers of note that took up antinovelistic projects were B. S. Johnson and Christine Brooke-Rose. In the twenty-first century some of the distinctive devices of the antinovel have been incorporated by works that combined a critical and commercial success: Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves* (2000) (experiments with the layout of the page), David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas* (2004) and Ali Smith’s *How to Be Both* (2014) (playing with the order of the constitutive parts), Tom McCarthy’s *Remainder* (2005)

³ Robbe-Grillet, whose works were frequently analysed as examples of the antinovel (most notably in Alfred Cismaru’s “Alain Robbe-Grillet and the Anti-Novel”), did not identify with this label (Brodeur 2011, 29).

(rejection of psychological realism), and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) (extensive use of visual material).

Whereas the above-listed texts manage to employ certain signature techniques of the antinovel, they do so in a way that does not contest their status as novels. For all their formal innovativeness, they still express – to a larger or lesser extent – the novel's traditional interest in plot and character. Their fragmentariness does not preclude a necessary degree of coherence; their self-reflexivity does not wreck their referential layer. In the end, despite the self-imposed obstacles and complications, they all succeed in conveying a story, however tangled or unconventional, set in a specific context (or multiple contexts – as is the case with the Mitchell and the Smith).⁴ A rare example of a contemporary writer who chose to do without the safety nets of plot and character was David Markson (1927-2010). Markson's most acclaimed work is *Wittgenstein's Mistress* (1988), which David Foster Wallace called "pretty much the high point of experimental fiction [in America]" (qtd. in Dempsey). Admired by fellow writers (including Kurt Vonnegut and Zadie Smith), he never became a widely recognisable name in the literary world, earning the reputation of the most talented "unknown and under-appreciated" writer of his generation (Markson 2005).⁵ His four last novels – *Reader's Block* (1996), *This Is Not a Novel* (2001), *Vanishing Point* (2004) and *The Last Novel* (2007) – are based on a very similar (and very distinctive) structure, which legitimises treating them as a tetralogy (against the narrator's explicit wish not to lump them together).⁶ They are all 150- to 200-page-long collections of loosely connected facts or anecdotes about the life or work of some of the world's most famous artists, philosophers, scientists and historical figures.⁷ The length of a single entry ranges from one word

⁴ *Cloud Atlas* has six distinct settings ranging from the nineteenth-century America to a post-apocalyptic future, whereas *How to Be Both* is set both in the fifteenth-century Italy and the contemporary Britain.

⁵ Peter Dempsey in *The Guardian's* obituary argues that Markson's fiction "runs against the grain of a generally upbeat US culture" and places it in the "great tradition of nay-saying American writing, which goes back at least as far as Herman Melville."

⁶ A passage in *The Last Novel* reads: "Wondering if there is any viable way to convince critics never to use the word *tetralogy* without also adding that each volume can be readily read by itself?" (Markson 2007, 161).

⁷ Françoise Palleau-Papin notes that Markson's narrators are interested in "famous creators" – "in their whole lives, from birth to death, with a predilection for the end of a life" (2011, 248).

(such as “Jedwabne”⁸) to six lines. A typical component of Markson’s tetralogy is like one of the following (all examples are from *Reader’s Block*):

The first lectures on Shakespeare at a British university were given at Oxford, by one William Hawkins, in 1751. In Latin. (Markson 1996, 32)

Hegel, Schelling, and Holderlin were roommates while studying theology. (34)

It is only the man whose intellect is clouded by his sexual impulses who could give the name of the fair sex to that undersized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped and short-legged race.
Said Schopenhauer. (138)

May I kiss the hand that wrote *Ulysses*?
No, it did lots of other things too. (49)

Where was Jesus between the ages of twelve and twenty-nine? (82)

26 Piazza di Spagna. (12)

The first two entries could be described as curiosities – interesting, and not widely known, facts, which may augment the reader’s erudition. The third is an example of one of several hundred quotations – amusing, surprising or (as is the case here) shocking. The next entry is an instance of a great number of unacknowledged quotations, which may encourage the reader to look them up on the Internet and find out more about their context. The fifth passage represents a question apparently posed by the nameless narrator – an expression of an individual’s curiosity or interest, which, however, is likely to arouse the reader’s interest as well. The last is one of a group of cryptic entries which prompt the most attentive readers to use a search engine in order to determine their meaning.⁹

⁸ Jedwabne is a small town in Eastern Poland notorious for a pogrom against the Jewish minority in 1941.

⁹ 26 Piazza di Spagna is the address of the house in Rome where John Keats died in 1821.

Although at times the arrangement of entries appears to be entirely random, there are numerous instances where they have been clearly ordered in a deliberate sequence.¹⁰ The recurrence of certain kinds of facts throughout individual books makes it possible to indicate some of the tetralogy's central themes, which include aging, death and suicide, artistic creation, the fickleness of artistic reputation as well as anti-Semitism and the Holocaust (hence the reference to Jedwabne).¹¹ Each work employs certain recurrent lines, which function like a refrain. There are also several lines which feature prominently across the entire tetralogy:

Old. Tired. Sick. Alone. Broke.

Nobody comes. Nobody calls.

Timor mortis conturbat me.

Nonlinear. Discontinuous. Collage-like. An assemblage.

The first three accentuate the sense of the narrators' increasing isolation and their fear of death. The last is one of many metafictional comments on the form of Markson's writing. The use of recurrent lines and motifs prompts Laura Sims to compare the structure of the tetralogy to that of the fugue.¹² This kind of composition poses a challenge for the reader, who must "remain attentive and active ... constantly connecting the lines/fragments/ quotations not only with their immediate neighbors, but also with lines from previous books" (65). Joseph Tabbi also stresses the need for reader involvement in Markson's "interactive" fiction: "for a narrative to develop at all," he argues, "significant connections need to form in a reader's mind" (Tabbi 1997, 766–67). The critic sees Markson's "nonsequential method" of fragmented units that touch on a given subject only to proceed to another and then return from a different angle as indebted to the style of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was an important figure in the novelist's earlier

¹⁰ At the end of *Reader's Block*, there is a list of 54 entries consisting of the names of literary protagonists who committed suicide.

¹¹ *Reader's Block* contains 86 entries following the format, "X was an anti-Semite."

¹² Palleau-Papin draws a similar comparison in her discussion of Markson's previous novel *Wittgenstein's Mistress*, which she calls "a hypernovel in the form of a fugue" (2011, xxxvi).

mentioned novel *Wittgenstein’s Mistress*. Another quality which Markson shares with the Austrian-British philosopher is the technique of developing meaning “not through a linear plot, argument, or ‘narrative progression’ ... but in ways that are cumulative” (Tabbi 1997, 750–51).¹³

Alongside the tetralogy’s fragmentariness, its rejection of a linear plot and characterisation stands as the most radical challenge to the novel and the strongest argument for classifying it as antinovelistic. Although each individual book employs characters – referred to in short entries interspersed with the anecdotal passages – who in some way develop, the use of quasi-plot and quasi-characters appears to be motivated by what Sartre calls the wish to keep the “outlines of the novel,” whose aim is to “destroy it under our very eyes” (1955, 40). *Reader’s Block* features an anonymous first-person narrator whose voice could be that of Markson himself, a character named Reader, who is, however, a writer working on a novel, and a character called Protagonist, who is being sketched by Reader.¹⁴ At the end, Protagonist commits two alternative imaginary suicides, while the fate of Reader remains unresolved. The book contains several entries in which Reader is thinking aloud about how autobiographical his novel is going to be and to what extent Protagonist should be modelled on him. Those ruminations sound like Markson’s own, since a lot of information referring to his past and current situation is applicable to Markson as well. That autobiographical reading is further legitimised by the antepenultimate entry, which contains Friedrich Nietzsche’s remark that “in the end one experiences only one’s self” (1996, 193).

In *This Is Not a Novel* Reader has been replaced by Writer as the author figure. Most Writer-centred entries focus on his weariness, headaches and depression; some call his very existence into doubt (“Does Writer even exist?/ In a book without characters?”) (Markson 2001, 11). The book contains references to 49 famous people who died of different kinds of cancer, which prepares the ground for the confession made on the final page – “Writer’s cancer” (167). *Vanishing Point*, referred to by Françoise Palleau-Papin as “a testament in the form of a novel” (Markson 2004, 252), features Author,

¹³ Markson’s method relying on “connectivity” – the capacity for establishing links between numerous fragments – is regarded by Tabbi as a *signum temporis* – “appropriate to an era committed to virtuality” (1997, 768).

¹⁴ The confusion about the notions of a “reader” and a “writer” is partly clarified by the epigraph from Jorge Luis Borges: “First and foremost, I think of myself as a reader” (Markson 1996, 5).

who seems to be preparing to start writing a novel but is, in fact, endlessly procrastinating.¹⁵ His health is in progressive decline, which leads to his presumed death on the last page. Nonetheless, in *The Last Novel* the author figure is reborn under the name of Novelist. It is repeatedly implied that Novelist is the author of the previous parts of the tetralogy; at one point a reference is made to the common critical charge that Markson “has lately appeared to be writing the same book over and over” (Markson 2007, 104), which many readers (also the sympathetic ones) could not categorically deny. One of the final entries of the tetralogy – “*Access to Roof for Emergency Only*” – may be interpreted as an indication that Novelist committed suicide like the 54 literary protagonists referenced in *Reader’s Block*. *The Last Novel* did indeed turn out to be Markson’s last, coming out three years before his death.

The title of the last book as well as the metafictional references to the earlier parts situate it unambiguously as the final chord of Markson’s fugue. However, despite Palleau-Papin’s insistence that the books are not “interchangeable” and that the tetralogy enacts a “progression” (2011, 247), it is very difficult to demonstrate any gradual or sustained narrative development. It is true that certain exact phrases, themes or motifs recur – like the already mentioned preoccupation with suicide in the first and last books – but those returns do not necessarily advance any long-term argument but rather provide further illustrations or examples. The claim to character development would be even harder to defend, since any progression that could be traced is that towards ill health and death, which, as a matter of fact, occurs at the end of two successive books. Although the lack of plot and characterisation in the traditional sense is evidently one of the objectives of Markson’s work, the tiresome repetitiveness of the author-figures and the occasional monotony of their ongoing concern with death and suicide may be regarded as a weakness of the tetralogy and an illustration of some of the potential pitfalls of such extended (roughly 700 pages in total) antinovelistic projects.

If Markson’s dismantling of plot and characterisation has certain shortcomings, the tetralogy’s programmatic (and exuberant) self-reflexivity remains arguably its greatest asset. Metafictional entries – though far less numerous than the factual ones – constitute an important strand in the four consecutive books. One of the first such comments to feature in the first part

¹⁵ Nathalie Sarraute’s *Entre la vie et la mort* features a similar author-protagonist, who declares to be working on his new novel but is not until – at one point – an exasperated reader comes up to him and says, “Why don’t you write? You only ever talk about it” (Jefferson 1984, 83).

of the tetralogy is the question "What is a novel in any case?" (13), which underlies much of the self-conscious content of the entire work – concerned, for the most part, with attempting to find, or rather create, a category for the emerging text. Several metafictional passages recur from *Reader's Block* to *The Last Novel*:

A novel of intellectual reference and allusion, so to speak minus much of the novel?

A seminonfictional semifiction?

Obstinately cross-referential and of cryptic interconnective syntax.

The first addresses the indeterminacy of the novel as a genre, echoing the unanswered question about what the concept actually entails. While conceding that each of Markson's books is a novel "minus much of the novel," it insists on its status as one. The question arising here is about what is meant to form that novelistic core which guarantees Markson's books their generic category despite their evident deviations.

This Is Not a Novel, the most overtly self-reflexive book in the series, opens with a sequence of statements that, when placed alongside one another, could be read as Markson's (anti-)novelistic manifesto. It begins with the entry "A novel with no intimation of story whatsoever, Writer would like to contrive./ And with no characters. None" (Markson 2001, 2), and is followed by the following characteristics: "Plotless. Characterless" (3); "Actionless ... with no *sequence of events* ... with no indicated *passage of time*" (4, original italics); "with no *setting*./ With no so-called furniture.... without *description*" (5); "with no social themes, i.e., no picture of society./ No depiction of contemporary manners and/or morals"; "Categorically, with no politics" (7); "entirely without symbols" (8); and "without even a subject" (9). The last entry is followed by two dissenting voices: José Ortega y Gasset's remark that "there is no work of art without a subject" and E. M. Forster's that "a novel tells a story." They, in turn, are confronted with a comment by American baseball player Dizzy Dean: "If you can do it, it ain't bragging" (10). This juxtaposition of original entries with the carefully selected quotations is among the most skilful and effective examples of Markson's signature technique. The Dizzy Dean quote, which is repeated on the book's last page, could be interpreted

as the author's announcement that his ambition is not only to formulate a certain idea of the novel but also to realise it – to cite Sartre – “under our very eyes.”

This Is Not a Novel also contains a scattered list of alternative categories that it could be said to fit, for those who will insist that indeed, as a Dizzy Dean might put it, a novel it ain't. Among the fourteen propositions of generic classifications are “a sequence of cantos” (Markson 2001, 23), “a mural of sorts” (36), “an autobiography” (53), “a polyphonic opera” (73), “a classic tragedy” (171) and a “synthetic personal *Finnegans Wake*” (185).¹⁶ The last entry invites a rather daring (if not insolent) comparison between Markson's work and Joyce's experimental classic. A similarly self-enhancing parallel – this time with Pablo Picasso – is suggested by the juxtaposition of the two following units, which are placed eight pages apart:

You can actually draw so beautifully. Why do you spend your time making all these queer things?

Picasso: That's why. (Markson 2004, 156)

Writer has actually written some relatively traditional novels.

Why is he spending his time doing this sort of thing?

That's why. (164)

The rationale behind the decision to abandon convention is, Markson asserts, artistic development. Once a set of skills has been mastered, a new direction has to be found in order for one's art not to stagnate and become stale. Experimentation emerges here not as a shattering of convention or tradition but as an attempt to take a step further and push their boundaries. It poses a challenge by remaining oriented towards a possible future rather than emulating the canon. That forward-looking disposition of innovative art is asserted by Markson's confrontation of a remark that could have been made by one of his friends – “Listen, I bought your latest book. But I quit after about six pages. That's all there is, those little things?” – with a quotation from another sportsman, the hockey player Wayne Gretzky: “I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it's been” (Markson 2007, 155).

¹⁶ Laura Sims argues that the list was inserted by Markson “in sarcastic response to the reviewer who called *Reader's Block* ‘not a novel’” (2008, 64).

Being in tune with the *Zeitgeist* and searching for new ways of expression is bound to baffle the less discerning. That is why the tetralogy abounds in more or less direct charges formulated against critics, mostly targeting their laziness, carelessness and lack of foresight. The inability to notice a work of genius is exemplified by the following entry from *Reader’s Block*: “Nothing odd will do long; *Tristram Shandy* did not last./ Said Johnson” (Markson 1996, 161). Doctor Johnson, often considered – alongside John Dryden – to have been the founder of literary criticism, emerges as the archetypal critic who gets it wrong. The inability to appreciate a masterpiece is also widespread among experimental artists themselves, which Markson demonstrates by quoting numerous dismissive remarks by fellow writers, including Virginia Woolf’s notorious assessment of *Ulysses* as “an illiterate, underbred book” (Markson 1996, 26). The mutual incomprehension of artists is also humorously signalled by two ruminations from *Vanishing Point*: “What Giotto would make of a Gerhard Richter canvas” and “What Balzac would make of a novel like Author’s” (Markson 2004, 145, 147).

What are contemporary readers supposed to make of a tetralogy like Markson’s? Should they take his word for it and see it as – despite all its affronts to the genre – a novel? After all, each book in the series either contains the word “novel” as part of its title or features it in the subtitle. The word “antinovel,” by contrast, is conspicuously absent from the entire series, even though it could be classified as its quintessential example – in the establishment of its own conventions, the foregrounding of its own textuality and in what Brodeur calls the essential paradox of the antinovel – “the desire to be a novel against the novel.” The ambition to reconcile the wish to be included within a given category and the wish to distance oneself from its kernel requires that one should position oneself at the borderline. And this is where Markson and the antinovel position themselves towards the novel. Rather than remaining at that border, the antinovel aims to push it ever further, which ensures its fluid shape despite its enduring and inflexible commitment to re-inventing – rather than destroying – the form of the novel.

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James Lasdun's *Give Me Everything You Have. On Being Stalked* as a Fusion of Writing Technologies

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Abstract: Drawing upon Mary Douglas's anthropological work *Purity and Danger*, Jay David Bolter's *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, and (to a lesser extent) Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto," the article analyses the form and authorship of James Lasdun's 2013 memoir *Give Me Everything You Have. On Being Stalked*. The book is Lasdun's account of his experience of being cyberstalked by his former female student. The article proposes that the memoir be read as a combination of two kinds of texts, indeed a fusion of two writing technologies (the print/book technology and the digital technology) resulting from a collision – or even an involuntary "collaboration" (a concept considered on the basis of its discussion by George P. Landow in his *Hypertext 3.0*) – of two very different (co-)authors: a more traditional author who is a digital "alien" and a disembodied and viral cyberstalker (a self-proclaimed "verbal terrorist") who is a native-like digital immigrant. The article examines the book's hypertextual qualities, proposing that it takes a step further in comparison to the protohypertextuality of experimental authors such as Sterne, Joyce, Borges and Calvino by actually including electronic text within its paper borders – which, in fact, become opened up as a result.

Keywords: cyberstalking, transgression, hypertext, writing technologies, virus

“...and it seemed to me I was calling across a great chasm of misunderstanding...”

James Lasdun, *The Horned Man*

“What you resist persists.”

Björk, “Mutual Core,” *Biophilia*

“[T]he ideal order of society is guarded by dangers which threaten transgressors,” wrote Mary Douglas in her seminal 1966 book on social anthropology *Purity and Danger* (2007, 3). “[I]deas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions,” she said, “have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience” (Douglas 2007, 5). But even if the social structure *is inherently* untidy, it is the “transgressor” who is *seen and treated* as untidy, as a source of pollution, and an anomaly, the reaction to which is “continuous with” the reaction to dirt (Douglas 2007, 5). Yet, there is power in both: “there is a power in the forms and other power in the (...) margins, confused lines, and beyond external boundaries” – in the “surrounding non-form” (Douglas 2007, 122). However, since “[a] polluting person is always in the wrong,” s/he is threatened and punished by dangers because s/he is seen as a source of danger and threat her/himself (Douglas 2007, 140). “Danger lies in transitional states,” says Douglas, “simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable” (2007, 119).

Analysing a range of societies at various stages of technological development, both in the past and in the present (the 1960s), Douglas wrote about that which cannot be defined – because it is impure, not one but mixed – as a universal source of fear in all cultures that fundamentally shapes societies and thus reality. Two decades later, in “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” Donna Haraway acknowledged that “[e]xploring conceptions of bodily boundaries and social order, the anthropologist Mary Douglas (...) should be credited with helping us to consciousness about how fundamental body imagery is to world view” (Haraway 2001, 310). In her own text (and in her own, very different, mode), Haraway continued reflecting on some of Douglas’s subject matter – however, by going decidedly beyond scientific description and analysis of reality and calling for a deliberate intervention in it in order to create an alternative:

as she specifies, the manifesto is “an effort to build an ironic political myth” (2001, 291) “about transgressed boundaries” (2001, 295), which are no longer seen as a source of fear. The author calls her text “an argument for pleasure in the confusion of boundaries and for responsibility in their construction” (Haraway 2001, 292). After all, Haraway says, “[b]y the late twentieth century (...) we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism. In short we are cyborgs” (2001, 292).

In 1991, the same year when Donna Haraway published the final version of “A Cyborg Manifesto,” Jay David Bolter published *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*. Haraway focused on “the late twentieth century,” when, as she wrote, “machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines” (2001, 293–94). Bolter calls this time, which began in the 1970s (2001, 9) and continues today, “the late age of print” (2001, 2). His focus is on the latest development in writing technology, which has brought about yet another transgressed boundary: “[i]n the late age of print,” he says, “we seem more impressed by the impermanence and changeability of text, and digital technology seems to reduce the distance between author and reader by turning the reader into an author herself” (Bolter 2001, 4).

I would like to apply these briefly outlined observations to one early twenty-first-century literary work, James Lasdun's *Give Me Everything You Have*. In fact, focusing on the form of the book, I would like to read it as a combination of two kinds of texts, indeed a fusion of two writing technologies resulting from a collision – and perhaps a kind of involuntary “collaboration” – of two very different (co-)authors.

Give Me Everything You Have is a memoir published in February 2013. Its author, James Lasdun, is a poet and writer born in 1958 in London, who now lives in the US. The book has a subtitle: *On Being Stalked*, but its more precise version would read *On Being Cyberstalked*, as the work tackles cyberharassment. The memoir tells the author's own story of suffering cyberharassment for seven years (and still counting).¹ The cyberstalker, whom he calls Nasreen, was Lasdun's student in 2003, and began her destructive campaign three years later. The email correspondence which she initiated

¹ As we can read in “*Give Me Everything You Have*: A Postscript” posted (without a date) on the author's official website, the situation has not changed, and the author does not believe it ever will.

in late 2005 was originally innocent, at once professional and friendly. Gradually, however, it became increasingly flirtatious on her part, and, unexpectedly, after Lasdun had gently rejected Nasreen's romantic advances, it morphed into what later she herself labelled "verbal terrorism" (Lasdun 2013, 38).

"I don't know a precedent for this," said the author in an interview (Lasdun 2013a), referring both to his experience and to his book.² There have been both works of fiction and factual accounts of stalking, but this book is most likely the first account of *cyberstalking* endured and written about by a professional writer.³ What additionally complicates matters is the fact that the very instance of *cyberstalking* he experiences is also written *by* another author (i.e. perpetrated through her writing), albeit *unprofessional*. Therefore there are two co-authors of this story just as there are two necessary sides to (cyber)stalking: the stalkee and the stalker. Both of them write, but very differently, and the difference between their writing was very clearly defined from the day they met. The teacher-student relationship between James Lasdun and Nasreen begins within a creative writing workshop, between a published and accomplished writer and an aspiring novelist. Moreover, the younger woman, who desires to become like the master, also grows to desire the master, the older man. More contrasts exist between them to further problematise the relationship, which can be illustrated by the table below:

² There are likely to be many follow-ups, however. In the same "Postscript" referred to above Lasdun wrote: "After the book came out I heard dozens of stories about cyberstalking and internet malice (enough to suggest there was a minor epidemic going on)."

³ The genre of the book will not be my object here. What is worth briefly mentioning, however, is the inherently problematic nature of any memoir. A memoir's purported nonfiction status (Lasdun insists that his work is "all non-fiction" [2013a]) is usually difficult for the readers to ascertain and tends to be accepted in an automatic gesture of trust. A memoir - or any autobiographical writing - *by a writer* poses yet more analytical challenge, well illustrated e.g. by the story "Borges and I" by Jorge Luis Borges (Borges 2000).

category	James Lasdun	"Nasreen"
power relation	teacher	student
gender	male	female
age	older (in 2005 late 40s)	younger (in 2005 mid 30s)
professional status	acclaimed writer	unpublished aspiring writer
nationality	British	Iranian
religion and background	non-religious of Jewish origin	Muslim
"at-homeness" in the US	immigrant since 1986, comfortable	immigrant, problematic in post-9/11 America
personal situation	happily married, two young children	single and estranged from family

What adds to the unequal power relationship between the older male published author of (to date) five volumes of poetry and four collections of short stories, a novella, two novels, two screenplays and two guidebooks, as well as many essays and reviews, on the one hand, and the younger female student with an unpublished manuscript on the other – is their ethnic and religious background. Lasdun is a non-religious British Jew, much more “at home” in the US, and in particular in New York, especially after 9/11, than the Iranian-born Muslim woman who arrived in the US as a child. This difference becomes suddenly preeminent when Nasreen’s attacks reach an extra level of toxicity and become unequivocally anti-Semitic. In fact, this shift from a merely individual and personal abuse to an ethnic, religious and geopolitical conflict⁴ corresponds with a progression in the strategy of her campaign. In her smear campaign Nasreen accuses Lasdun of sexual

⁴ One critic, expressing her strong reservations about the memoir in an article posted on a website devoted to Muslim religion and culture, proposes that “The story of a sensitive, morally upright American, viciously attacked by an irrational, malevolent, Iranian, is an encapsulation of the international politics of the 2008–12 era, as seen by Western audiences” (Taylor 2014). The same critic also calls the book “a highly political text, which draws upon a cultural landscape of stereotypes about the Middle East, while presenting itself as innocent unfiltered observation” (Taylor 2014). This political and religious aspect addressed in *Give Me Everything You Have* reflects actual recent developments: an increase in anti-Semitic sentiments in the West in connection to the unabating tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Greenwood et al. 2016). Since it occupies a prominent portion of the book (the whole “Part IV: Mosaic” is devoted to it) it merits a separate article.

harassment – of her female fellow-students, and of herself by a kind of (variously described) involvement in her own rape (Lasdun 2013, 41, 116–17, 134), and of plagiarism. In short, she accuses him of the two worst things tarnishing the reputation of a teacher and a writer. The campaign grows in scale, from emails only to Lasdun, to emails sent to people associated with him: first the inner circle, such as his literary agent and former and present employers, then to people he never even met, whom, however, Nasreen implicates in a supposed collective Jewish conspiracy against her. Next, Nasreen learns how to appropriate other people’s email addresses and uses them to invade Lasdun’s email box, after which she impersonates Lasdun himself, using his own email address to send compromising emails to other people. She also vandalises his Wikipedia entry, writes damaging reviews of his books in Amazon.com, places defamatory comments under online articles by him or on him, etc.

The effect of this “verbal napalm” (Lasdun, 2013, 133) quickly becomes palpable for Lasdun:

Never mind that my real self was innocent of everything she accused me of: out there in cyberspace a larger, more vivid version of myself had been engendered and was rapidly (so I felt) supplanting me in the minds of other people. (Lasdun 2013, 133)

“This other version of me,” continued the author, “so much more vital and substantial than I felt myself to be by this time, had completed its usurpation of my identity and was running amok” (Lasdun 2013, 145) – rather like Dr Jekyll’s alter ego, Mr Hyde. To quote from Stevenson’s novella: “man is not truly one, but truly two” (Stevenson 1980, 79); however, in the Internet age the number of possibilities for selves may have grown larger, perhaps even infinite.

Just as the origin of Mr Hyde was a magic potion whose last and unique ingredient was an “unknown impurity which lent efficacy to the draught” (Stevenson 1980, 102), the origin of “the other version” of the author was also a kind of poison coming from a known source but for a not altogether known reason. In the venom, curiously, confessions of love blend with hateful rants, suspicions of insanity clash with sheer cleverness and calculation, leaving Lasdun feeling “flayed, utterly defenceless” (Lasdun 2013, 139). The author sees an adequate image for his predicament is nothing less than the BP oil

catastrophe of 2010: Lasdun pictures "Nasreen's hostility as that blackness on the spillcams, billowing unstoppably from the ocean floor" (Lasdun 2013, 139). The scale of the smear is now global: hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and as the author says "poison is spreading its plumes into the hitherto clear waters of my virtual self" (Lasdun 2013, 112). Dangerously, the virtual self had always been fluid, it was fluid to begin with, and therefore inevitably vulnerable.

In 2008, two years into the ordeal, Lasdun started experiencing health problems, which were most likely psychosomatic: he suffered insomnia, grew generally fatigued, his wife feared his self-harm (Lasdun 2013, 138). He described his reaction to Nasreen's relentless barrage of emails as an "abstract distillation of pure pain," and "thinking" about them as "feeling them pulsate in [his] mind like some malignant bolus" (Lasdun 2013, 136). In no uncertain terms, he experienced the whole predicament as a kind of disease: "The illness I had contracted was incurable. My adversary was stronger than I was" (Lasdun 2013, 155). As we read towards the end of the book and in the author's online commentary about it, most recently the "recurrent illness" has spread to his ear via the latest development in Nasreen's warfare, i.e. phone calls (Lasdun 2013, 211, "*Give Me Everything You Have: A Postscript*"). However, already early on, when malicious rumours started to spread, Lasdun "began to feel like a leper" (Lasdun 2013, 114), as if he was afflicted by a parasitic and ostracising infection.⁵

"I don't know if the Internet has created a whole new category of meanness," says Lasdun in an online interview (Lasdun 2013a), or perhaps it merely activated a latent virus, a sleeper in a sleeper terrorist cell. What Lasdun does know is that "It is real. It's something you do feel. It's a very peculiar kind of harm, smearing" (Lasdun 2013a). In the last pages of the book, Lasdun still states, "the stain of defamation continues to spread" (Lasdun 2013, 209). And even if it stopped, he could not just wash it off and forget about it. "The nature of a smear is that it survives formal cleansing, and I felt the foulness it had left behind, like an almost physical residue" (Lasdun 2013, 135).

⁵ However, Lasdun has compassionate supporters who are not only the likewise affected fellow-writes and other people who personally experienced Nasreen's wrath. There is a Facebook page (established on February 11, 2013, which coincided with the book's publication) called "Help Identify James Lasdun's Cyberstalker," with one post offering the real name of Nasreen (accessed on February 23, 2016).

The language Lasdun uses in describing his oppressor and the threat she poses and subjects him to – impurity, poison, stain, smear⁶ – echoes Mary Douglas’s *Purity and Danger*,⁷ which, in turn, is echoed in Zygmunt Bauman’s *Wasted Lives*: “Chaos, disorder, lawlessness, portends the infinity of possibilities and the limitlessness of inclusion; order stands for limits and finitude. In an orderly (ordered) space, not *everything* may happen” (2006, 31). In anthropological terms, it is not only Nasreen’s transgression – crossing boundaries, violating accepted norms – that are a quintessential source of danger, but so is her very state or her own current “nature.” When Lasdun compares her actions and their effect to oil, foulness and residue, “untouchable filth” (Lasdun 2013, 135), and an “unclean feeling” that “there was never time to purge” (Lasdun 2013, 129), he is also speaking about her, about her mixed, in-between state without borders that is not contained within the orderly confines of an individual self (as is the social norm), but seeps, slops, sullies and soils, transfers parts of herself onto another person thus creating a (reluctant for one side, desirable to the other) connection, blurring the boundary between the two selves. In other words, she is sticky. Discussing “stickiness,” Douglas refers to Jean Paul Sartre’s essay on the subject and adds her own observations:

The viscous is a state half-way between solid and liquid. It is like a cross-section in a process of change. It is unstable (...). Its stickiness is a trap, it clings like a leech; it attacks the boundary between myself and it. Long columns falling off my fingers suggest my own substance flowing into the pool of stickiness. (...) to touch stickiness is to risk diluting myself into viscosity. Stickiness is clinging, like a too-possessive dog or mistress. (Douglas 2007, 47)

In the case of Nasreen’s cyberstalking experienced by Lasdun, the tactile and material, distinctly bodily quality of this sensation paradoxically

⁶ Also stink: “I had been successfully targeted, and with the most primevally effective form of malediction: my name mingled with the smell of shit. Cockroaches, vermin, excrement... There are certain phenomena that, purely by association, have an ability to reassign a person from the category of human being, in their fellow citizens’ minds, to that of waste” (Lasdun 2013, 113).

⁷ Lasdun’s own knowledge about and “interest in purity and pollution” (Lasdun 2002, 186) can be inferred from the fact that he ascribed them to a character (the narrator’s wife) in his debut novel *The Horned Man*.

(but nonetheless entirely effectively) results from “nonphysical” actions carried out in immaterial cyberspace, in the digital environment – itself available to us through the material in-between layer (membrane?) of computer interface. An established order is disrupted in this marginal, borderline realm: hitherto reliable duality of binary opposites proves tenuous, becomes smudged or reversed. The complete lack of physicality between the stalker and the stalkee originated in and now stands in striking contrast to Nasreen’s desire for it. Real physical distance: the fact that Nasreen now operates as a completely disembodied cyberstalker who in actuality lives in a different US state (California), and the lack of direct physical harm, still manages to do (healthwise) physical damage to the stalkee, while protecting the cyberstalker from legal proceedings, since an extradition from California to New York is unlikely for a mere “misdemeanor” due to the costs this would incur (Lasdun 2013, 123–24). Consequently, while the stalkee’s own immune system – and the “social immunity system” of law and order that he resorts to – fail, “the electronic tsunami she unleashed” reveals Nasreen’s unbridled energy, “something manifestly creative in her unstoppable productivity” (Lasdun 2013, 214).

Moreover, just as her transgression is not limited by space, it is also not limited by time. She intends to go on forever: “I will not let you go,” she writes (Lasdun 2013, 145). In what she wants (love, reciprocity) she is like almost everyone else; the difference is that she does not stop. She goes too far; she “goes viral.” The disembodied cyberstalker is genuinely like a virus – this strange “entity” that certainly exists, yet does not “live,” according to mainstream scientific definitions; it is not a “living” organism. Its sole “purpose” is to go on forever, to replicate itself, and it does so by invading the cells of the host, reprogramming their genetic material. The cyberstalker needs the cyberstalkee as she needs cyberspace, which is the perfect environment for this virus to exist and spread.⁸ The result, says Lasdun, is “a vitality I couldn’t stop envying” (Lasdun 2013, 214).

This confession is probably the most striking paradox of the story, the fact that the stalkee is compelled to admire the stalker, in a distant echo of the initial real-life enthusiasm for her writing (“I was extremely impressed” [Lasdun 2013, 5]) and (judging by Lasdun’s descriptions of Nasreen’s looks) undeniable

⁸ And one that almost all of us are now addicted to. This fact, in effect our own complicity, must be one of the reasons why, as Lasdun says in his “Postscript,” cyberstalking has now become “a minor epidemic.”

physical attraction (Lasdun 2013, 7, 27, 93). Nasreen's own attraction to the author seems to be proportionate to his present repulsion; the longer and the more he rejects her by being silent, the stronger and louder her efforts to be heard, known, felt, not forgotten. Consequently, again paradoxically, the two are definitely having "a relationship" now, solidified and eternalised by the book which they have, in fact, co-created.

In *Hypertext 3.0* George P. Landow contemplates the phenomenon of "collaboration":

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, the verb *to collaborate* can mean either "to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort," or "to cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupying one's country." The combination of labor, political power, and aggressiveness that appears in this dictionary definition well indicates some of the problems that arise when one discusses collaborative work. On the one hand, the notion of collaboration embraces notions of working together with others (...). This meaning recognizes, as it were, that we all exist within social groups (...). On the other hand, collaboration also includes a deep suspicion of working with others (...). Most of our intellectual endeavors involve collaboration, but we do not always recognize that fact for two reasons. The rules of our intellectual culture, particularly those that define intellectual property and authorship, do not encourage such recognitions, and furthermore, information technology from Gutenberg to the present – the technology of the book – systematically hinders full recognition of collaborative authorship. (2006, 137-38)

What *encourages* recognition of collaborative authorship in the case of *Give Me Everything You Have* is that the book has not been "made" only by the technology of the book. In this book, print technology combines with the digital technology – far beyond the now quotidian fact that all books begin as electronic text and "pass through the computer on their way to the press" (Bolter 2001, 2), and in general "[d]igital media are refashioning the printed book" (Bolter 2001, 3). Lasdun's memoir includes copies of email correspondence, which gives the memoir both an epistolary and *electronic*

quality. Roughly 10% of the text⁹ is presented to us as directly quoted from Nasreen's emails (standing out from the rest of the text thanks to a different, "electronic-looking" font), in some of which she poses as someone else, including the author.

An obvious irony, and again, a self-fulfilling prophecy spelled out by Nasreen, which does not escape the author, is that the very book in which he protests his innocence against her accusations of plagiarism, quotes from her writing without her permission (Lasdun 2013, 164). Nasreen claims that Lasdun based one of his short stories (about a lonely woman who desperately lures men into her apartment hoping to seduce them) on her own words and ideas, and at the same time, somewhat contradictorily, she says "i'm [sic] living your short story out and I'm scared" (Lasdun 2013, 51). In another reversal, by means of her accusations of sexual harassment, she turns Lasdun into the protagonist of his first novel, *The Horned Man*, published in the year when the two met, and most likely read by her autobiographically (Nasreen proves to be the author's most attentive reader). The novel is about a British professor of Gender Studies, who is its Kafkaesque unreliable narrator. Lawrence Miller serves on the sexual harassment committee of his American college, and believes that he is being framed for being a sexual predator and murdering women.

In an interview, Lasdun calls this instance of life imitating art an "uncanny repetition" (Lasdun 2013a), to which must be added the "multiplying effect of the Internet," i.e. the infinite reproduction it makes possible (Lasdun 2013, 61). Indeed, the repetitions and reversals are many and dizzying: while Nasreen claims that her teacher stole her writing, she says that she lives out *his* writing, and ascribes to him *her* own (electronic) writing. Lasdun, in turn, anachronically, enacts her accusations, for instance he does come into contact with the strangers Nasreen accused him of conspiring with against her – and they do start to, in a way, conspire against her, i.e. exchange notes, advice, and ideas for how to cope with the whole predicament with the help of the police and the FBI (Khakpour 2013). Thus the cyberstalker's and the stalker's respective *words* become reality, and the border between the two becomes blurred.

⁹ If my count is correct, approximately 20 pages out of 218 are entirely her "text." In his review of the memoir for the *London Review of Books*, Nick Richardson says the amount is closer to 25%, which I find to be an overestimation.

Above all, *Give Me Everything You Have* does use Nasreen's writing and is based entirely on her (not copyrighted but *signature*) "idea" for cyberstalking and takes from her its very title, literally turning Nasreen's own words addressed to Lasdun "give me everything you have and go kill yourself" (Lasdun 2013, 210) *around*, sounding almost like a provocation. The quote expresses Nasreen's striking materialism, which stands in such stark contrast to the now *immaterial* form she has assumed: bizarrely, she repeatedly demands from Lasdun the keys to his New York apartment, as well as other forms of pecuniary compensation for the damage he had allegedly done to her. Now, the author may appear to be saying through the title of (mainly) *his* book, *you* give me everything you have and I will use my privileged position as an acclaimed writer to further my literary career and earn some money at your expense while I'm at it.¹⁰

Such would be a particularly suspicious reading of the title, echoing Landow's reflections on "collaboration" and the distrust it tends to generate quoted above. In the case of Lasdun's memoir, the practice of "collaboration" is conspicuously problematic, and yet textually undeniable. Landow's second definition of *to collaborate* could be applied to Lasdun and paraphrased here as: "to cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupying one's *mind*." For, even though the "lone jihadi," as Lasdun calls his "verbal terrorist," engages in "asymmetric warfare" (Lasdun 2013, 38), the result is yet another series of reversals and a kind of symmetry. The essence of Nasreen's tactic is that she has nothing to lose, while he has everything. In effect, the initial unequal power relationship between the female student and the male teacher is reversed: the powerless one uses her weakness as a source of strength, gaining

¹⁰ As one reviewer has concluded, "Lasdun got a book out of Nasreen, while she remains alone, her novel unpublished, clearly very ill" (Richardson 2013). The question of Nasreen's possible mental illness (a bi-polar disorder?) is, of course, an important aspect of the story; however, it is not explored in the book beyond Lasdun's explanation for his rejection of this diagnosis. Firstly, while acknowledging "borderline" aspects of Nasreen's personality and in fact her "communicating from a place well and truly across the border" (Lasdun 2013, 194), Lasdun argues that Nasreen was fully aware of the consequences of her actions and should be held accountable for them. Secondly, he points to her own "proclamations" of insanity, which to him are "precisely evidence that she was *not* insane" (Lasdun 2013, 194). However, immediately after making this statement, the author admits that he has "a strong vested interest" in the stalker's sanity, since he *wants* her to be held "responsible for her behaviour" (Lasdun 2013, 194). Moreover, writing about a mentally ill person, he says, would have "probably" made him feel "uncomfortable," and it would have diminished the book's literary quality (Lasdun 2013, 195). Nonetheless, regardless of his highly subjective, and, for some, questionable intentions, as one critic has put it, Lasdun's memoir is "a valuable portrait of borderline personality disorder, of which he unwittingly provides the most concisely accurate definition ever written" (Garman 2013).

extraordinary, supernatural powers. As Lasdun comes to realise, this idea of “leveraging one’s very powerlessness to exert power” was taken by Nasreen from his very own writing (Lasdun 2013, 46–47). Now, he learns this strategy from himself – however, only through her mediation: he borrows from her borrowing from himself, and this circularity yet again blurs the boundary between the two selves. However, the major manifestation of symmetry paradoxically resulting from Nasreen’s asymmetric warfare (or word-fare) is the fact that her obsession with Lasdun becomes replicated in his own obsession with her. Like a virus reprogramming the host’s genetic material, Nasreen has penetrated and modified Lasdun’s consciousness *and* his subconscious. As he says, “I couldn’t think about anything except her, and pretty soon I couldn’t talk about anything except her” (Lasdun 2013, 129). Inevitably, he also couldn’t write about anything else, hence *Give Me Everything You Have*. In Lasdun’s act of writing the book, one more reversal takes place: the victim of someone who considers *herself* a victim is now no longer just a victim, he refuses to be passively and silently victimised. For this purpose, Lasdun says, “without being entirely aware of it, I had enlisted Nasreen as a guide to help me through the very crisis she herself had precipitated” (Lasdun 2013, 214).

If she was “enlisted” as “a guide to help,” and the means of Lasdun’s self-help is the memoir (the genre can be seen as a therapeutic and cathartic exercise, a self-prescribed and self-administered cure), then she can be considered its “co-author.” What additionally blurs the distinction between the two authors is Lasdun’s own ambiguous and controversial status as an alleged oppressor/exploiter and/or victim, as well as his malleable online identity, which both match, in another instance of symmetry, the cyberstalker’s own “borderline” and “border-crossing” personality as well as her Internet-enabled “porousness” and “amorphousness” (Lasdun 2013, 141). However, one important and as yet not mentioned divergence between them is that, while Lasdun is a digital “alien,” Nasreen is a native-like digital immigrant;¹¹ in other words, she is very much at home in cyberspace; the electronic environment is, in fact, one in which she thrives. This fact stands in sharp contrast to Nasreen’s situatedness not only in the physical reality they both share, the United States of America, but also in one sub-aspect of this context, namely the literary market, which she wishes to enter, but is denied access. Even

¹¹ Nasreen was born in the 1970s, i.e. too soon to be considered a digital native.

though, according to Lasdun, “everything about Nasreen’s profile – age, gender, nationality – seemed to me to make her an eminently marketable prospect” (Lasdun 2013, 12), and indeed, soon there was “a spate of novels and memoirs, some of them bestsellers, published by young women of Iranian origin” (Lasdun 2013, 56), Nasreen is (and above all feels) excluded from the print technology. As Landow more realistically points out, by its association with writing as an individual rather than a collaborative act, the book technology, generally speaking, “supports a traditional patriarchal construction of authorship and authority” (2006, 140). And, as Jay David Bolter adds, “[b]ecause printing a book is a costly and laborious task, few readers have the opportunity to become published authors” (Bolter 2001, 161–62).

Nasreen, paradoxically, finds her way into this very technology through the digital technology. Her electronic text becomes absorbed by the paper book: through the more traditional author’s copying and pasting (a distinctly selective and authoritative, even manipulative, act that restores some sense of control to him) the print text incorporates fragments of electronic text as well as other digital media, such as digital voice recordings and especially digital photos – both of which are available to us as if through a hyperlink – they open up (the readers can *virtually* hear and see them) through Lasdun’s description of what he can actually hear and see. The result is a fusion of technologies – a hypertext-like print text.

However, this memoir’s hypertextual qualities go beyond what can be found in earlier pro- or metahypertextual works, such as Lawrence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the writings of Jorge Luis Borges (Bolter 2001, 140–47) or Italo Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller* (Jeżyk 2005). Similarly to them, *Give Me Everything You Have* has a rambling, rather convoluted non-linear structure, resembling a labyrinth with many entries, leading to a centre (the core problem, which, however, proves elusive and saturates the whole), but with no exit yet in sight. It is repetitive and has a highly intertextual dimension.¹² However, it goes a step further than being “a metahypertext without electricity” (Jeżyk 2005, 62) – firstly, because it is not a work of fiction but an instance of life-writing, and secondly, because it literally contains electronic text incorporated into the more traditional medium. As a result, the older medium becomes

¹² The main literary work that Lasdun refers to is the late 14th-century Middle English chivalric romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Among other major references are Patricia Highsmith’s *Stangers on a Train* and Sigmund Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism*.

changed by the newer one from the inside. The vehicle is hijacked by “the lone jihadi” – or: the host is reprogrammed, as if by a (cyber)virus. On the one hand, the memoir literally and metaphorically contains Nasreen (she has become a text, a voice¹³); on the other hand, exactly by doing so, the traditional text is opened up, becomes a continuum or – to refer to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari – a rhizome-like network is now created between this memoir, its (primary) author's other works, and other instances of life-writing concerning him (such as texts about him and about his works in both print and digital form) and the writing by Nasreen that is part of that life-writing (when she intervenes into his Wikipedia entry or a *Guardian* review of his book, and especially when she usurps his identity and writes pretending to be him). In this sense, as Bolter was quoted saying at the very beginning of this article, “[i]n the late age of print (...) we seem more impressed by the impermanence and changeability of text, and digital technology seems to reduce the distance between author and reader by turning the reader into an author herself” (Bolter 2001, 4). This is connected with the fact that even more so than in “the late twentieth century,” as Donna Haraway wrote somewhat hyperbolically and futuristically, “we are all (...) hybrids of machine and organism” (2001, 292). In the early twenty-first century we may “all” be “cyborgs,” but some of us are more “cyborg” than others.

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¹³ Nasreen's actual voice can, in fact, be heard on James Lasdun's official website: his “Postscript” provides hyperlinks to two MP3 files with recordings of her messages left on Lasdun's telephone.

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The Neutral Voice of the Subject: Samuel Beckett and Maurice Blanchot

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Abstract: The question of who speaks in Beckett's work is one that has intrigued critics ranging from Maurice Blanchot to Jacques Derrida. This undecidability stems predominantly from a modernist poetics characterized by authorial neutrality, the effect of which is a floating, anchorless and disseminated subject that resists articulation and has no definite point of origin. The speaking voice, therefore, becomes the proxy for this subject, itself a spectral entity which incessantly presents the subject despite its desire for silence. The aim of this article is to examine subjectivity in Beckett's fiction, especially the third part of his trilogy, *The Unnamable*, in reference to the agency of the voice as it is defined in Maurice Blanchot's concept of the neutral voice. Blanchot's theory of neutrality gives insight into the paradoxical nature of subjectivity in Beckett's fiction by foregrounding the irresolvable aporetic undermining the objective/subjective dualism at the heart of Western metaphysics.

Keywords: Beckett, Blanchot, subjectivity, voice, modernism, philosophy

Much of the considerable scholarly output dealing with subjectivity in Beckett's work seems to have been inspired by poststructuralist theory, and, indeed, it goes without saying that such philosophers as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze have been instrumental in occasioning a paradigm shift in Beckett studies from predominantly existential considerations to studies concerned more with linguistic instability and authorial indeterminacy. Incidentally, all three aforementioned philosophers had at one point or another written or undertaken studies on Beckett – Foucault refers to Beckett extensively in formulating his ideas relating to the author's demise and Deleuze regards Beckett's prose as an a prime example exhaustion.

The notable exception among these philosophers is Derrida, who mentioned in his interview with Derek Attridge that his inability to write about Beckett stems from the proximity that exists between his style and Beckett's (Attridge 1992, 61). This poststructuralist tendency in Beckett criticism is further exemplified by publications devoted primarily to this topic: Eric Migernier's *Beckett and French Theory: The Narration of Transgression*, Anthony Uhlmann's *Beckett and Poststructuralism*, and Paul Stewart's *Zone of Evaporation*, where the topic of Derrida and Beckett is thoroughly addressed.

It, therefore, comes as little surprise that what most contemporary criticism of subjectivity in Beckett's writing suggests is a predominantly postmodern view, focusing on subjectivity as severed from its metaphysical source, destabilized, absent or in infinite regress. Couched comfortably in poststructuralist jargon, such studies tend to present subjectivity as an illusory by-product of language, instead of a source of meaning. Accordingly, all intimations of a self are seen as merely treading the surface of language which has come to be understood more as an infinite system of references than a referential system of signs. The effect of this reconceptualization is the appearance of a floating subject that has no anchor in any ideality, a conception which seems to offer insight into Beckett's strategies of frustrating cognitive comprehension.

Though these various interpretations of subjectivity have gone a long way in bringing to light a postmodern Beckett, it would be beneficial to trace Beckett's artistic and theoretical decisions back to his contemporary, Maurice Blanchot, whose fiction and theoretical work provides us with a most fertile context within which to examine Beckett's artistic strategies, not to mention the important influence his work exerted on French criticism of the 1960s. In many ways Blanchot's work anticipated the turn in literary theory associated with Derrida, Foucault and Deleuze, which is why relating Beckett's prose directly to Blanchot is of particular importance and will be the primary focus of this article. Though critics have commented on the affinity between Beckett and Blanchot (most notably Simon Critchley and Leslie Hill), there exist, however, few studies that develop particular aspects of this relationship. There is relatively little information about Maurice Blanchot beyond the role he had in French politics and literature. His writing can be divided into four types: political journalism, literary reviews, novels and a hybrid style of writing which escapes classification, often referred to as *recits* written in an enigmatic and aphoristic style (*Awaiting Oblivion*

is a prime example). There is no evidence that the two writers had been acquainted with one another personally, we also do not know to what extent Beckett was familiar with Blanchot's work; however, we do know that it would have been highly unlikely for Beckett not to have been aware of Blanchot, given his position as editor in in "Journal des débats" in Paris during the 30s. On the other hand, Blanchot acquaintance with Beckett's work is well-established, given the brief references to Beckett in *The Infinite Conversation*, the more developed analysis, entitled "Where Now? Who Now?" found in a collection of critical essays entitled *The Book to Come*, and the glowing review of *The Unnamable*, which was, in the words of Beckett's biographer Anthony Cronin, "a milestone in the progress of Beckett's reputation" (436). What constitutes the common ground between these two writers can be defined as a concern with the ambiguous ontological status of the speaking subject in literature or, more precisely, "the link between language and negativity, where negativity describes the power of language to negate the reality of things through the insubstantiality of the word" (Hasse and Large 2001, 25).

The question of who speaks in Beckett's work is acutely articulated in *The Unnamable*, a book that not only exemplified Beckett's treatment of subjectivity but redirected his work towards a more exhaustive, minimalistic prose style. This is not to say that *Texts for Nothing, Ill Seen Ill Said*, and the earlier *Watt* could not serve this purpose; yet, what *The Unnamable* seems to present is the most distilled formulation of Beckett's incessant themes, whereas his later work presents variations and developments of that theme. It is in this last volume of what has come to be considered a trilogy (*Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*), where the subject is thrust into a purely hypothetical and predominantly linguistic existence, questioning its own existence. In one of the few recorded interviews (with Isreal Shenker), Beckett said "in my last book - *The Unnamable* - there's complete disintegration. No I, no 'have', no 'being'. No nominative, no accusative, no verb. There's no way to go on" (Shenker 1979, 147). With the end of this trilogy Beckett believed to have come to an impasse in his writing career, unsure whether he would be able to write anything beyond *The Unnamable*.

Nothing is certain of who the I speaker is, a point made clear with the three questions opening the novel: "Where now? Who now? When now?", questions which are left unanswered, forcing the I speaker to find his bearings with only what is at hand - figments of memories and imagination (elements often taken from Beckett's earlier texts). Indeed, much of *The Unnamable* is organized

around a failed attempt at constituting self-consciousness with a singular voice narrating its disembodied 'self' in a dark empty space. "In my life, since we must call it so, there were three things, the inability to speak, the inability to be silent, and solitude, that's what I've had to make the best of" (Beckett 1973, 400). This paradoxical position of not being able to be silent while at the same time not being able to say anything defines the ontological status of the I speaker. At one point this speaking "I" asks: "Do they believe I believe it is I who am speaking? That's theirs too. To make me believe I have an ego all my own, and can speak of it, as they of theirs" (Beckett 1973, 248). This constant questioning mired in self-doubt, paranoiac conviction that one's sense of self is a lie perpetuated by some mysterious "they" suggests a desire for self-constitution or self-definition, but it is a desire that is constantly frustrated, as the narrative voice is often led astray with linguistic games and logical paradoxes, enacting a playful response to Descartes's establishment of the modern subject.

The speaking voice has no name, but, as the title states, it is also unnamable; the names that do appear quickly change and are succeeded by other names, or "delegates" which speak on behalf of the voice, thus avoiding a fixed place in the linguistic sphere. "But it's entirely a matter of voices, no other metaphor is appropriate, they've blown me up with their voices, like a balloon, and even as I collapse it's them I hear. Who, them?" (Beckett 1973, 327).

The act of naming is a powerful theme here with multiple references and questions. Biblically, naming is conflated with creation; conversely, this desire to name the self can also be construed as an imposition of language onto a pre-linguistic, and, therefore, semantically empty, self. This, in turn, bears a completely opposite conceptualization of naming. As Leslie Hill in his study on Beckett states:

To accept the name inscribed by others is to be born under an assumed name, and therefore not to live but die, just as to be buried under a false name is not to die at all, but to live on as a restless ghost. (Hill 1990, 106)

This ghostly, disembodied voice is precisely that, a nameless, and, therefore, dispossessed, subject whose sole claim to existence is hearing oneself speak.

The question which revolves around the precarious ontological status of the I speaker, the uncertainty of the I speaker's presence in language

undermines his existence as such. With only language as the medium, the final I, like the transcendental referent, is always kept at bay in the interminable referential game Beckett's prose plays. This understanding of subjectivity is in line with postmodern thinking, which, generally speaking, frustrates any kind of teleological satisfaction by negating referential certainty; hence, the critique of postmodern depthlessness by Jameson, simulations by Baudrillard's and logocentrism by Derrida to name only the most salient examples. What we do have in Beckett's prose, amid and perhaps behind the characters and discarded names, is a singular voice. As Chris Ackerley writes in his article for *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui*,

The mystery of the voice is the paradox that drives Samuel Beckett's supreme fiction, the three novels that culminate in *The Unnamable*, and then manifests itself in the fiction (and ultimately in the drama) that follows. It may be finally, Beckett's most profound literary creation. (Ackerley 2004, 40)

It is with this concept of voice that any discussion of subjectivity in Beckett's fiction should begin. This voice is not only a creation of literature but is also, at the same time, the necessary remnant of literature, it is what remains after language is turned on itself in a self-questioning aporetic that characterizes the drawn-out monologues found in *The Unnamable*. It is indeed a profound literary creation, because this voice which breathes life into the Beckettian subject seems to be always alien to the subject, as if to speak of the voice of the Beckettian subject is to silence its profundity. There seems to be, therefore, no voice that would once and for all belong to the subject. All the words are spoken by "them," by the invisible others, whose voices only provisionally assume the guise of the unitary self. The self, which is only the hearing self, is thus without a mouthpiece of its own; it is merely brought into existence by the voices of others, just like Echo's words are provided by Narcissus. In the attempt to escape the contextualizing effects of the voice, the unnamable systematically rids itself of all the images in which his self takes form, all the past literary incarnations of the subject from previous books,

All these Murphys, Molloy's, and Malones do not fool me. They have made me waste my time, suffer for nothing, speak of them

when, in order to stop speaking, I should have spoken of me and of me alone. (Beckett 1973, 305)

To this end, Beckett pares down language to its minimum structure; in a negative movement he isolates the impossibility of isolating anything like a voice or a center of the subject. Repeatedly, the I speaker expresses the frustrated longing for the voices to stop, “Ah if only this voice could stop, this meaningless voice which prevents you from being nothing” (Beckett 1972, 374) or for a voice to be appropriated, “Ah if I could only find a voice of my own, in all this babble, it would be the end of their troubles, and of mine” (Beckett 1973, 351). But in both cases the voice is deferred, always beyond reach, though language nonetheless necessitates the use of the “I” standing in the place of the subject, thereby creating the illusion of a stable subjectivity.

It is this idea of the deferred apperception of self-consciousness that constitutes the narrative as well as what is often paradoxically interpreted as being the manifestation of self-consciousness. The title itself – *The Unnamable* – is precisely this designation of an empty space, where the possibility of signifying mainly asserts itself but without meaning and content to follow suit; it is in effect a marker of its own absence, an externalization of its emptiness and impossibility. And yet, language brings with it a certain declaration of presence from which Beckett’s prose constantly and in vain struggles to reject. Paul Stewart remarks of this situation that “Presence, the verb to be, always intrudes upon the language, or, rather, is a condition of that language” (Stewart 138) and later goes on to correctly argue that such a declarative statement as “to be” seems to be an unavoidable necessity entailed by language itself, it is, as Stewart says, “inevitable and inadequate, because it grants too much, for the Unnamable’s situation” (Stewart 138). Language is the excess that is being pared away with each word, thereby constituting the fundamental *aporia* of Beckettian poetics. The first page of *The Unnamable* states this problem succinctly with a series of questions and self-contradictory statements:

I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me. These few general remarks to begin with. What am I to do, what shall I do, what should I do, in my situation, how to proceed? By *aporia* pure and simple? Or by negations and affirmations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later? (Beckett 1973, 293)

This aporetic impasse separating the speaking subject from the attainment of silence and non-being necessitates a method of apophatic speech, negating whatever is affirmed in a process of reduction *ad nihilo*.

So who speaks in Beckett's prose? The question of the speaking voice and its relation to subjectivity in Beckett's trilogy is elaborated in Blanchot's essay the title of which comes from the first sentence of *The Unnamable*, "Where Now? Who Now?". This is not the only text where Blanchot refers to Beckett, though it is the only one where Beckett is given center stage and is not just mentioned in passing. As is the case with much of Blanchot's work, the purpose of this essay is not solely to offer an interpretation or commentary on the work of another writer, but to showcase his own theoretical arsenal. The question of the neutral voice speaking from behind the veil of the text occupies much of Blanchot's writing and it also happens to be of the most important themes in relation to Beckett's writing. Blanchot starts his article with a question: "Who is speaking in the books of Samuel Beckett? What is this tireless "I" that seemingly always says the same thing? Where does it hope to come?" (Blanchot 2003, 210). Blanchot is using this question to make a case for his concept of the neutre.

In an attempt to define the neuter, we will come upon the same difficulties as with Derrida's *différance* or Levinas's *il y a*, none of which are concepts in the strictest sense of the term. Much like these terms, the neutre is meant to stand beyond conceptualization and is, therefore, indefinable. However, residing outside the narrative and ultimately outside signification, this neutral space is what precedes language and what makes language possible. Blanchot in *The Infinite Conversation* states explicitly that:

The neuter is that which cannot be assigned to any genre whatsoever: the non-general, the non-generic, as well as the non-particular. It refuses to belong to the category of subject as much as it does to that of object. And this does not simply mean that it is still undetermined and as though hesitating between the two, but rather that the neuter supposes another relation depending neither on objective conditions nor on subjective dispositions. (Blanchot 1993, 299)

The neuter, therefore, occupies a pre-ontological place in which the very distinction between presence and absence or between subject and object

is irrelevant. What is absolutely unknown, unable to be known is the neuter and so it is not a site of possibility but of radical and infinite impossibility through which literature and writing can exist.

As Leslie Hill points out in his study on Blanchot, “the neutre is perhaps best understood as a movement of perpetual effacement and re-inscription that is logically prior to all conceptual distinctions” (Hill 1997, 132). Again it is important to emphasize that the neuter as well as namelessness necessarily precede language and thus cannot be applied and subordinated to the logic of dialectics. Nevertheless, despite this conceptual marginality, namelessness and the neuter refer to the impossible limit of thought, which is always already the “alterity that is at the origin of all thought as such” (Blanchot 1997, 133). For Blanchot this originary state of namelessness is precisely the domain of the neuter.

This is also the situation one finds in *The Unnamable*, where the speaking “I” recedes into the neutral background. With the loss of the “I”, the narrative voice of *The Unnamable* slips into a neutral space, which is neither the voice of the author (who, for all intents and purposes, is dead) nor the voice of the narrator, who maintains an infinite distance from the text. At one point the narrator says that:

It is not mine, I have none, I have no voice and must speak, that is all I know, it’s round that I must revolve, of that I must speak, with this voice that is not mine, but can only be mine, since there is no one but me, or if there are others, to whom it might belong, they have never come near me. (Beckett 1973, 309)

Some light on this point is shed by Blanchot, who in the first chapter of *The Space of Literature*, called “The Essential Solitude”, deals with the solitude encountered by the writer upon entering the literary work. One of the essential conditions of the work, for Blanchot, is that it must be separated not only from the world but also from the self: “to write is to break the bond that unites the word with myself” (Blanchot 1982, 26). This notion can be traced back to Stéphane Mallarmé’s “Crisis in Poetry”: “The pure work implies the disappearance of the poet as speaker, yielding his initiative to words, which are mobilized by the shock of their difference” (Mallarmé 1982, 75). In addressing the role of solitude of the writer who loses authoritative control

over his work, Blanchot conceptualizes literature as containing statements which

state nothing, that is not the repose, the dignity of silence, because it is what is still speaking when everything has been said, what does not precede speech because it instead prevents it from being a beginning of speech, just as it withdraws from speech the right and the power to interrupt itself. (Blanchot 1982, 26)

It is language that is supposed to speak in literature, not the author whose link with the reader must be severed if such an unveiling of language is to take place. Moreover, it should be remembered that, according to Blanchot, the writer does not put language to use for the purpose of expressing “the exactitude and certainty of things and values according to the sense of their limits” (Blanchot 1982, 26) but instead must ‘surrender to the interminable’ (Blanchot 1992, 27). Therefore, the disappearing “I” speaker that we find in *The Unnamable*, its waning authorial voice, must recede into the background if language is to speak in a voice disposed of its owner.

As was mentioned before, the arbitrariness of naming is a central problem in *The Unnamable* and perpetuates a self-effacing withdrawal from all names and deictic markers. It seems that Blanchot could have been writing about *The Unnamable* when he said that “[t]he novelist is a person who refuses to say “I” but delegates that power to other people; the novel is filled with little “egos”” (Blanchot 1999, 461). Are not the Murphys, Molloys and Malones mentioned earlier precisely these egos preventing the I speaker from speaking in his name? The defining property of literature for Blanchot is the departure from the first person “I” towards the impersonal “he” (it should be pointed out here that in French “he” and “it” share the same pronoun “il”). In the trilogy, there is a similar withdrawal from the first person pronoun, as the characters of Molloy, Moran or other names these “delegates” assume no longer have corporeal presence, and are conceptualized only in the form of voices. Eventually, these voices refuse even the pronoun “I”, opting instead for the impersonality of the third person: “I shall not say I again, ever again, it’s too farcical. I shall put in its place, whenever I hear it, the third person, if I think of it” (Beckett 1973, 358). The neutral “he” should not be seen as representing yet another site from which the narrator can speak, it is not another mouthpiece for the writer; instead, the neutral “he” could be seen as representing

the alterior voice, speaking from beyond the limits of the narrative, its source remaining outside the narrative and outside language.

As Simon Critchley notes, what speaks in Beckett's work is "an incessant, interminable and indeterminable voice that reverberates outside of all intimacy, dispossessing the 'I' and delivering it over to a nameless outside" (Critchley 1997, 173). It would, however, be a gross generalization to state that Beckett's fiction enacts a wholesale rejection of subjectivity. This endeavor would be impossible, which is precisely the idea behind the impossible obligation of the incessant voice. In an oft-quoted passage, referring to Bran Van Velde's painting, Beckett said that in art he prefers "the expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express" (Beckett 1984, 139). Compare this with Blanchot's thoughts about obligation in "From Dread to Language": "possessed of nothing but my voice, the voice, it may seem natural, once the obligation has been swallowed, that I should interpret it as an obligation to say something. But is it possible?" (Blanchot 1973, 313). In both cases we see the obligation to express being married to the impotence of such an endeavor, an attempt that will inevitably lead to circularity and aporia, not rejection, not liquidation. The impossibility of the voice to represent itself in both Beckett's and Blanchot's writing constitutes not an illusory end in itself but a determining force calling one to write, which is the source of literature.

Blanchot's concept of the neuter, obscure as it may be, provides a language that goes some way towards coming to terms with the paradoxical nature of subjectivity in Beckett's fiction. Namely, it is a subjectivity that is predicated on a voice, which – as Derrida has already pointed out – is imbued with a privileged association with presence. Beckett demonstrates what Derrida later conceptualized, namely, that every concept that has been assigned qualities of plenitude and metaphysical purity is always dependent in some way or another on the exteriority that it excludes, a dependence which inevitably implicates the other into the same. The voice is as impotent as the written word in determining its source. What Blanchot's neuter brings to the fore, apart from anticipating the type of rhetoric Derrida would employ in his deconstructive readings, is the possibility of thinking otherwise, thinking in a way that would bypass the dialectical reasoning rooted in Cartesian notion of subjectivity. This negative, or apophatic, approach to subjectivity is a continuation of Mallarmé's and Blanchot's poetics which attempt to reinstate

the idea of language divorced from the writer. Because language is seen as an alien imposition on the subjectivity of the I speaker, it can never serve the purpose of expressing anything related to apperception or pure expression. In the hands of Beckett and Blanchot, language used as an end in itself, not a referential medium that might be able to express anything beyond its existence. This particular literary tradition harkening back to Mallarmé and revived by Blanchot is very much a part of Beckett's poetics of inexpressibility, especially in regards to the ontological status of the subject in language.

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Faced with Otherness: A Few Remarks on Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*

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Abstract: *Dancing at Lughnasa* by Irish playwright Brian Friel is a play marked by the notion of the Other. In the present article this concept is understood in two ways as either an inferior term in each of the binary oppositions that the drama is rich in or as a notion denoting an unfamiliar, alien quality that is very different from the typical Western point of view. The former means of reading the term can be elaborated on with the use of the Derridean concept of logocentrism which leads to a display of various binary terms present in the play. The latter understanding of the term "the Other" comes from Edward Said's reading of "the Orient" as the Other for the Occident. These two renderings of the term lead to the conclusion that the Other is omnipresent in the play and that the understanding of this concept facilitates the decoding of the message conveyed by the play.

Key words: Brian Friel, the Other, Jacques Derrida, Edward Said, binary oppositions

Brian Friel's play *Dancing at Lughnasa* is a story of five unmarried sisters whose lives focus solely on household chores. They live with Michael, the son of Chris (one of the sisters), and are accompanied by their elder brother Jack, who has come back from Africa after serving as a priest in a leper colony. On two occasions they are visited by Michael's father - Gerry. The only moment of their rebellion against patriarchal rules represented by the Church and the State comes in a dance which the Mundy sisters perform in the silence of their rural kitchen. The Church and the State are visible in the play due to the omnipresence of a local priest who has a great influence on the inhabitants. Friel's dramatic piece is rich in many oppositions between female and male experience, power relations and body-language dichotomies. This

article is an attempt to show that these oppositions function as binary terms which deconstruct themselves in the course of the play. What will be essential in order to explain these dichotomies and, simultaneously, to show that they co-exist, is Jacques Derrida's notion of logocentrism and the idea of oppositions where one term is culturally constructed as superior to the other, which is seen as worse and inferior (the Other), yet, in fact, defines the essence of the former. *Dancing at Lughnasa* reveals a number of such binary terms at the core of the play: man vs. woman, Catholic vs. pagan, order vs. disorder. I will try to show that these oppositions are omnipresent in the play.

Moreover, when it comes to the notion of the Other, it will be necessary to mention Edward Said's definition of Orientalism in relation to the Orient being the Other for the Occident, as the characteristics attributed to the Orient fit very well with some characters from *Dancing at Lughnasa*, especially Father Jack, described as one who "went native." My analysis of Orientalism will show that the traits associated with the Orient are not only comparable with Jack's characterization, but also congruent with the Mundy sisters and Ballybeg itself, the place where they live and where the Lughnasa dances are held.¹

To discuss binary oppositions in a critically and theoretically informed way, it is crucial to draw on Derrida and his ideas. In *On Deconstruction*, Jonathan Culler quotes Derrida's argument and asserts, in an attempt to elucidate Derridean thought, that

[p]hilosophy has been a "metaphysics of presence," the only metaphysics we know. "It could be shown," Derrida writes, "that all names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated the constant of a presence." (Culler 1982, 92)

¹ The third theory that could be used here to show how paganism and the Orient are connected with the Mundy family and Lughnasa celebrations is the process of interweaving cultures in performance as described by Erika Fischer-Lichte. When interwoven with the superficially Catholic family of Ballybeg, the concepts of the Orient and otherness present the Mundy sisters in a totally different view and thus shed a new light on the sisters' rebellious behaviour. However, given the limited length of this paper it would be impossible to address the issue of post-colonialism and the political meaning of interweaving cultures in performance, as understood by Fischer-Lichte, in detail, as it would require thorough explanation.

He then mentions concepts such as "consciousness, subjectivity, co-presence of the self and the other" (1982, 92–3) and asserts, after Derrida, that

[e]ach of these concepts, all of which involve a notion of presence, has figured in philosophical attempts to describe what is fundamental and has been treated as a centering, grounding force or principle. In oppositions such as meaning/form, soul/body, intuition/expression, literal/metaphorical, nature/culture, intelligible/sensible, positive/negative, transcendental/empirical, serious/nonserious, the superior term belongs to the logos and is a higher presence; the inferior term marks a fall. Logocentrism thus assumes the priority of the first term and conceives the second in relation to it, as a complication, a negation, a manifestation, or a disruption of the first. (Culler 1982, 93)

The binary oppositions present in *Dancing at Lughnasa* can also be characterized in this way. One of the two terms is always seen and culturally constructed as the superior term, whereas the other seems to be worse in relation to the former and its significance is actually built on the priority of the former and in opposition to it – thus it is *the Other* one.

In order to explain further how the binary oppositions work, it is pertinent to mention Derrida's words quoted by Culler: "[a]ll metaphysicians have proceeded thus, from Plato to Rousseau, from Descartes to Husserl: good before evil, the positive before the negative, the pure before the impure, the simple before the complex, the essential before the accidental, the imitated before the imitation, etc." (Culler 1982, 93). Thus, in each binary opposition, one term is as if privileged and the second one becomes "the Other" element, something worse, marginalised and inferior. Such process works perfectly in every opposition of terms that could be formulated on the basis of the play.

The most visible binary opposition in the play is that of man vs. woman, where the masculine perspective is highlighted from the very beginning of the drama by means of the presence of the male narrator Michael. It is thus shown that the interpretation of the play and the story it conveys will be based on the subjective remarks expressed by a boy who is a constant observer of his aunts. The male perspective dominates over the female one, and as Harris observes, "Friel has cast Michael in the roles of both on-looker and representative of the writer at different stages of Friel's understanding

of the action" (1997, 47). Thus, the sisters are not only controlled by the male environment in the play (the priest's surveillance of the dancing body and bodily conduct, the State and the Church controlling the dances, Jack's going native, which starts the downfall of the whole family), but also supervised by Michael, the narrator, whose words serve Friel as a way to reveal his own mastery of events. Although Kiberd notes that "by focusing on five unmarried but sensuous sisters, Friel brilliantly avoids the usual stereotypes - mother, martyr, virgin" (2001, 24), it is even more frustrating that, devoid of stereotyped roles, the women's lives are finally embraced by a failure as their momentary rebellion does not let them avoid the lingering doom of the family and their dissatisfaction with life. Men are the controlling force and with a spontaneous moment of insurgency the sisters are finally doomed to calamity.

The above-mentioned opposition of man vs. woman is the most vivid example of women being constructed on the basis of what men allow or forbid them to do. Yet, Friel is very successful in showing the rebellion on the women's part—their outburst of emotions in the form of a dance. As McMullan observes, "[i]f, on a reflexive level, the activity of dancing |in the play is posited as the 'other' of narrative authority, diegetically it is presented as the subversive other of institutionalised ideology" (1999, 92). Thus, dance is also a kind of "Other" in a binary opposition, which McMullan posits as an "opposition between language and its corporeal 'other', dancing, which reverberates throughout the play" (1999, 90). On the basis of McMullan's observation another kind of binary opposition, that is language vs. dancing, may be formulated.

The sisters dodge the patriarchal restraints by wielding corporeal power, that is by engaging in a dance. At the same time, they are, by this very token, doing something regarded as inferior, because dance expresses emotions rather than intellectual ideas and its exact message is much harder to construe than that of language, which remains a potent tool of patriarchal, logocentric culture. Furthermore, Ojrzyńska rightly observes that

[b]ased on the gendered dichotomy between body and language, dance is presented by Friel largely as a female attribute that has the power ... to subvert the patriarchal order in an often explosive fashion, which may be seen as a form of rebellion ... against imposed restrictions and inhibitions. (Ojrzyńska 2015, 60)

McMullan observes: “[a]s it is the women who are most corporeally restrained by the prevailing religious discipline, it is the dance amongst women which subverts that discipline most radically” (1999, 93–4). She later adds that “[t]he women become ‘other’ to their usual, controlled selves” (1999, 94), and it is not surprising that in his final monologue Michael remarks:

Dancing as if language had surrendered to movement – as if this ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper private and sacred things, to be in touch with some otherness. (Friel 1999, 107-8)

Another very important binary opposition that underscores the rebellion on the sisters’ part is order vs. disorder. Order is undoubtedly superior in relation to disorder which contains the notion of otherness in its meaning, being the negation of order (dis-order). Disorder is an element of the sisters’ rebellion, sexuality and women’s dancing bodies, as opposed to order which is indicative of patriarchy, purity, and language. Thus, order comprises institutions such as the Irish Dancing Commission or Gaelic League² which, despite not being directly mentioned in the play, show in the characters’ awareness of many prohibitions to dance in public or to display a woman’s body in front of a male viewer.

The binary opposition between man and woman is dominated by the hierarchy that privileges man. It is man that has the characteristics of “higher presence,” the woman being just the other, a poorer addition and realisation. In the opposition of man vs. woman, language is the attribute of men (Michael – narrator, Friel – writer, the priest – preaching patriarchal rules enforced by the Church), whereas the body and dance become women’s attributes (the dances performed by the sisters as a means of liberating themselves from the enforced rules). This shows that reason, understood in abstract terms, is men’s domain, the body (irrationality) being the domain of women. Nevertheless, in this relationship the dance becomes for the women in the play a way to show their momentary but powerful rebellion.

² The Irish Dancing Commission was set up in order to classify the dances according to their origins, and only the native ones could be danced by the people of Ireland. The Gaelic League was at first concerned with the preservation of Irish language but later developed into an organization that also focused on dance and was an initiator of the Irish Dancing Commission.

It is important to mention that Western culture's logocentrism as understood by Derrida, as Culler argues, "assumes the priority of the first term and conceives the second in relation to it, as a complication, a negation, a manifestation, or a disruption of the first" (Culler 1982, 93). Dance is, in fact, such a disruption of language, which is a male domain and accords well with the assumption which underpins the ideas reflected in the play and thus can be a hint at its interpretation, mainly that men are associated with language and women with the body. Ojrzyńska rightly notices in *Dancing at Lughnasa* the presence of "the contrast between the depiction of male and female characters in the play, corresponding to the traditional opposition between body and language" (2015, 91). Hence, what can be observed in the play is also an opposition of language vs. body, the first being the attribute of men and the latter a female domain. Ojrzyńska further adds that Michael and Gerry, the lover of one of the sisters and Michael's father, use language either in order to convey the narration or to seduce, mislead the women, whereas the sisters prefer dancing as a way of dodging their problems (2015, 91). It is also important to underscore that the body in the play is, sometimes, something inferior to language, as some of the words spoken by Michael shape the sisters' story and the audience's knowledge and understanding of their behaviour. Additionally, the audience must rely on Michael's narration (i.e. words) as it is not possible to grasp certain messages conveyed by the play only on the basis of the dance.

According to Culler, the terms seen as inferior in binary oppositions can "be defined as complications, derivations, and deteriorations" (1982, 93) of the superior ones. Such is the case with all the above-mentioned binary oppositions and also with the ones that will follow. An important set of terms is also constituted by the public vs. the private. While quoting Glassie, Ojrzyńska mentions that "a typical Irish kitchen [was] an intermediary area between public and private space" (2015, 73). She immediately adds that "the kitchen in the play has lost its role as a space for integrating the members of the family with the local community" (2015, 73), as the sisters are lonely and not visited by any guests from the village and their house is also located on the outskirts. It can be argued that the sisters' alienation is accentuated by the fact that they live in a house located on the periphery of the town and spend most of their time in the kitchen, which should be a place for many meetings and social gatherings, but in the play becomes a venue where only the five spinsters dance and talk to one another. The sisters' kitchen may thus

be a site of conflict between the public and the private, where the former may be seen as a "deterioration" or a "complication" of the latter. The public is culturally constructed as better because it stresses communal good exercised through the scrutiny of all the people who can observe and control one another in public space. The private is something Other, something peculiar, endowed with connotations with potentially dishonest or improper deeds that can be committed in the privacy of somebody's home. In this way, the private (being in the play the sisters' house and especially their kitchen) becomes something odd, and morally secondary to the public space and thus suspicious.

The conflict between the public and the private makes it possible to introduce another binary opposition, namely that of purity vs. sexuality. As Lojek observes, the play "focuses on difficulties facing women struggling to realize themselves in a society whose revolution produced not greater opportunities for women but a codification of secular and religious paternalism" (2006, 78). Women have to comply with the rules of proper conduct enforced on them by men. In this binary opposition the superior term is, undoubtedly, purity, enforced by the local priest, whose gaze Kate is very much aware and afraid of. Purity is the term denoting "higher presence" as Derrida would have it, as, in the play, it is a state accepted by the institutions and laws controlling society. On the surface level, it can be claimed that the sisters are chaste, because they are five spinsters and do not have men in their lives, but, on the other hand, on a deeper level, the audience are aware of Chris's illegitimate child or Rose's "affair" with Danny Bradley. Additionally, Ojrzyńska asserts using Dean's words: "[d]ance is the only form of physicality associated with pleasure and, at least for Chris, with sexuality" (Ojrzyńska 2005, 81). Hence the sisters who long for a dance behave as if they also longed for some kind of sexual satisfaction. Thus, the craving for a dance and the final outburst of this yearning exercised by the sisters may, perhaps, be an indication that what they want is not only physical movement but a kind of sexual, orgasmic pleasure. This places the sisters on the sexual side of the opposition purity vs. sexuality and makes them function as the Other with regard to the standards of Purity prevalent in their society. McMullan mentions that

female performances [in Friel's plays] may provide liberation from confining gender roles, but they often reproduce uncritically the gendered construction of women as the non-rational and corporeal 'other' to both social and symbolic authority. (2006, 145)

This shows that, on the one hand, women are in an inferior position in the man vs. woman dichotomy, on the other hand, their association with “corporeal other” posits them as sexual creatures as opposed to the ideal purity endorsed by the male-governed institutions.

McMullan mentions more oppositions in *Dancing at Lughnasa*: “[i]n his initial speech, Michael sets up the play’s oppositions: Catholic/pagan; control/spontaneity; language/dancing; past/present” (1999, 98). The control/spontaneity opposition is contained in many of the previously mentioned ones, as it is man, the public, order, and language that are associated in the play with control, and it is woman, the private, disorder, and the dancing body that are aligned with spontaneity. Spontaneity and all the “feminine” terms mentioned along with it hint at freedom, bodily rebellion and women’s power that is constantly quenched by patriarchal men who want to keep in check women’s frivolous desires. As Ojrzyńska rightly hints, quoting Dean’s words, “[d]ance emphasizes the women’s bodies” (Ojrzyńska 2015, 81), and, one might add, in this way disturbs the order enforced by men.

The last binary opposition which slightly differs from all of the above-mentioned in the sense that it refers not so much to the male/female binary but relates to the subject of religion instead, is the dichotomy of Catholic vs. pagan. Robbins explains:

Michael talks of how Maggie wanted to name the radio Lugh, after the old Celtic god of the harvest, thus symbolically uniting the pagan past with the present age of progress. Jack’s descriptions of pagan practices in Africa parallel those of the Irish Festival of Lughnasa, making the point that both countries had Christianity imposed on them, layered on top of a pre-existent religion that on some level, the people remain faithful to. (1992, 85)

Robbins also acknowledges the opposition of the past and the present as it has been mentioned by McMullan, and, moreover, he connects it with paganism and progress respectively. The sisters’ longings for dancing and Jack’s memories of the Ryangan community are yearnings for the past that has now been replaced by the modern age, which is totally different and alien to them. The sisters hanker after times when they were young and had many opportunities ahead of them, which is contrasted with the pre-

sent that offers little consolation to them. Jack's memories function in quite the same way, as he often recalls the time when he met people

to offer sacrifice to Obi, [their] Great Goddess of the Earth, so that the crops will flourish. Or maybe to get in touch with [their] departed fathers for their advice and wisdom. Or maybe to thank the spirits of [their] tribe if they have been good to [them]; or to appease them if they're angry. (Friel 1999, 73)

The fact that Robbins juxtaposes pagan practices mentioned by Jack with Lughnasa Festivities serves as an additional marker of the fact that the binary opposition between pagan and Catholic is very volatile. Guided by the priest, the people of Ballybeg seemingly rebel against the pagan practices and it is obvious for everybody in this society that they should follow the strict code of conduct and Catholic moral rules, but such behaviour is visible only on the surface level. When one looks at the deep level, it is clearly discernible that society is involved in a conflict between the forces of paganism and Catholicism. People in the village are absorbed with what the harvest dances may bring and with celebrating Lughnasa on the back hills where the priest's watchful eye does not reach.

Robbins is right to point out that

[t]he sources of spiritual inspiration in Friel's plays exist outside the boundaries of traditional religion. The 'faith' or 'way of seeing' that Friel hoped was emerging from his work appears to be sourced more often in pagan traditions than in Christian ones. (Robbins 1992, 76)

Thus, it can be argued that some similarities of Lughnasa to pagan African rites show that the community of Ballybeg, the sisters, and especially Jack, are people who cannot fit their spirituality into the rigid rules of Catholic morality and that they search for spirituality, which the Church's practices and guidelines lack. Grant stresses that

[t]he importance of ceremony and ritual was central to the play and the sister's horrified reaction to the return of their uncle priest from Uganda with his enthusiastic reports of tribal rites, seen

against the background of so much domestic ceremonial in their everyday lives, was richly ironic. (Pine et al. 1990, 10)

Friel wants to stress this irony in order to show that the sisters are horrified by Jack's behaviour but this is, in fact, the kind of behaviour that they would like to perform themselves. The short period of their spontaneous dance is a sheer moment of precisely such a desire to forget about the gazes of others and let the body move similarly to a ritualistic tribal practice of pagan Africa.

It is the Other, the secondary term in the opposition Catholic vs. pagan, that is closer to the sisters' feelings and desires. This is an inferior term in the above relation, but just as the sisters are communally posited as inferior to men and to the public sphere of society as such, and their dancing bodies are secondary to language, they also feel more inclined to paganism. They become "the Other" to society in which they live and, above all, to the authoritative forces of the Church, but only such a position allows them to identify with what they actually crave for – freedom.

While elaborating on the binary oppositions and the notion of logocentrism as formulated by Derrida, it is essential to mention that the pattern of the binary terms may be deconstructed. As mentioned above, in every binary opposition there is one superior term, and "the Other," that is the inferior one, which is always culturally constructed as a mere supplement of the former. Derrida focuses on the inherent conflict in each of the binary oppositions to point out that what has always been marginalized is, in fact, the structural backbone of the logic behind the superior term as, for example, in the case of presence vs. absence:

... the issue has been the hierarchical opposition presence/absence. A deconstruction would involve the demonstration that for presence to function as it is said to, it must have the qualities that supposedly belong to its opposite, absence. (Culler 1982, 95)

Thus, what distinguishes the superior notion from the inferior one can be undermined, just as what defines the secondary notion can be shown to be the basis of the definition of the primary one.

Following this argumentation, it can be noticed that although the sisters have a conviction that how Jack behaves and what he talks about have a strong

sense of otherness to them, Jack is no different or "Other" with regard to Ballybeg, as the whole place is full of rituals because people yearn to see and experience them on the back hills. There are many ritualistic performances in Ballybeg, as we learn from the character of Rose: "First they light a bonfire beside a spring well. Then they dance round it. Then they drive their cattle through the flames to banish the devil out of them" (Friel 1999, 29). This is exactly in accordance with what Jack describes when he talks about tribal beliefs and when he depicts how African people worship the dead. It cannot, therefore, be definitely stated that paganism, indeed, functions as an objectively secondary term to Catholicism in Ballybeg, for the formally Catholic community views the idiosyncrasies of Jack's native-style behaviour and beliefs as different or "Other" only to try to expel its own demons.

While elaborating on the subject of deconstruction, Culler mentions Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his discussion of "education as a supplement to nature" (1982, 104). Culler observes that according to Rousseau:

[n]ature is in principle complete, a natural plenitude to which education is an external addition. But the description of this supplementation reveals an inherent lack in nature; nature must be completed—supplemented—by education if it is to be truly itself: the right education is needed if human nature is to emerge as it truly is. The logic of supplementarity thus makes nature the prior term, a plenitude that is there at the start, but reveals an inherent lack or absence within it, so that education, the additional extra, also becomes an essential condition of that which it supplements. (1982, 104)

The example provided by Rousseau and used by Culler while explaining the process of deconstruction is applicable to each binary opposition that is introduced in the present article. In the opposition man vs. woman, it is the female part that seems to be inferior but in order for the man to function, "the Other" term, that is woman, has to be present. Although woman seems an "external addition," it turns out that man lacks some complementation and has to be "supplemented" by woman. The patriarchal rules that men impose as being the forces of either the State or the Church would not be possible if there were no women on whom these rules could be enforced. Thus, within the framework of Western culture woman

has to function, as it was already ordained by God when he constructed the woman from man's rib, in order to be a supplementation for the forces that men generate and embody.

The same description is applicable to the opposition between language and dancing and language and the body. Dance and body function as additional terms in order for the language to fully show its powers of control and forces of restriction imposed on the female dancing body. In this way, an alleged degree of order is posited within society, which conceals the inequalities and hierarchies of the binary oppositions that underpin it. Sexuality is, in turn, the secondary term in the opposition of purity vs. sexuality, as in order for the chaste behaviour to be distinguished and formulated there is a need for the sexuality to be described and for some individuals to be denounced as non-compliant and immoral. The same logic is relevant to the oppositions between order and disorder, the public and the private, or Catholic and pagan.

Dancing at Lughnasa shows that these binary terms actively operate in the play and structure it; in each case the superior terms, though culturally constructed as originary, genuine and primary, involve "the Other," "inferior" elements in their constitution. In this way, the notion of otherness functions in the play and is a powerful accent facilitating the understanding of the play and its oppositions.

The play stresses "the otherness," which is present in the sisters' lives and shapes the action of the play. Despite it being visible in the binary oppositions which have been already mentioned, "the Other" is visible also in the construction of some characters, especially Jack, or of Ballybeg itself. Coming back from Ryanga, Father Jack is a priest who "went native," and he is, hence, one whose characteristics are very similar to those attributed to the Orient, understood not so much as a notion of the actual geographical East - Jack comes from Africa rather than the Middle or Far East - but as a cultural construct set in opposition to the rational Western world of Christendom. In order to contextualise Jack's otherness, the notion of Orientalism as put forward by Edward Said can be of great help.

When the oriental people are described in Western discourse, they are thought to be secondary to those living in the West, and as French philologist and historian living in the nineteenth century, Ernest Renan, put it, "[e]very person, however slightly he may be acquainted with the affairs of our time, sees clearly the actual inferiority of Mohammedan countries"

(Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 2001, 51). He adds that it is also applicable to Africa as

[a]ll those who have been in the East, or in Africa are struck by the way in which the mind of the true believer is fatally limited, by the species of iron circle that surrounds his head, rendering it absolutely closed to knowledge. (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 2001, 51)

The oriental people are thus seen in the West as limited, inferior to the westerners and narrow-minded. This description is very similar to how Jack's behaviour is interpreted by the people of Ballybeg, who do not visit him and thus exclude him from the proper society. Jack's arrival also brings nearer the lingering doom of the family, as we are informed by Michael that "The parish priest didn't take her [Kate] back when the new term began; although that had more to do with Father Jack than with falling numbers" (Friel 1999, 64). Jack becomes "the Other" of the village and by being an inferior element inadvertently makes the whole family become "the Other" as well, even if the sisters are often horrified by Jack's pagan practices, as if knowing that they all will have a negative reception in the community.

Jack's otherness has geo-political and cultural characteristics, since coming from Ryanga he immediately becomes "the Other" and is excluded from society. As Ashcroft and Ahluwalia assert, "the 'production' of Orientalist knowledge became a continual and uncritical 'reproduction' of various assumptions and beliefs" (2001, 51). This is just what happens to Jack when he is excluded from Ballybeg as being problematic and different. Although the description of Edward Said's Orientalism is always based on the distinction between the Occident and the Orient,³ his description of the Oriental is fully justifiable when it comes to "the otherness" of Jack, as Jack's rejection works precisely in the same way as with the Orientals being seen as "'primitive' ... 'exotic' and 'mysterious'" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 2001, 53). Ashcroft and Ahluwalia mention also the "imaginative geography [that] legitimates a vocabulary, a representative discourse peculiar to the understanding

³ "Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (Orient, the East, 'them')" (Said 2003, 43).

of the Orient that becomes *the*⁴ way in which the Orient is known" (2001, 61). Jack's behaviour is thus interpreted on the basis of the country from which he has just returned. He becomes a native African to the people of Ballybeg and a subject to be scrutinised but at the same time kept apart from the local and Christian community.

Ashcroft and Ahluwalia also elaborate on the fact that, owing to the discourse of Orientalism, the repressed communities from "the Other" lands can also see themselves through the lenses of the colonisers and, in this way, "adopt the imperial view of themselves as 'intuitive' and 'emotional,' asserting a distinctiveness from the 'rational' and 'unemotional' Europeans" (2001, 63). The Irish were perceived by the British as savage and emotional, thus the colonialist belief that Irish people's playfulness should be somehow controlled and kept in bonds was something to enforce. Kiberd is right to point out that

[t]he Irish missionary campaign had no ulterior political imperial motive, such as disfigured other European efforts; and this meant that its exponents were more willing to identify with the struggles of native peoples for self-development. Both sides were involved, after all, in the attempt at decolonisation. (2001, 27)

Kiberd sees that Friel makes many comparisons between Ireland and Africa (2001, 28), and Jack may be an indication that his being "the Other" in the Ballybeg community parallels Ireland's "otherness" in relation to England.

Alluding to the notion of logocentrism as understood by Derrida, it can be stated that in the binary opposition of the Occident vs. the Orient, "the Oriental culture and perspective is viewed as a deviation, a perversion, and thus is accorded an inferior status" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 2001, 64). Thus, Jack exemplifies the binary opposition of Ballybeg vs. Africa, in which his African practices and beliefs are placed as inferior in terms of the Catholicism prevalent in the community of Ballybeg.

As Said himself explains,

⁴ Emphasis original.

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient ... in short, Orientalism [is] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (2003, 3)

Jack is perceived in Ballybeg as a visitor from the other land, from Africa, which people do not know, and thinking about which they use only some stereotypical and hearsay notions. Although we are not provided with direct quotes from the people in the play, the fact that Jack is "the Other" is evident by the lack of visits in the sisters' house, and also by the fact that we learn that, upon returning,

he didn't say Mass that following Monday. In fact he never said Mass again. And the neighbours stopped enquiring about him. And his name never again appeared in the *Donegal Enquirer*. And of course there was never a civic reception with bands and flags and speeches. (Friel 1999, 92)

Orientalism, according to Said, is

*A distribution*⁵ of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an *elaboration*⁶ ... of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident). (2003, 12)

Thus, people from Ballybeg are prejudiced against the one who has come back from far-away Uganda and, additionally, there is a feeling that everybody knows that he "went native" there and this is why he has been sent back.

Said cites Cromer when he wants to show his readers how the oriental people were perceived by Europeans. The Occidental perspective was associated with reason whereas the Oriental people were thought to be intellectually inferior. Their reasoning was said to be illogical, somewhat distorted and narrow. They were believed to have to consider their statements longer

⁵ Emphasis original.

⁶ Emphasis original.

than Europeans, because they were viewed as narrow-minded, not to say stupid. They contradicted themselves, because they were not sure what they wanted to say (Said 2003, 38). Furthermore, Said stresses that in the description of the Orient, as used by Cromer and Balfour, “[t]he Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different;’ thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (2003, 40). All these descriptions fit very well Jack’s characteristics in the play. The memories of the practices, beliefs and traditions that Jack mentions are recognised as improper and irrational in the Christian community of Ballybeg, which Kate highlights when rebuking Jack for asking Chris if she has other love-children:

She certainly has not, Jack; and strange as it may seem to you, neither has Agnes nor Rose nor Maggie nor myself. No harm to Ryanga but you’re home in Donegal now and much as we cherish love-children here they are not exactly the norm. (Friel 1999, 64)

Additionally, Ojrzyńska is very right to observe the childlike qualities which the sisters attribute to Jack. When describing the situation where Kate interrupts Jack’s dancing with two pieces of wood, which later serve Michael to make the kites, Ojrzyńska states that Kate’s request for Jack to leave the pieces of wood “is not only an effective way of convincing her brother to return the stolen property, but also an instance of Kate trivializing his unruly behaviour as childish or, perhaps, senile” (2015, 85). Thus, Kate perceives Jack’s behaviour as that of the Other and Oriental-like, which for her is, as Said would have it, quite childlike and different. Moreover, Ojrzyńska adds that “Kate’s ultimate reaction is far from surprising, for the traditions of native Ryangans must have been perceived as savage and particularly sinful according to the Irish Catholic criteria of the times” (85).

As Said observes,

[o]n the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other there are Arab-Orientals; the former are (in no particular order) rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things. (2003, 49)

Said mentions Arabs and also some other nations such as the Egyptians, but all the adjectives ascribed to the Oriental, and at the same time "the Other" nations, are, as it was already mentioned and elaborated on, fully applicable to Jack himself. Jack is "the Other" of the Ballybeg community, but it is an interesting fact that the Ballybeg community itself is not so pure, Catholic or moral, because, as it was stated before, people there are very much interested in the Lughnasa Festivities and Lughnasa is the topic mentioned in the streets of Ballybeg. Kate is very much afraid of what the local priest would say, but she cannot resist "the Other" forces and dancing, which is a free and quite a ritualistic kind of movement.

To conclude, *Dancing at Lughnasa* is a play where the presence of "the Other" is clearly visible. Many binary oppositions can be distinguished in the play, namely man vs. woman, language vs. dancing, language vs. body, purity vs. sexuality, order vs. disorder, public vs. private, and, finally, Catholic vs. pagan. These numerous conceptual oppositions which function in the play facilitate the understanding of the conflicts within the drama. In each of the oppositions one term can be discerned that is the superior one, and, at the same time, "the otherness" of the second term is stressed, for it is in each case a notion that is posited as a derivation or deprivation of the former one. It is a term that is deemed lacking and believed to be secondary. Using deconstruction as formulated by Derrida, however, one may notice that in order for the superior term to function, the inferior one must also co-exist with it and, in fact, the worse term is the basis for the constitution of the superior one. Thus, in every opposition the unprivileged term becomes a necessary existence, and in this way, woman is the root for the man to be present, the body is necessary for language to come into existence and so on.

In the play, the existing conflicts have to take place in order to show the true meaning of the drama and the fact that

the position of the Mundy household [is placed] between areas representing conflicting values, which results in the characters' need to constantly negotiate between the pagan, and the Catholic, the foreign and the local, the bodily and the verbal, and the real and the imagined, and which finds an accurate reflection in Friel's use of dance. (Ojrzyńska 2015, 64)

Moreover, “the Other”, as formulated and elaborated on by Edward Said, is of great help in showing that Jack’s behaviour and the beliefs and rituals presented by him are regarded by the community and even by his sisters as “Oriental” and “Other.” Jack’s “going native” and the fact that Ballybeg is so much against it exemplifies another conflict, namely Ballybeg vs. Africa, a version of the Occident vs. Orient dichotomy. This conflict is especially significant, as the people, even his sisters, who trivialise Jack’s behaviour or see him as “the Other” and different, are also filled with the desire “to be in touch with some otherness” (Friel 1999, 108). At the end of the play the readers are informed by Michael that

each new [i.e. Jack’s] revelation startled – shocked – stunned poor Aunt Kate. Until finally she hit on a phrase that appeased her: ‘his own distinctive spiritual search’. ‘Leaping around a fire and offering a little hen to Uka or Ito or whoever is not religion as I was taught it and indeed know it,’ she would say with a defiant toss of her head. ‘But then Jack must make his own distinctive search.’ (Friel 1999, 92)

And this final remark on the part of Michael can easily serve as a closing commentary on this article, which focuses on “the Other” in *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

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Music in Hardy's Novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* and Its Latest Film Adaptation by Thomas Vinterberg

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Abstract: This article discusses the use of musical elements in Thomas Hardy's novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* and its 2015 Thomas Vinterberg adaptation of the same title. First of all, the author discusses the use of music in the novel, both in its linguistic composition and actual music playing. The idea is to present not only Hardy's knowledge of and deep sensitivity towards various kinds of music, but also to show the complexity and symbolism of music in the novel. The second part of this article is devoted to an analysis of the musical elements in the latest film adaptation. Here, the author's main goal is to present the choice of music and to prove by comparison with the novel that the filmmakers recognised the richness and potential of the music within Hardy's work and applied that musical knowledge in the film without impoverishing its symbolic value.

Key words: music, film adaptation, Thomas Hardy, Thomas Vinterberg, *Far from the Madding Crowd*

Music was always an inseparable part of Thomas Hardy's life. From early childhood until his later years he was not only an ardent listener but also a keen performer of music. Hardy grew up in a family of skilled musicians who, although amateurs, were well remembered in the musical history of their neighbourhood. His inborn passion for music and the family tradition of music playing found its reflection in Hardy's poems, short stories and novels. *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the first of Hardy's renowned literary achievements, owes much of its success to the skilful use of musical elements, ably entwined in the plot; it is music that helps create the pastoral mood of the novel which so appealed to the 19th century readers.

21st century viewers have had the opportunity not only to familiarise themselves with Hardy's novel but also to compare it to its on-screen equivalents.

Far from the Madding Crowd has been filmed three times so far.¹ The foremost goal of the latest 2015 adaptation, as stated by its director Thomas Vinterberg, was to bring back and maintain the atmosphere of 19th century Wessex. The indisputable box-office success of Thomas Vinterberg's adaptation proves that the British still fancy pastoral stories praising the beauty of rural England: its landscape and rhythm of nature according to which life turned its circles again and again. To achieve this goal, music was of help. Therefore, this article aims at analysing the musical elements such as songs, dances and the sounds of nature found in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* and Thomas Vinterberg's latest film adaptation by the same title.

In the novel Hardy draws heavily on his own musical experience. Many of the scenes with characters singing and dancing are based on real events in which the future author participated with his father. However, Hardy's penchant for music was most likely inherited from his grandfather Thomas Hardy I, an irreplaceable amateur musician who played congregational songs for the parish of Stinsford. The Hardys also eagerly played at all house parties and social gatherings where dancing was involved, priding themselves on playing string instruments like the cello, the violin and the viola. Yet they never accepted anything for their performances. In *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (p. 24), the author recalls a time from his early childhood when he was rebuked by his mother Jemima for accepting five pennies for his violin performance. He later explains that the temptation to buy *The Boys Own Book*, mostly about games, outweighed obedience to his mother. The book remained in Hardy's library until the end of his life.

However, Hardy's first memories of music playing were connected with his father playing all sorts of melodies at home. When young Thomas turned four, he was taught to play the accordion; and by the time he was five, he could also play tunes from his father and grandfather's tune books as well as some of his mother's ballads. Jemima was an inexhaustible source of folk songs and ballads, which she could retrieve from memory whenever she wanted to sing to her children. When Thomas reached his teens he became a fluent fiddler (Grew 1940, 140) and could also tune a piano. After some time later he admitted that once in a while he regretted not pursuing a career of an organist.

¹ The first film adaptation of *Far from the Madding Crowd* appeared in 1916 gaining rather limited appreciation from the critics. Half a century later, in 1967 the director John Schlesinger filmed the novel once more. This time the adaptation proved successful.

Moreover, Hardy could pride himself on having an almost prodigious memory for old tunes. Once he had heard a melody, he could store it in his mind for a long time and play it flawlessly after many years. Enraptured as a young boy by various tunes, he later became a collector of countless old Dorset folk songs, ballads, jigs and airs² and made every effort to preserve the traditional "orally transmitted ditties of centuries" (F. Hardy 2007, 20).

Also, during his apprenticeship in London Hardy never neglected his musical interest. On the contrary, he made the most of the opportunities offered by the capital. He attended the opera at Covent Garden to hear the famous Romantic Italian operas of Rossini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Bellini and his favourite Verdi. Nevertheless, it was for hymns that Hardy had a special appreciation and fondness. Even at the advanced age of 81, he would attend church only to hear a particular hymn (Seymour 2009, 224).

Rich personal experience had to find its refection in Hardy's literary output. Next to *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far from the Madding Crowd* is one of Hardy's most musically-packed novels. According to Elna Sherman, Hardy's susceptibility to music, his unique sense of the rhythm of life, derive not only from his fondness for sounds: those in nature, human voices and instruments, but also from their meaning, what they symbolise and the impact they have on people's everyday lives (Sherman 1940, 434).

First and foremost, however, Hardy's genuine love of nature and his susceptibility towards music helped him create the "melodious" world of Wessex, where the music of the Earth fuses and mingles with human voices, amplifying the emotional and sensory experience (Seymour 2009, 225). Sound-filled Wessex possesses inherent charm; it becomes a distant world that allures the reader with its enduring beauty. Music is one of the elemental features in building such an impression as well as in introducing the pastoral atmosphere of the novel. Although in the mind of some experts³ *Far from the Madding*

² The archives of the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester store the tune books of Hardy's grandfather and father, each of them packed with more than three hundred tunes. In the museum it is also possible to see Hardy's violin standing next to his father's in the corner of the study which has been completely reconstructed from Hardy's study at Max Gate.

³ In the article *Far From the Madding Crowd as modified pastoral*, Michael Squires claims that Thomas Hardy's novel is a pastoral tale in two respects. First of all, Hardy uses a traditional pastoral theme - the shepherd's life - and depicts rural life stressing its beauty rather than its coarseness. On the other hand, however, the novel lacks the usual artificiality common to pastoral tales. Instead, its opening part contains many aspects of harshness of rural life in which animals die and shepherds have to persevere through many hardships of fate; numerous misfortunes happen to other characters as well, especially in the second half of the novel.

Crowd breaks with the stereotype of what a pastoral tale is in its basic sense, the novel is nostalgic enough to be warmly received by its 19th century audience. Half of the novel's success lies in Hardy's ability to constantly stimulate readers' imagination by describing the melody of the earth. The natural sounds emphasise the beauty of the rural countryside. Hardy's description of natural phenomena like the sound of the wind, sometimes "rattling", "wheezy" or "snarling", and the sounds of Wessex fauna: the "crack-voiced" sound of pheasants (*FFMC*, 190) or the "course-throated chatter of a sparrow" (*FFMC*, 373) deserve much appreciation. Hardy's Wessex breathes with the melody of ripples and larks, and "the low bleating of the flock mingles with both" (*FFMC*, 246). Hardy's description of the storm unleashed during Bathsheba and Troy's wedding reception is a fascinating example demonstrating not only the grandeur of nature but also the danger lurking in its unpredictability. The silence before "a disastrous rain" is broken by thunder, the growing intensity of which the poet of Wessex translates into: a "noisy peal", "rumbles" and "rattles", the "shout of a fiend", and "a stupefying blast, harsh and pitiless" (*FFMC* 336–37).

According to Eva Mary Grew, the use of natural sounds and the musical effect they have on the reader are Hardy's unique form of expression. There are passages in the novel where "the arts of poetry and music meet" (Grew 1940, 138). In one of the early chapters of the novel one may encounter the poetic description of Norcombe Hill, where the story of Gabriel Oak has its beginning:

The thin grasses, more or less coating the hill, were touched by the wind in breezes of differing powers, and almost of differing natures – one rubbing the blades heavily, another raking them piercingly, another brushing them like a soft broom. The instinctive act of human-kind was to stand and listen, and learn how the trees on the right and the trees on the left wailed and chaunted to each other in the regular antiphonies of a cathedral choir; how hedges and other shapes to leeward them caught the note, lowering it to the tenderest sob; and how the hurrying gust then plunged into the south, to be heard no more. (*FFMC*, 167)

Hardy's descriptive form of poetic expression includes the frequent use of onomatopoeic words like: "snorting", "gurgling", "grumping", "pitapat"

or “whizzing” and music-related metaphors. The spectacular storm is compared to “a perfect dance of death” (*FFMC*, 336). In some other place when Troy demonstrates his artistry in using a sword in front of Bathsheba, his motions are compared to a “twanged harpspring” (*FFMC*, 290). Bathsheba’s words when she appears at the corn market sounded like: “a romance after sermons, (...) like a breeze among furnaces” (*FFMC*, 223). As the only woman at the market she puzzles and impresses the farmers. Her appearance introduces novelty into the world chiefly reserved for men.

The sounds of nature mix with the sounds of music playing. The fondness for music in the characters of *Far from the Madding Crowd* seems to be a distinctive feature of Hardy’s novel. The sounds of fiddles and violins, flutes, tambourines and even the piano fill the air. Some of the characters are defined by musical instruments. Bathsheba owns a piano, which she buys for herself after inheriting Weatherbury Farm; and although she never plays it, the instrument symbolises her status as a wealthy woman. Furthermore, Gabriel Oak, besides being a shepherd, is also a skilled flutist whose manner of playing is “nowhere to be found in nature”. The “Arcadian sweetness” of the flute, that quintessentially pastoral instrument, accompanies Oak when he loses his flock and in his times of joy when he finds work at Weatherbury Farm. In both cases people admire his playing “Jockey to the Fair”⁴. Oak’s skill in performing this “sparkling melody” is then confirmed by one of the guests of Warren Malthouse: “He can blow the flute very well – that a’can” (*FFMC*, 78). To the pleasure of Malthouse guests, Oak also plays a chorus part of the play “Dame Durden”⁵ – a joyous melody about an eponymous housewife.

Playing the flute proves not to be Oak’s ultimate musical talent. Towards the end of the novel the reader finds out that Oak decides to join the choir to sing the bass parts of church hymns. Although Hardy does not allow the reader to admire Gabriel’s vocal talents, he entwines verses of the hymn “Lead Kindly Light”⁶ Oak and Bathsheba overhear. The lyrics which follow:

⁴ The songs and melodies used by Hardy in the drama *The Dynasts*, the novels: *A Laodicean*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and the short story “A Few Crusted Characters” were recorded in 2009 by The Mellstock Band, a musical group specialising in English folk music.

⁵ “Dame Durden” is a folk song which enjoyed popularity in the South of England. It was usually performed at harvest or other village festivals.

⁶ “Lead, Kindly Light” was composed in 1833 by an Anglican vicar named John Henry Newman before he decided to convert to Catholicism. Newman was travelling in the Mediterranean and fell

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on.

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

(...)

Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile (FFMC, 435)

may have special poignancy for Bathsheba, especially in view of the tragic circumstances surrounding Troy's death. On hearing the hymn, she starts to cry "for she hardly knew what" wishing she was like "those children (...) unconcerned about the meaning of their words" (FFMC, 434). For Bathsheba and Oak the words of the hymn suggest that both of them should come to terms with their lives and learn to forgive, forget all their misfortunes, their mistakes and "the encircling gloom" that has befallen them and let "the kindly light" lead them to a more promising future.

The evocation of faith for the two main characters in this particular moment is also used by Hardy as an excuse to include pieces of church high-art music, which serve as a balance to the rich spectrum of folk songs the author includes.

However, Bathsheba's earlier performance during the shearing supper is the crowning moment of the pastoral in nature, one of *Far from the Madding Crowd's* scenes. The sense of togetherness after the work's done predisposes people to be more emotional. Therefore, Jon Coggan, a Weatherbury Farm worker, encouraged by the mood of the moment intones a sentimental song entitled "I've lost my lover and I care not". Soon he is followed by Joseph Poorgrass, who performs another love song - "I sowed the seeds of love". The central performance, however, is Bathsheba and Boldwood singing together. The "dulcet piping of Gabriel's flute" accompanies their duet of the ballad entitled "The Banks of Allan Water," which follows:

For his bride a soldier sought her,
And a winning tongue had he:
On the banks of Allan Water
None was gay as she! (FFMC, 270)

The events that ensued ensured that not only the ballad's verses but also the lyrics of the previous two songs were remembered for years by all

sick. The song was composed during his three-week recovery period and turned into a hymn in 1845. The poignant lyrics talk about the author's loneliness and longing for his beloved county (Christiansen, 2016).

the people gathered at the feast. The first two tunes performed by Coggan and Poorgrass become comedic as the exaggerated seriousness of the performers and the withheld laughter of the audience contradict the songs' emotional tone.

Yet, in line with the amusement caused, there also comes an affinity between the texts of the songs and the fate of the main characters. The ballads herald the future of Troy, with whom Bathsheba becomes entangled that very night, and the futures of Oak and Boldwood. The verses of Coggan's song correspond clearly with the events in Sergeant Troy's life:

I've lost my love, and I care not,
 I've lost my love, and I care not;
 I shall soon have another
 That's better than t'other;
 I've lost my love, and I care not. (*FFMC*, 268)

The lyrics refer directly to Troy's relationship with two women: the first, his "lost (...) love" – Fanny Robin, and the other – Bathsheba Everdene. The realisation that he made a mistake in abandoning Fanny comes too late for Troy. His marriage to Bathsheba buries Gabriel's hopes for his happiness with the young lady. However, the verses of the ballad relate to the feelings of two other suitors for Miss Everdene's hand: Oak and Boldwood. In this sense Bathsheba is also Oak's love.

I sow'-ed th'-e
 I sow'-ed
 I sow'-ed th'-e seeds' of' love',
 I-it was' all' i'-in the'-e' spring',
 I-in A'-pril, Ma'-ay, a'-nd sun'-ny June',
 When sma'-ll b'-irds they' do' sing. (*FFMC*, 268)

The lyrics refer to Gabriel's hopes and expectations of winning the affection of the owner of Weatherbury.

However, the final two stanzas of Poorgrass's ballad introduce some confusion into the correlation between the song's meaning and the novel's characters the verses refer to. This is due to the fact that the symbolism of the willow tree varies from author to author. In mythology the willow is associated with life, power and the regenerative forces of nature. Contrary to that, in Shakespeare, the tree symbolises impermanence. Even in the Bible,

the symbolism of the willow varies. Sometimes it is associated with loss, other times it symbolises revival.⁷

Oh, the wi'-il-lo'-ow tree' will' twist',
And the wil'-low tre'-ee wi'-ll twine' (*FFMC*, 269)

Despite his sincere affection towards Bathsheba, Oak is forced to wait through all the 'twists' and 'twines' of fate to finally be able to gather the harvest of love that has grown out of the 'seeds' he once 'sowed'. Boldwood's advances towards Bathsheba end tragically. In a fit of fury, despair, jealousy and disappointment over Bathsheba's unreciprocated love, he kills Troy. His affection towards her symbolises loss; he himself resembles a willow tree that grows in cemeteries and its slanted shape is reminiscent of a person grieving.

In contrast to the shearing supper, Troy's joint celebrations of the harvest feast and wedding reception taking place at the same time, differ considerably as far as the mood of the scene is concerned. The harvest feast coincides with the oncoming storm. The "sinister aspect" of the night, the silence and stillness of the heated air which precede booms of thunders and flashes of lightning parallel the chaos within the walls of the barn. The acoustic impression of the six peals of thunder described in the novel with the added support of visual effects such as "like an ink stroke on burnished tin" suggests the metaphor of hellish powers and "the perfect dance of death" (*FFMC*, 336). When Oak enters the building:

the sound of violins and tambourine, and the regular jiggling of many feet, grew more distinct. (...) Here sat three fiddlers, and beside them stood a frantic man with hair on end, perspiration streaming down his cheeks, and a tambourine quivering in his hands. (*FFMC*, 329)

⁷ In mythology, the Greek goddess of witchcraft Hecate used willows for wands, and Orpheus used willow wood as a talisman against evil as he travelled to the underworld. Therefore, the willow symbolises not only protection but also sound, as the harp given to Orpheus by Apollo was originally of willow wood. In the Bible, willow trees are mentioned in Psalm 137, in which the Jews being in Babylonian captivity weep while remembering their homeland: "There on the willow trees, we hung up our harps." Here, the willow tree symbolises loss. In another Biblical passage (Ezekiel 17:5), however, the willow stands for revival as the prophet plants the fruitful seed and "sets it like a willow tree". Finally, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Ophelia dies after she falls out of a willow tree and drowns in a brook. In Shakespeare, willows symbolise women deserted by their lovers.

Troy's military discipline gives place to excessive and limitless drunkenness and ignorance of the coming storm. According to the fiddler, the intoned song – "The Soldier's Joy"⁸, possesses "an additional charm, in being so admirably adapted to the tambourine aforesaid – no mean instrument in the hands of a performer who understands the proper convulsions, spasms, St. Vitus's dances, and fearful frenzies" (*FFMC*, 329).

The richness of Thomas Hardy's musical experience must have been taken into account by the director of the latest 2015 film adaptation of *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Contrary to the common belief that film music is not meant to be heard, in its basic sense music reinforces the emotional and psychological content of a film. This evocation of certain emotions like fear, love, and amusement among others indicates the way in which a film should be perceived. Most importantly, however, music serves to create the so called "colour" of a production. The "colour", so immensely important in the case of heritage productions, is associative and easily recognisable to various audience types. For example, flute or oboe playing is immediately associated with a pastoral mood (Prendergast 1992, 214). Therefore, film music is there to provide a convincing atmosphere of time and place as well as to underline the psychology of each character. It becomes a transcript of the unspoken thoughts of characters and the unseen overtone of certain situations.

Thomas Vinterberg's adaptation of Hardy's novel is particularly appealing to the senses. Both he and the music composer of the film soundtrack, Craig Armstrong,⁹ were aware of the role of music in constructing the atmosphere of the film. The appreciative reviews of Armstrong's music from the critics were particularly directed towards the delicacy of the sound and his understanding of the epoch. The soundtrack is immersed in English folk music tradition as well as the classical music of the era.¹⁰

Generally speaking, the soundtrack is based on and dominated by the exquisite solo violin, which integrates the whole soundtrack and becomes

⁸ "Soldier's Joy" is a catchy melody destined to be played on the violin. It can be classified as a reel or a country dance. The melody originates in old Irish and Scottish fiddle playing tradition. It was also used by Robert Burnes for his song "The Jolly Beggars". Most frequently however, the text of the songs refers to Civil War soldiers, who were known to overuse alcohol and morphine as painkillers.

⁹ Craig Armstrong (1959) is a Scottish composer, a graduate of The Royal Academy of Music and the author of soundtracks for such blockbusters as *Romeo + Juliet*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Ray*, *Elisabeth: The Golden Age* and *The Great Gatsby*. Armstrong has also won a BAFTA Award, Golden Globe Award and Grammy Award for his achievements in film music.

¹⁰ <http://moviemusicuk.us/2015/04/25/far-from-the-madding-crowd-craig-armstrong/>

its soul. The violin is used to add a pastoral touch to the film as well. For instance, Gabriel Oak's country life in all its simplicity is conveyed through some orchestral passages where the romantic violin based motif mixes with slightly more rhythmical and dashing tunes that were probably inspired by traditional Irish fiddle playing.¹¹ The sheep watering scene illustrates this point well. The voices and laughter of the farm workers, the splashing of water, the bleating of sheep blends with the lively orchestral music join together in a cheerful melody. The music used in the scene of Oak's decision to depart from Weatherbury farm is similar in tone, but somewhat slower-paced.

Time and again, however, the composer changes the mood of the film from pastoral to more romantic by mixing the violin with delicate piano and flute cords. One of the most impressive scenes proving this point is Bathsheba's meeting with Troy in the woods. The piece entitled "Hollow in the Ferns" is a poignant violin-reliant piece of music, the tempo of which seems to be adjusted to the heroine's emotional state. Evocative of Bathsheba's heart beating and her insecurity about Troy, the music suddenly stops to be resumed in a slower tempo towards the climax of the scene, the crowning moment of which is the pair kissing.

The efforts to romanticise the film though music met with criticism from some experts. Armstrong's attempt to highlight the romantic thread of the plot was considered an easy way to attract a less demanding audience. What is undoubtedly achieved, however, is a sensual impression. The effect is reinforced by the sounds of nature. The awareness of Hardy's poetic artistry in describing Wessex induced the filmmakers to use pictures and sounds which would, in a way, replace Hardy's descriptions of Wessex. Therefore, not only does the adaptation abound with the sounds of nature always heard in the background of the ongoing events, but there are also short scenes exposing nothing more than the melody of Wessex. One of the examples of this artistic measure is the picture preceding the sheep watering scene; it suggestively brings back the idyllic image of rural England where the chirruping of birds as well as the buzzing of crickets is heard over a meadow of blooming flowers, and a lively stream of crystal clear water hums quietly while ears of wheat sway from side to side.

It seems, however, that the most frequently repeated sound of nature is that of the wind. Either mixed with the sounds of the sea or present in the rustling

¹¹ <http://moviemusicuk.us/2015/04/25/far-from-the-madding-crowd-craig-armstrong/>

of trees, the wind is the acoustic element that brings change into the lives of the characters, an example being the sinister growling of the sea at night, which seems to devour Gabriel's flock when the sheep fall from the cliff one after another. Also, the wind blowing right into Oak's face obviously prophesies difficulties. In the consecutive scene, the wind from the sea foretells the improvement of Bathsheba's status. She receives a letter informing her of the inheritance of Weatherbury Farm. While Oak is forced to start from scratch, she becomes an owner of a flourishing property. Later, however, the quiet mesmerising whisper of fern leaves entices Bathsheba to walk into the woods to be caught by Sergeant Troy. In a different place in the novel when, following Troy's advice, Fanny Robin is heading towards Budmouth shelter, the wind blowing from the side seems to push her off the road she decided to follow. Therefore, all these examples show that the wind, apart from its acoustic value, also possesses symbolic power of giving things to the characters and depriving the protagonists of them. To some it brings fortune, to others misfortune; but, it is unpredictable in its choices.

Armstrong's soundtrack is also filled with actual music playing, dancing and singing. The use of original songs and dances is one of the ways that musical colour can be introduced into a film. Although a composer may encounter potential problems with integrating these pieces into his original soundtrack, he usually decides to arrange them anew so that they fit the rest of the music picture (Prendergast 1992, 214).

In addition to Armstrong's score, the *Far from the Madding Crowd* soundtrack also includes some traditional hymns performed by The Dorset Singers and the Yeovil Chamber Choir and several lively dances and reels. In contrast to the novel, parts of a church hymn appear at a different moment in the film. "O come, o come Emmanuel" is the only hymn used in the film; it appears twice. Firstly, it is the background to Bathsheba and Liddy's quiet conversation, which takes place during a church service, about marriage and Boldwood as a perfect candidate for a husband. It is used again towards the end of the film in the scene preceding Boldwood's Christmas party, where Bathsheba realises she is obliged to give Boldwood her final decision concerning her marriage to the farmer. Therefore, the words of the hymn express her wish and prayer for the situation to be resolved:

O come, o come Emmanuel,
To free your captive Israel.

In the ensuing scene, the reader sees that her prayers are answered. Troy's death at the hands of Boldwood frees Bathsheba from the two relationships she entangled herself in. Boldwood's Christmas party in the film is a rich scene in terms of music. Unlike in the novel, where the reader is forced to imagine what the party looks based on Boldwood's meticulous preparations and some snippets of dancing and music playing which he sees and hears from behind the door, in the movie the viewer is at the centre of the party and watches people dancing to jolly violin tunes. It is also the moment when an element of romance is added as the viewer sees Bathsheba and Oak dancing together. Their dancing is slow and rather stiff, showing the tension between them and the emotion they share.

Contrary to the novel, however, Oak's musical abilities are reduced. Gabriel does not play the flute. As a result, the dynamics of the sheering supper scene differ from those in the book. In the film, Oak becomes an observer of Bathsheba and Boldwood's duet. Instead of the ballad "The Banks of Allan Water", Armstrong decided to use the song "Let No Man Steal Your Thyme"¹² – a traditional English and Irish tune that cautions young girls to guard their chastity:

Come all you fair and tender maids
That flourish in your prime.
Beware, beware keep your garden fair.
Let no man steal your thyme;
Let no man steal your thyme.

For when your thyme is past and gone,
He'll care no more for you,
And every place where your thyme was waste
Will all spread o're with rue,
Will all spread o're with rue. (...)

The gardener's son was standing by;
Three flowers he gave to me
The pink, the blue, and the violet, too,
And the red, red rosy tree,
The red, red, rosy tree.

¹² <http://www.metrolyrics.com/let-no-man-steal-your-thyme-lyrics-craig-armstrong.html>

Apart from the symbolism of herbs, the lyrics of the aforesaid ballad do not carry hidden meanings; instead, they straightforwardly refer to the main heroine. She becomes the focus of attention as the independent and self-aware young woman. In the song, thyme is being used as a euphemism for a girl's purity and her hopes for the future. The loss of virginity equals the lost chance at future happiness. Therefore, rue in the ballad relates to sorrow or repentance. As the film adaptation is directed toward a wide audience and the film falls into the category of mainstream cinema, the message of the song understood in this particular context has to be clear and transparent. Therefore, the ballads used in the film clarify the meaning of this particular context.

Unlike in the above-mentioned scene, where the simplification of the choice of music was unnecessary, the songs in Troy's harvest scene are rather meaningful. In the novel and the film alike, two simultaneous acts of violence are taking place: the oncoming storm and Troy's incipient drunkenness among chaotically dancing people; the tempo of the dancing reflects the increasing violence of the coming storm. The sequence of Troy's rowdy behaviour is interrupted by short scenes of Gabriel watching the sky before the oncoming storm. In the barn, one of the men starts to sing a lively but crude song entitled "The Knife In the Window"/ "Pretty Polly", whose verses tell the story of the seduction of a young girl, who later gives birth to a child:

Pretty Polly, pretty Polly, it's I've come a wooin'
 Pretty Polly, pretty Polly, it's I've come a wooin'
 She says, "Creep up through the window then and let's get doin'
 And lay your leg over me, over me, do.
 (...)
 Oh, my britches is tight and I cannot undo 'em,
 My britches is tight and I cannot undo 'em."
 There's a knife on the window sill, love, take it to 'em,
 And lay your leg over me, over me, do.

As the audience discovers in one of the following scenes, the lyrics may refer directly to Fanny Robin seduced by Troy. As a balance to Oak's limited musical skills in the film, the filmmakers decide to include samples of Troy's singing abilities when he joins the crowd of drunk men singing the lewd "Pretty Polly" song. The filmmakers decided to show Troy's carelessness towards his newly acquired duties as a farm owner.

All things considered, the musical elements in the novel comprise a coherent entity, extremely bountiful in meaning. What the filmmakers try

to achieve is to show at least a fraction of the enormous talent Hardy evinced with the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The musical elements in the novel are used not only to manifest the beauty of the English countryside but also to demonstrate its richness. Various country dances and songs are perpetuated on the pages of the novel as precious relics of English folklore. Furthermore, the songs and melodies used in the context of the ongoing events cast a new, deeper light on the lives of the characters. The language of those songs reveals a simple truth about human life in general. It proves that a sort of repetitiveness is inscribed in human fate. Whatever happens to the particular characters has happened before to somebody else. What is left is the emotion that music helps to recall.

The filmmakers of the latest adaptation must have been aware of the complexity of Hardy's novel. However, they wanted to produce a film that would be understandable to as wide an audience as possible, also embracing those who have never read Hardy. Therefore, as music is one of the most important components of a film, they had to decide on some simplifications as far as the choice of music was concerned. Sometimes they opted to use different pieces of music, the universality of which is understandable to a wide audience. It seems that the musical elements in Vinterberg's adaptation are as important as they are in Hardy's novel. The filmmakers fully recognise the diversity of the music used by Hardy and make a successful attempt to use that knowledge in the film. What they have achieved is a modern version, a fresh look at the 19th century novel, which seems to be a nod towards Hardy in recognition of his unusual susceptibility to music and nature. What the audience receives is a coherent picture, the foreground of which comprises visual and auditory viewing pleasure.

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The Importance of the Father Figure in the Representation of the Irish in the Selected Contemporary American Films

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Abstract: The importance of the father figure seems to be one of the most ubiquitous motifs used in the portrayal of the Irish in American cinema, as it is present in films belonging to various genres. The function of the motif is related directly to the development of the main character's masculine identity, usually presented within the context of violence. As mother figures are usually absent from the representation of the Irish in contemporary Hollywood, it is the father figure that has the most profound impact on the character's social and emotional development. The present article focuses on the role of the father figure in the construction of the main Irish characters in selected contemporary American films. On the basis of the explicit, implicit and symptomatic meaning produced by the analyzed pictures, it is argued that the studied productions reflect the process of the Irish immigrants' assimilation into American culture.

Keywords: Irish, immigration, father figure, assimilation, masculinity

The present article is a fragment of a larger study focusing on the role of violence in the Irish stereotype explored by the New Hollywood and the contemporary American cinema. In the course of the aforementioned research, over thirty American films produced in the New Hollywood and the contemporary era were analyzed; it became apparent that the relationship between the father and his child constitutes one of the most important themes used in the portrayal of the Irish in America, as it appears across genres and pertains to a variety of characters. Thus, the aim of this article is to present a synthesis of these observations on the basis of three selected contemporary films and argue that through displaying the relationship between

the characters and their fathers, either biological or substitute, the studied films reflect the process of the Irish immigrants' assimilation into American culture through developing a degree of social and emotional maturity.

One of the most important aspects of the films discussed here is the fact that in their deep structure, they strongly rely on Irish stereotypes existing in America. These stereotypes are connected primarily with professions or social roles which are traditionally associated with the Irish or, at some point, were dominated by the Irish. Those discussed in the present study are: a police officer, a firefighter, a gangster and a boxer. What is also important, the representations of the Irish in the contemporary American cinema are dominated by male characters; therefore, the studied films explore primarily the notions of masculinity, usually expressed through violent behaviour. However, one of the selected films shows a definitely strong female character, which seems to prove that, in the case of Irish-themed productions, the importance of the father figure transcends the father-son relationship, which itself may be a common cinematic motif.

The methodology of the present study consists of a paradigmatic analysis of the selected primary sources with the focus on the motif of the importance of the father figure for the main Irish character. In other words, the structure and the function of the studied motif are examined within the plots of the selected films in order to access the meaning produced by the motif.

The analysis concentrates on the implicit and symptomatic meaning produced by the films because of the presence of the studied motifs. Both the implicit and the symptomatic meanings belong to the level of "hidden meaning," as defined by David Bordwell, which exists alongside the direct or apparent meaning (Bordwell 2009, 2). In order to explain the difference between the two levels of meaning, Bordwell compares studying a film to psychoanalysis; in such a view, the direct meaning accessed through following the plot represents what a psychoanalytic patient says, whereas the hidden meaning accessed on the level of deep structure constitutes the interpretation of what is said (Bordwell 2009, 65). Moreover, the level of hidden meaning may be further divided into implicit meaning, which represents either an intended or not intended message the viewer should be able to decipher, and the symptomatic meaning, which combines the message produced by the plot with the context in which the film was made (Bordwell 2009, 71-72). This context may be formed e.g. by the producer's or the viewer's personal, social and cultural experience. Therefore,

the paradigmatic analysis focused on the studied motif is supplemented with the data on the perception of father-child relationship in the Irish society, as well as on the most important facts concerning the development of the social status of the Irish in America.

The three films chosen as the primary sources of the study illustrate both the major trends and interesting cases in the portrayal of the father figure. Although the analyzed films belong to different genres and present different plots, they realize the studied motif in a similar way. Apart from the three selected productions, other titles which also mentioned in the course of the analysis.

The first of the studied films is a science-fiction film, *Frequency* (2000), directed by Gregory Hoblit. It tells the story of a young Irish-American police officer, John (Jim Caviezel), whose father Frank (Dennis Quaid) was a firefighter. Frank died when John was a child, leaving the boy with his mother, Julia (Elizabeth Mitchell). One day, John, who is now in his thirties, finds his father's old ham radio and, unexpectedly, makes contact with Frank thirty years into the past. Because of that, the main action of the film takes place in two parallel realities: the present and the past. As he is fully aware of the circumstances of his father's death, John attempts to save Frank. However, his actions affect the present reality, creating the worst-case scenario in which he loses both his parents. Ultimately, however, he manages to save them, at the same time changing his own life. The film is included in the study because it shows how the young Irish-American's life changes when he loses his father and then his father and his mother and, finally, when he grows up with both his parents present.

Another film chosen for the study is *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), Clint Eastwood's critically acclaimed sports drama. The plot focuses on Frank Dunn, an Irish-American boxing coach, who begins training Maggie Fitzgerald (Hillary Swank), a young talented pugilist. Initially reluctant to training a woman, Dunn becomes aware of Maggie's potential when he sees how determined she is to become a boxer. The film transcends the typical narrative schema of boxer-trainer relationship as Dunn becomes a substitute father for Maggie. During one of the fights, Maggie is seriously injured and becomes quadriplegic, which leaves Dunn torn between his religious convictions and the love to Maggie when she asks him to assist her in committing suicide. The film was chosen due to its untypical realization of the studied motif.

The third title analyzed in the present article is *The Departed* (2006), a crime film by Martin Scorsese. It tells the story of two Irish-Americans entangled in the criminal activity of the Irish mob in Boston, run by Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson). Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon) is Costello's protégé, who devoted his whole life to serve Costello's organization. He becomes a police officer in order to spy for the gangster. Thus, he is a mobster pretending to be a police officer. Billy Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio), on the other hand, is a police officer who pretends to be a criminal so as to infiltrate Costello's organization. In his mission he is overseen by Captain Queenan (Martin Sheen). The film was selected due to the contrast between the positive and the negative vision of the father figure's influence on the main character.

The main function of both biological and substitute father figures present in the selected films is to direct the social and emotional development of the characters representing their children and, therefore, they guard the development of their identities, affecting them in a positive or negative way. The following analysis focuses on the most important events which show how the child figure's life is affected by the presence or absence of the father figure.

The mechanism of John's and Frank's ability to reach through time to contact each other in *Frequency* is never fully explained. However, it is strongly suggested to the viewer that a psychological or spiritual bond between the father and his son plays an important role in the sudden appearance of the otherwise unexplained phenomenon. In this respect, the bond between the father and the son may be treated as the single most powerful force in the world in which the action takes place, as it allows affecting the flow of time itself.

Since the viewer witnesses the events from the perspective of John, who is the only person aware of the changes to the reality that his actions entail, it is possible to see how John's life alters when his father, later followed by his mother, disappears from his life. Before he saves his father, John is unsuccessful in his life. He is lonely and miserable, which is reflected by the state of the ruined house in which he lives; old furniture constitutes all the man has and bleak colours cover the walls as a reminder of what once was the home belonging to a happy family. More importantly, however, the state of disarray in John's life is underlined by the mood of the scenes in which the Irish-American is presented.

Having been deprived of his father, John is unable to realize himself as a man. Julia is a loving mother, but it was Frank's task to prepare John for the reality he is bound to live in. In the scenes taking place in the past, Frank is presented as a father who plays with his son, teaching him how to compete with others, e.g. when playing baseball, and how to ignore bruises and failures, e.g. when riding a bicycle for the first time. When Frank is gone, John's masculinity cannot be fully realized.

When John saves his father from the fire in which he originally died, he alters the present reality. In the timeline that he creates, his father survived the fire but a chain of unfortunate events led to Julia being murdered by a serial killer and Frank becoming a chain smoker and dying of lung cancer some time after that. Thus, in the second version of the present reality, John is deprived of both his parents. However, his life without the mother changes only marginally, indicating that, while loving and caring, she only had a minor impact on John's well-being. In the third timeline, Frank and his wife survive, which results in changing John's life, as evidenced by the complete remodelling of John's house that occurs gradually, right in front of his and the viewer's eyes: the colours suddenly become vivid and the old furniture is replaced with new. What is more important, it is only when his father is present in his life that John is able to become a father himself and, as suggested by the final scenes, teach his own son the values he is going to need in his life.

In *Million Dollar Baby* the two main characters become foster family members to each other because their biological families are dysfunctional. Dunn has lost contact with his biological daughter, who returns each and every letter he sends her. Maggie Fitzgerald is an adult woman whose dream is to become a boxer. Initially, when Frank refuses to train her, she finds a coach who is incompetent and does not treat her seriously. It is only when she is given an opportunity to train with Dunn that she is able to develop her skills. What is more important, thanks to Frank, she becomes aware of her Irish origins and undergoes a transformation from "white trash" to a proud Irish-American woman who is able to decide about her own fate. This is emphasized by her rejection of her biological family represented by her mother and siblings, who are interested only in the money she earned as a boxer and who stress the fact that she lost her last fight and became quadriplegic. Consequently, the Irish ethos represented by Frank is contrasted with the lack of ideals in the case of Maggie's family (Carroll 2011, 132).

Furthermore, the connection between the “father” and the “daughter” is emphasized with the use of Irish language. When she begins her career, Maggie is given a pseudonym by Dunn – “Mo Chuisle,” which itself is a version of an Irish term of endearment: a chuisle mo chroi, which means “the pulse of my heart,” and is roughly the equivalent of the English “darling.” Dunn, however, refuses to reveal the meaning of the pseudonym to Maggie until the very end of the film, when he is about to assist her in her suicide and translates it to her as “my darling, my blood”; thus, in Maggie’s final moments, he affirms that he has considered her a daughter for a long time. Maggie chooses to die as she sees it the only way to preserve her dignity. As she became injured due to a dishonourable illegal punch, she is striving to preserve the dignity and honour she gained thanks to Frank. Thus, teaching Maggie about her Irish heritage, Frank instigates in her the emotions she was deprived of by her biological family.

Also, in the light of the present study, it is interesting that the film deviates from two typical narrative patterns, i.e. the father-son relationship and the male trainer-male boxer relationship. Thus, it suggests that the Irish women, who admittedly appeared in American cinema before but who were usually given marginal roles, have finally gained some attention. What is important in this context, Maggie traverses the territory reserved for men and proves to be even more successful than most male pugilists seen in the film. This empowerment of the Irish women, who are usually presented in the context of the patriarchal Irish community, proves the evolution of the way Irish women are seen today in American popular culture. Still, Maggie needs a father figure to learn about duty and honour, as well as to discover her Irish identity, while her mother is presented in a decisively negative way.

A sharp contrast between a negative and a positive character development directed by substitute father figures is seen in *The Departed*. The film presents two pairs of father-son characters. Frank Costello performs the function of the father figure for Colin Sullivan, representing a dark and destructive version of fatherhood. Costello, whose motto *Non serviam* emphasizes his diabolical nature (Wernblad 2010, 205), begins shaping Colin’s identity when the latter is a young boy. His age and low social status make him susceptible to Costello’s skilful manipulations and he is easily impressed by the gangster’s strength and wealth. Although Costello teaches Colin the values usually emphasized in Irish-themed films, such as the sense of duty,

and instigates in the boy the sense of Irish pride, his motivation is decisively negative; Colin is his long-time investment that is supposed to become quite valuable in the future. Thus, the gangster does not educate the boy out of fatherly love but because of a selfish calculation. When Colin starts serving as Costello's informer, the father-son relationship between the two characters is emphasized by the fact that Colin calls Frank "Dad" whenever he calls him with information on police activity.

Although Costello is sometimes analyzed also as a father figure for Billy Costigan, it is Captain Queenan who seems to be more accentuated in this function. Firstly, it is Queenan who creates Billy's identity as an infiltrator, effectively deciding about his further personal and professional life. Despite the fact that he is directed by Queenan into a dangerous situation, Costigan trusts his Captain also as the keeper of his original identity. Secondly, Queenan is selfless when it comes to Billy's safety; when Costello's gangsters assault Queenan, they ask him where his "boy" is, which obviously refers to Costigan, but the Captain answers as if it was a question about his son.

Gangster: "Where's your boy?"
Queenan: "He's studying law at Notre Dame."

This serves a similar purpose to Sullivan's referring to Costello as "Dad" during their phone calls. Finally, as a true Irish father, whose role is to be a hero for his son, Queenan sacrifices his life in order to save Billy. When he is thrown down from a roof, his body hits the pavement right in front of Costigan, the Captain's blood staining Billy, emphasizing the fact that Queenan died for his young protégé.

Furthermore, the storylines involving the respective father-son relationships mirror each other. To begin with, Costello and Queenan both send their "sons" to infiltrate their enemies. Secondly, the father figures serve as constant reminders to Sullivan and Costigan that their respective missions must be completed. Finally, both infiltrators eventually lose their "fathers," which proves to have a profound impact on their lives as, in both cases, the event affects their identity. When Sullivan shoots Costello, he has problems accepting his new identity as a hero of the police unit. However, he quickly comes to terms with the fact that he is free from the toxic father figure's influence and seems ready to reconstruct his identity. Billy, on the other hand,

has his world shattered by Queenan's death as he is now left alone against the mobsters.

Similar ideas about father-son relations in the Irish context may be found in other contemporary American films, which stress the loss of the father figure and its consequences for the main characters. In *The Devil's Own* (1997), Frankie McGuire (Brad Pitt) becomes a member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army when his biological father is murdered by Ulster Loyalists, an event which deprives him of a chance for normal life. In *Backdraft*, an action thriller from 1991, directed by Ron Howard, firefighter Brian McCaffery (William Baldwin) is a young man struggling to follow in his father's footsteps after the latter dies in the line of duty. In *Daredevil* (2003), a neo-noir superhero film based on a comic book, Matt Murdock (Ben Affleck) becomes a superhero fighting against criminal underworld in New York when his father, a boxer, is murdered. In *Gangs of New York* (2002), another Irish-themed film by Martin Scorsese, Amsterdam Vallon (Leonardo DiCaprio) is driven by the desire to avenge his father who was murdered by Bull Cutting (Daniel Day-Lewis).

There might be various reasons as to why the father figure is important for the representation of the Irish in American cinema. The traditional image of the Irish father, stemming from literature but also from classical Hollywood, is dominated by negative characters, similar to Costello. As pointed out by a developmental psychologist, J. Kevin Nugent, "[Irish] fathers are generally emotionally distant yet controlling, having little contact with their children except as disciplinarians" (Nugent 2013, 175). However, Nugent also argues that this image is undergoing a change, especially in Irish literature, with fathers beginning to show affection to their children (Nugent 2013, 176). The famous *In The Name of the Father* by Jim Sheridan might be seen as an important example of this trend. When it comes to American Irish-themed films, the stereotype of Irish fathers as distant and emotionally cold towards their children (Nugent 2013, 175) seems to be rather marginal with positive examples constituting a majority of representations. The father figure is a character of authority and is crucial for a young Irish person to develop socially, as it is the father who is the source or the carrier of emotions and qualities that are indispensable for this development. This dominant emotion here is Irish pride and the dominant quality is the sense of duty.

What is interesting, such a decisively positive image of the Irish father differs from the one projected by contemporary Irish productions. As Debbie Ging points in her book *Men and Masculinities in Irish Cinema*: "In the case

of cinematic portrayals of the Irish father-son relationship, (...), the dominant trope is one of dis-identification, for the Irish father on-screen is more often than not a bully whose only emotional outlet is to inflict psychological damage on his children. Indeed, the harsh, autocratic father figure has arguably become a metonym for all that is backward about Ireland" (Ging 2012, 81). Conversely, in contemporary American cinema, the dominant trope in father-child relations is identification, rather than dis-identification.

Such a sharp contrast between the view and the representation of Irish fathers in Ireland and in America might be symptomatic of the differences between the apparent function of the Irish father figure in the two countries. The father figure in contemporary American films treating about the Irish in America is connected to Irish tradition and the attachment to tradition and the feeling of Irish pride related to it played a crucial role in allowing the descendants of Irish immigrants to become successful members of American society. When the Irish came to America, they brought with them all the components of their culture, including the disregard for authority (Miller 1988, 327) and militant Catholicism, which automatically put them at odds with the dominant American WASP society (Kenny 2014, 118). At first, they organized themselves in gangs, which reflected the ancient tribal divisions brought from their homeland (Blake 1981, 29), but eventually, they started to gradually gain importance as valuable members of society, often serving as firefighters, often referred to as "an Irish club" (Smith 2010, 122), and police officers, becoming urban icons (O'Brien 2012, 861). These professions were often a part of family traditions with sons following in their fathers' footsteps.

As the Irish were patriarchal, with the father taking the role of the breadwinner, an important function of the father was to teach his child, primarily a son, to become the breadwinner for his future family. As Michael Hout notices in his *Following in Father's Footsteps: Social Mobility in Ireland*, Irish sons were usually taught by their fathers to eventually substitute them in the profession they performed, which normally happened when the father was no longer able to work (Hout 1989, 242). This feature was then transferred by Irish immigrants to America and became a part of the Irish stereotype. As the cinematic representations of the Irish have always been based on stereotypes, with the change in the perception of the Irish father that took place at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, a new such stereotype appeared: one in which the role of the Irish father is not only to teach his son or daughter a traditional Irish profession, but also to develop

the child in terms of emotions, mainly to instigate the Irish pride and the sense of duty which guarantee success in American society. However, this may also prove destructive if the elements of the tradition the father passes on to his son involve the stereotypical Irish violence.

The importance of the father figure for the representation of the Irish in the contemporary American cinema seems to be one of the main motifs used in the construction of Irish characters in selected films. Moreover, the loss of the father figure as the factor affecting and usually impeding the development of the Irish-American characters' identity is also emphasized in various films. Taking into account the aforementioned current trends in the evolution of the Irish father stereotype, it may be said that, in contemporary American cinema, the Irish father represents the old ways, the remnants of the Irish tradition, still very much alive in Irish Diaspora, while the son is the reflection of the first generations of the Irish born in the USA, who were torn between the allegiance to the country of their parents and that to America. In their successful transition from living in poverty in American cities of the nineteenth century to achieving the middle class status at the end of the twentieth century (Ibson 2003, 238), the Irish needed to remember who they were and what they were trying to achieve. According to John Ibson, it was the memory of the painful experience connected with oppressive English authority they carried with them from Ireland that made the Irish strive to achieve higher social status in their new home, which resulted in some of them rising to the positions of the highest authority, such as e.g. John F. Kennedy (Ibson 2003, 239).

Thus, the importance of the father figure in the representation of the Irish in contemporary American cinema stems from the father being a link to the tradition and the difficult history of the Irish; losing a father means severing these ties and the need to find a substitute who would direct the emotional development of the child figure's as an Irish person and its social development as an American.

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Filmography

Frequency. Director: Gregory Hoblit. Writer: Toby Emmerich. Cast: Dennis Quaid, Jim Caviezel, Shawn Doyle. New Line Cinema, 2000.

Million Dollar Baby. Director: Clint Eastwood. Writers: Paul Haggis, F. X. Toole. Cast: Hilary Swank, Clint Eastwood, Morgan Freeman. Warner Bros., Lakeshore Entertainment, 2004.

The Departed. Director: Martin Scorsese. Writer: William Monahan. Cast: Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon, Jack Nicholson, Mark Wahlberg, Martin Sheen. Warner Bros., 2006.

Report on “Emotion(s)” PASE 2015 International Conference

The 24th annual PASE (Polish Association for the Study of English) conference was held by the Institute of English Studies of the University of Wrocław on April 17–19, 2015 under the umbrella title “Emotion(s)”. This international and interdisciplinary conference gathered a total of 170 participants from around the world, including the USA, India, England, Slovenia, Canada, and Northern Ireland, guaranteeing diverse perspectives on the topic of emotions as they are represented, constructed and negotiated in language and literature.

The papers, plenary lectures, and panel discussions were provocative and varied in their treatment of the conference theme and it would be impossible to summarize the content of single papers in this short space; instead we will try to limit ourselves to highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the approaches taken to the conference theme. The conference proceedings were divided into five disciplinary fields, focusing on literature, culture, linguistics, translation studies and glottodidactics, each exploring the theme of emotions within the bounds of their specific methodologies and standpoints. Considered as a whole, the diversity perspectives contributed greatly to a deeper understanding of how integral and elusive emotional content is in language and literature, and how challenging it is in our work as translators and teachers. Emotions were approached as constructs in language and literature, determined by specific cultural contexts, as well as psychological affects evoked by means of specific linguistic gestures.

Plenary lectures were delivered by outstanding scholars from several academic centers renowned for their departments of English studies. The conference was opened by two plenary lectures, providing a fascinating introduction to the conference theme from both a literary and a linguistic perspective. The first lecture was delivered by our esteemed guest, Leigh Gilmore, a visiting scholar of at the Harvard Divinity School, whose paper entitled “Hiding in Plain Sight: Emotions and Ethical Witness in Women’s Autobiographical Narratives” provided insight into how emotions are elicited in feminist autobiographical narratives in order to establish a scene of ethical witnessing and political sympathy. This was followed by our second opening lecture delivered by Smiliana Komar, professor at the University of Ljubljana,

Slovenia, titled “Intonation: The Strongest Link in *The Weakest Ling Quiz*,” in which the discourse structure of the titular quiz show is analyzed in terms of its emotional subtleties and impact.

Another plenary lecture was delivered by Eva C. Karpinski from York University in Toronto, who talked about experimenting with the redefinition of genre by means of affect theory used in relation to genre understood as social action. On the last day of the conference, Ewa Willim from Jagiellonian University in Cracow (Poland) and Bożena Rozwadowska from the University of Wrocław (Poland) in their plenary lecture discussed emotion verbs and their Experiencer argument.

The literature and culture section of the conference interrogated the role and influence of emotions in a wide selection of genres, time periods, and methodologies, from 15th century miracle plays to contemporary fiction and film. These works were approached from diverse psychoanalytical perspectives to historical analyses of emotions as cultural constructs. Emotions were, therefore, explored not only in the way they were represented in literature, but also in terms of their production within a specific cultural context.

The presentations given in linguistics sections touched upon various aspects of language study, with particular attention paid to various emotion-related aspects of using language as a vehicle of communication. Among the issues discussed by conference participants were, for example, emotions in the language of the Internet, emotional expressions in headlines, hate speech, emotion-related metaphors, and diachronic study of emotion-related vocabulary, to mention but a few.

The scholars who presented their papers in applied linguistics/ glottodidactics spoke about various emotional aspects of language teaching and learning. Emotions and affective factors in language teaching and learning seem to be two the most frequently exploited topics presented from different angles and in different educational settings.

The presentations delivered by translation and interpreting scholars also focused on how emotions are translated, how emotions and affective factors influence interpreting performance quality or how court interpreters should behave – also in terms of their emotional responses – in their professional environment, i.e. in courts. It seems that translating emotional language is one of the challenges that translators have to handle if they wish to render the original text in the target language appropriately.

The PASE 2016 conference organized a round table discussion, three translation panels, and a young researchers' forum of translation studies. The round table discussion, "The Place of the Humanities - The Role of Teaching Literature," moderated by dr hab. Anna Budziak (University of Wrocław), gathered academics from Poland and abroad (including prof. dr hab. Ewa Borkowska from the University of Silesia, professor Jan Jędrzejewski from the University of Ulster, prof. dr hab. David Malcolm from the University of Gdansk, and dr Wojciech Małecki from the University of Wrocław). It offered the opportunity to exchange opinions and thoughts concerning the crucial question of the changing role of the Humanities in today's academic culture. The lively discussion oscillated between considerations of the role of teaching literature, its benefits for higher education and the challenges now facing Humanities departments in today's market-driven educational system. Far from limiting themselves to a purely theoretical discussion, our speakers also considered practical aspects of the Humanities in higher education, such as interdisciplinary programs, teaching methods, and cooperation between English literature departments and other faculties.

The first translation panel, "Professional Accountability of Sworn Translators," moderated by prof. dr hab. Marek Kuźniak (University of Wrocław), dealt with legal aspects of sworn translators. The panel hosted dr hab. Artur Kubacki, a distinguished translator scholar and sworn translator, and mgr Bolesław Cieślak, Head of the Department of Sworn Translators in the Ministry of Justice, who provided an 'inside view' regarding the implementation of provisions regulating the supervision of the conduct of sworn translators.

The second translation panel, moderated by dr Maciej Litwin (University of Wrocław), hosted representatives of the University of Wrocław and of the Municipal Government of Wrocław, who engaged the vital concerns of English studies in Poland twenty-five years after the political transformations. Specifically, the panel delved into questions regarding the role of the English language and English departments in affecting cultural change, the extent of their influence, which can be gleaned in the corporate culture of multinational corporate institutions, as well as the possible consequences of this influence. Finally, the panel also considered the possible future of English in united Europe regarding, for example, opportunities and threats faced by English study institutions.

The third translation panel, convened by dr Michał Szawerna (University of Wrocław), was devoted to the cooperation between community interpreters and police negotiators. The guests – dr Piotr Czajka, an interpreter, and a police negotiator (name and surname must be kept confidential) from Wrocław Police Department – spoke about their cooperation and the conditions which have to be met for this cooperation to be successful. The circumstances in which police negotiators work are usually emotionally charged and it is the task of those negotiators to cope with a variety of emotions experienced by the people involved in a given situation. If an interpreter is called for help, then it is expected that such a person will interpret only what is being said. However, in quite many cases, this seems to be an unfeasible task and both the negotiator and interpreter need to compromise to make a given situation finish successfully. The participants thus talked about how such a compromise is needed during police negotiations in which a foreign language is the vehicle of communication.

A noteworthy initiative was undertaken by the doctoral students of translation associated in “Translatio” Doctoral Students’ Association in the Institute of English Studies of the University of Wrocław. This was a conference-format forum in which young scholars, mostly doctoral students working on their theses on various aspects of translation and interpreting, presented their research. Each presentation was followed by a series of questions and/or comments expressed by senior scholars. The forum was attended by numerous young researchers mostly from Polish universities. In a cordial atmosphere, they could discuss their projects with other translation and interpreting scholars. The forum was coordinated by Dawid Czech (University of Wrocław) and its particular sessions were chaired by Michał Garcarz, Michał Szawerna and Marcin Walczyński – members of the Department of Translation Studies in the Institute of English Studies (University of Wrocław).

Marcin Tereszewski
Marcin Walczyński

Calls for Papers

25th PASE

Multiculturalism, Multilingualism and the Self

Szczyrk, 31st March – 2nd April 2016

University of Silesia

Through others we become ourselves (L. S. Vygotsky):

The limits of my language are the limits of my world (L. Wittgenstein)

The Institute of English and Institute of English Cultures and Literatures at the University of Silesia and the Polish Association for the Study of English are pleased to invite you to the 25th annual Conference of The Polish Association for the Study of English. The theme of the conference is “Multiculturalism, Multilingualism and the Self”.

The submissions are welcome in the area of literature, culture studies, linguistics, applied linguistics, translation and teacher training.

The following topics are only our suggestions for presentations at the conference:

- the multidisciplinary of multiculturalism and multilingualism research,
- the contexts of multilingualism,
- bilingualism versus multilingualism: the same or worlds apart,
- multilingual language contact and cross-linguistic influences,
- multilingual language acquisition and learning in a variety of contexts,
- the teaching of multiple languages: facilitation and challenge,
- the multicompetence of a language learner/user,
- multilingual translation,
- the role of English in the multilingual world,
- multiculturalism or/and interculturalism: dreams and possibilities of cultural reunification,
- rethinking multiculturalism: the successes and challenges of cultural pluralism,
- literary representations of cultural/political conflicts and scenarios of their resolution,
- narratives of conflict, narratives of reconciliation,

- identity (personal, regional, communal, ethnic, national) in literary representations and cultural products,
- wor(l)ds, voices, selves in-between culture.

We are pleased to announce that the following eminent scholars working in the field of English studies have kindly agreed to present plenary talks at our conference:

- Prof. Anthony David Barker (University of Aveiro, Aveiro),
- Prof. Jean Marc Dewaele (University of London, Birkbeck College, London),
- Prof. Frank Ferguson (University of Ulster, Coleraine),
- Prof. Hanna Komorowska (University of Social Sciences and Humanities/ University of Warsaw, Warsaw),
- Prof. Rafał Molencki (University of Silesia, Katowice),
- Prof. Claus Schatz-Jakobsen (University of Southern Denmark, Odense).

The conference will be held in the holiday resort of Szczyrk in the Beskidy Mountains. The dates of the conference are 31st March to 2nd April 2016 (arrival on Wednesday the 30th March is recommended).

All those wishing to contribute papers or just to attend presentations are welcome to enroll in the conference. Presentation abstracts should be submitted by 15th January 2016 to the following e-mail address: 2016pase@gmail.com. Notification of acceptance will be sent out by 31st January 2016.

For conference-related matters please contact the Conference Organisers at 2016pase@gmail.com or check the website: www.pase.us.edu.pl.

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The World of E. M. Forster – E. M. Forster and the World

29th–30th September 2016

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

University of Warsaw

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International E. M. Forster Society

One may as well begin with an invitation:

We would like to invite you to an international scholarly conference on the life and works of E. M. Forster, the first conference to be organised by the International E. M. Forster Society and the second Forsterian conference in Poland. It is our aim to evaluate the presence and legacy of Forster in English literature and social history. The double title of our conference is meant to reflect the duality of our aims – on the one hand, we are interested in Forster's own works, with a special stress on the less often approached texts. On the other hand, we would like to enquire in the position of Forster, his works, and the values he stood for within British and world culture(s) almost half a century after his demise.

We are interested in all possible aspects of Forster's oeuvre and life, as perceived by various theories, methodologies, and schools. Our interests encompass both the works and the life of Forster himself as these of his contemporaries, especially those he was influenced by and those he in turn influenced himself. The list of possible candidates ranges from Jane Austen through Henry James to Virginia Woolf and Christopher Isherwood. We are also interested in Forsterian influences in the works of our contemporaries, such as Alan Hollinghurst, Jonathan Coe, and Zadie Smith. Our interest includes also books in which Forster features as a literary character, for instance Damon Galgut's *Arctic Summer*. We are further interested in E. M. Forster's legacy going beyond literature, such as films, plays, musicals, and operas based on his works. It is our aim to make the selection of papers as comprehensive as possible, so do not hesitate to contact us with your proposals, no matter how far-fetched they may be.

The conference will take place at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, in the heart of the picturesque Polish Lake District. The organisers

will offer moderately priced accommodation on the university campus (details will be announced on the webpage) for the duration of the conference.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Olsztyn!

Organisers

Prof. Krzysztof Fordoński, University of Warsaw

Dr. Katarzyna Kodeniec, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

Prof. Ewa Kujawska-Lis, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

Dr. Anna Kwiatkowska, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

Dr. Weronika Szemińska, University of Warsaw

Dr. Heiko Zimmermann, University of Trier

Politics and Poetics of Friendship

27–29 October 2016

Jagiellonian University in Kraków

As Umberto Eco once famously noted, a man who loves a cultivated woman knows that “he cannot say to her ‘I love you madly’, because he knows that

she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland”. But what about **friendship**? Has it also become devalued since, for instance, on Facebook friends are a number and the meaning of the verb “to friend” as “to befriend” has become archaic? Or is friendship “a way of life”, as Michel Foucault would have it, an underestimated category whose radical potential grows with evolving social models? What are the characteristics and forms of friendship? What are its laws? Is it based on mutual nourishment or exploitation? Dedication or self-love? In what way does it differ from other types of bonding? Does friendship go beyond the “proximity of congeneric double, beyond kinship, [...] beyond the principle of fraternity” (Jacques Derrida)? Or is it governed by “fraternal tenderness”? Is a friend addressed or described as “‘an absent other’, a kind of adult cousin to the imaginary friends little children invent for themselves”, as Paul Auster recently said about his epistolary friend, J. M. Coetzee?

The goal of our conference, organised by the Institute of English Studies (Jagiellonian University in Krakow), is to explore **representations of friendship in literary fiction and non-fiction, film, and other visual narratives**. We are particularly looking forward to receiving proposals addressing the issue of friendship in life narratives (autobiographies, memoirs, autofiction, [auto]biographical graphic novels, biographies, biofiction, biopics, letters, diaries, journals, etc.), as well as those focusing on friendship between writers.

Suggested themes include but are not limited to:

- fe/male-fe/male friendship,
- friendship vs family,
- friendship vs love,
- erotic friendship / friends with benefits,
- intimate friendship / bromance,
- “friendship” as a euphemism,
- spiritual friendship,

- professional / artistic / literary friendship,
- false and/or forced friendship,
- from friends to foes,
- wo/man's best friend: friendship with animals,
- friendship in the digital world.

Proposals for 20-minute presentations should consist of a brief biographical note (including academic title and institutional affiliation) as well as a 150-word abstract. They should be sent to the e-mail address friendship.conference@gmail.com by **31 May 2016**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **15 June 2016**. The conference will be held at the Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland on **27-29 October 2016**.

Conference fee: 120 EURO (or 480 PLN).

Following the conference we plan to publish selected papers (between 4000-6000 words in length) in book form.

The conference will be held during *The Conrad Festival* (www.conradfestival.pl) – the largest international literary event in Poland and one of the largest in Europe, which offers a great opportunity to meet world-renowned writers.

Authors' Biodata

Wojciech Drag is a lecturer at the Institute of English Studies at the University of Wrocław in Poland. He holds an MA from the University of Glamorgan and a PhD from the University of Wrocław. He is the author of *Revisiting Loss: Memory, Trauma and Nostalgia in the Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* (2014), *The Pursuit of Meaning in the Novels of Julian Barnes* (2015) and academic articles about Ishiguro, Barnes, John Banville, Tom McCarthy and J. M. Coetzee. His academic interests centre on the contemporary British novel, experimental literature, literary prizes and canonicity.

Ewa Kowal is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture at the Institute of English Studies of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. She is the author of the book *The "Image-Event" in the Early Post-9/11 Novel: Literary Representations of Terror after September 11, 2001* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2012) and a series of articles devoted to post-9/11 literature. Her current research interests concentrate on contemporary literature and film, in particular responses to the aftermath of the current economic crisis. Her additional interests include contemporary literary, cultural and aesthetic theories, feminist criticism and gender studies, as well as the visual arts and the intersection between the Internet and literature. She is also a translator and editor.

Marcin Tereszewski is Assistant Professor at the University of Wrocław, where he specializes in modern British fiction. He has published articles dealing with various aspects of Samuel Beckett's work in relation to post-modern thought. His book, *The Aesthetics of Failure: Inexpressibility in Samuel Beckett's Fiction*, was published by Cambridge Scholars Press in 2013. His current research projects include an examination of J.G. Ballard's dystopian fiction in relation to psychogeographic theories of spatiality and architecture.

Justyna Dąbrowska holds a master's degree in English Studies from the University of Łódź. She completed her MA thesis entitled "Looking Acutely, Dancing Passionately and Experiencing a Sense of Otherness: the Visual, the Body, and the Other in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*" at the Department of Drama and Pre-1800 English Literature at the University of Łódź, and earned a distinction for it. Her main academic interests include modern Irish drama (especially the work of Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats), contemporary Irish drama and a broadly defined concept of visuality. She is also interested in the portrayal of women in drama and in the Bible. She is the president of Geoffrey Chaucer Student Society at the Department of Drama and Pre-1800 English Literature at the University of Łódź. Recently, she was awarded an excellence medal for outstanding studies.

Katarzyna Mosionek holds a Master's degree in English Literature from the University of Warsaw. She is a PhD student at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Her research interests include Victorian literature, especially the works of Thomas Hardy, and their film adaptations. She is also interested in British heritage cinema.

Piotr Szczypa graduated from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin in 2008. In 2009, he returned to the university as a doctoral student. Currently, he is a research assistant in the Institute of English Studies at MCSU in Lublin. He specializes in broadly defined visual culture and his doctoral dissertation, devoted to the role of violence in Irish stereotype in American cinema, is currently under review. His scholarly interests include the study of cinematic representation, video game aesthetics, the role of film and video games in creating and transferring prosthetic memory, and the study of the viewer's identification with the film character.