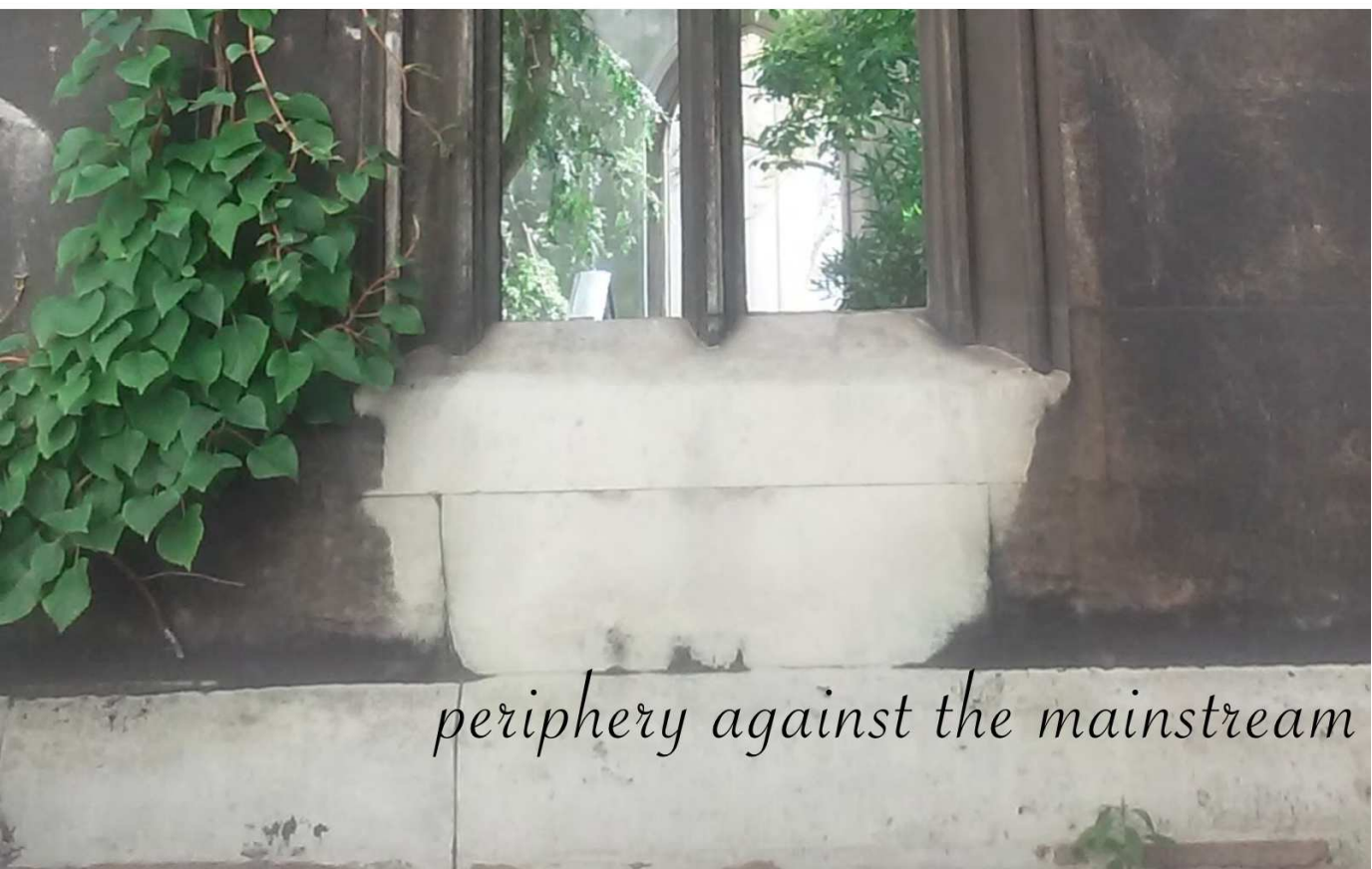




currents

A Journal of Young English Philology Thought and Review



periphery against the mainstream

CURRENTS
A Journal of Young English Philology Thought and Review

Vol. 5: Periphery: Against the Mainstream
2019

Edited by
Edyta Lorek-Jezińska, Paula Budzyńska, Jacek Stopa & Marek Placiński

Toruń 2019

CURRENTS. A Journal of Young English Philology Thought and Review
Vol. 5: **Periphery: Against the Mainstream**/2019

Edited by Edyta Lorek-Jezińska, Paula Budzyńska, Jacek Stopa & Marek Placiński
Editor-in-Chief: Edyta Lorek-Jezińska

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www.currents.umk.pl *currents.journal.umk@gmail.com*
ISSN 2449-8769

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Publisher: Academic Association for Doctoral Students of English Philology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland / Doktoranckie Koło Naukowe Filologii Angielskiej, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, ul. Bojarskiego 1, 87-100 Toruń

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Typesetting: Edyta Lorek-Jezińska

CURRENTS. A Journal of Young English Philology Thought and Review, based in Toruń, is a yearly interdisciplinary journal addressed to young researchers in the field of English studies. It was founded in 2013 by the Academic Association for Doctoral Students of English Philology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and its first issue was released in 2015. The journal is dedicated to all aspects of English studies, including linguistics, literary and cultural studies, translation, book editing and ESL teaching. It seeks to explore interconnections and differences between various sub-disciplines and approaches within English philology, providing a platform for debate to young scholars. *Currents* invites contributions from students of English departments in Poland and abroad, pursuing BA, MA and PhD degree programmes. The major part of each issue consists of academic articles related to the key themes described in call for papers published in the latest issue or on the journal website. A separate section is devoted to book reviews and conference reports. The journal applies a double-blind review procedure; each article is reviewed by one or two academic referees. *Currents* is edited by members of the Academic Association for Doctoral Students of English Philology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. All submissions and queries should be sent to the journal address: currents.journal.umk@gmail.com.

Editor-in-chief
Edyta Lorek-Jezińska

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
INTRODUCTION	
Edyta Lorek-Jezińska, Paula Budzyńska, Joanna Antoniak, Julia Siepak Peripheries and mainstreams: An introduction	8
ARTICLES	
PERIPHERIES OF LANGUAGE	
Arkadiusz Cezary Sokolnicki On loaded language	16
Dorota Watkowska The conceptual system of non-native speakers: an attempt to determine the influence of translingual experience on mental representations	41
Agata Piasecka An analysis of figurative language in selected Bring Me the Horizon's songs	58
PERIPHERIES OF LITERATURE AND CULTURE	
Iga Noińska On the periphery of literary and authorial truthfulness: <i>Handcarved Coffins</i> by Truman Capote	72
Mateusz Dudek Ideology and family relations—Philip Roth's <i>American Pastoral</i> from a political perspective	84

Bernadetta Jankowska	97
How to explain the inexplicable? The portrayal of a supernatural character in <i>The Skriker</i> by Caryl Churchill	
Katarzyna Stępień	106
The anthropocentric perspective in <i>Solaris</i> by Stanisław Lem	
Aleksandra Sieradzka	116
A machine like a human being—transhumanism as new humanism in the movie <i>Ex Machina</i>	
Jacek Stopa	126
Almost Hollywood: The English and American Influences on Australian Cinema and its Renaissance in the 1970s	
BOOK REVIEWS	
Joanna Antoniak	144
Living between the border and the centre—the migrant condition in modern Britain	
CONFERENCE REPORTS	
Paula Budzyńska	151
<i>Periphery: Against the Mainstream</i> An Interdisciplinary Conference (Horizons 3)	
Bernadetta Jankowska	153
<i>Authored Cultures/ Authoring Cultures</i>	
Joanna Antoniak	155
<i>Comparing e/migrations: Tradition—(Post)memory—Translingualism</i>	
ABSTRAKTY	159
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	164

Acknowledgements

Had it not been for the great involvement of many people, the publication of the fifth issue of *CURRENTS* would not have been possible. We intend to express our gratitude to all researchers and lecturers teaching English Studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University for their kind support. We greatly appreciate invaluable comments provided by our Reviewers. Their attention to detail helped to inspire our young scholars and substantially contributed to the quality of this edition. We would like to thank the supervisors of BA and MA theses, which formed the bases of some of the articles included in this volume as well as doctoral students' advisors for their useful comments and suggestions. Last but not least, we wish to extend our thanks to our colleagues, who helped us with proof-reading and other editing tasks.

CURRENTS

The fifth issue editors

CURRENTS EDITORIAL
PERIPHERIES AND MAINSTREAMS

**Edyta Lorek-Jezińska, Paula Budzyńska, Joanna Antoniak &
Julia Siepak**

Nicolaus Copernicus University

PERIPHERIES AND MAINSTREAMS: AN INTRODUCTION

Keywords: periphery, mainstream, centre, binary, fluidity

It is our great pleasure to deliver the fifth issue of *CURRENTS. A Journal of Young English Philology Thought and Review*, edited by members of the Academic Association for Doctoral Students of English Philology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Following our earlier explorations into horizons and what lies beyond them in 2017 and 2018, the aim of this issue of *Currents* is to examine the way in which the binary opposition mainstream–periphery functions in contemporary society and culture and how it is approached in various academic contexts.

In the cultural context, the periphery is often understood as the opposition to the mainstream culture, known and recognised by the majority of a given community. Therefore, although the periphery is a part of a cultural system, it functions partially outside of it, located on the border between being acknowledged and being obscure. The relations between the mainstream (the centre) and the periphery are often tense and marred with misunderstandings. Yet, despite all the differences between the two, a distinctive feature of the centre/mainstream-periphery binary is the fluidity of its boundaries exemplified by the constant shifting of theories and the works of culture from the periphery to the centre and vice versa. These processes are accompanied by the continuous redefinition of what is meant by the centre and the core. They can be noticed in the growing and then decreasing popularity of certain

approaches and theories, shifting interests in particular areas of research and research materials, and changing positions and perspectives, exemplified by such concepts as recuperation or cultural appropriation.

The concept of the periphery in geographical and cultural senses has been connected to the mapping of the world in terms of dominance/importance and marginalisation, also applied in economy in Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of the core and periphery distinction (1979). The evolution of positioning and perspective can also be illustrated by the dynamics of the discourses of orientalism (Said 1978) and occidentalism (Buruma, Margalit 2004; Carrier 1995) and their implications.

As Byram (2003: 10) noticed already over fifteen years ago, in the modern times, when the world is continuously changing and mobility is increasing, it is impossible to live in seclusion. Cultural exchanges are taking place along and across the borders and peripheries, gradually affecting the mainstream and redefining the very notions of "periphery" and "mainstream." New studies emerge around these processes. For instance, intercultural studies focus on the ability to communicate effectively with the representatives of various origins and cultures, which has become particularly significant nowadays.

The relation between the periphery and the centre is also continuously redefined within particular disciplines and research areas. This can be illustrated with the changing view on, among others, socio(-)cognitive¹ approach to language in the field of the humanities. Originating in the field of the exact sciences, the socio(-)cognitive approach was regarded as peripheral, until such scholars as Atkinson (2002), Matsuoka and Evans (2004), Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), Koller (2008), Kecskes and Zhang (2009), Kecskes (2010, 2014), Khatib and Branch (2013), Langlotz (2015), or Larsen-Freeman (2017), to mention but a few, commenced to adopt it in their studies. Thanks to it, the position of the said notion has shifted from the peripheries to the mainstream in the field of language studies specifically.

The authors contributing to the fifth volume of *Currents* address various meanings and implications of peripheries and mainstreams in their fields of study, commenting on the marginality or centrality of loaded language, translanguaging and conceptual metaphors in language and communication and exploring the peripheries of genre, ideology, representation, humanism and anthropocentrism as well cultural geographies in literature and culture. This issue of *Currents* is divided into three sections: Articles—exploring the peripheries in language and literature and culture, Book Reviews and Conference Reports.

Peripheries of language

The article *On loaded language* by **Arkadiusz Cezary Sokolnicki** opens the linguistic section of *Currents* 5. The author discusses the role that loaded language plays in a variety of linguistic messages, ranging from poetic language to religious and philosophical texts to political statements and persuasive journalism. The article examines the possible emotional responses to selected examples of loaded language use and considers general implications for function of emotive language and its role in relation to reasoning and adaptive processes.

In her article *The conceptual system of non-native speakers: an attempt to determine the influence of translingual experience on mental representations*, **Dorota Watkowska** examines approaches to mental representations and their dependence on human experience. Writing after what is described as the translingual turn (Horner et al. 303–304; Lee 129), she is particularly interested in how the experience of translanguaging affects the conceptual systems of non-native users of languages.

The last article in the language section entitled *An analysis of figurative language in selected Bring Me the Horizon's songs* written by **Agata Piasecka** examines the use of figurative language in the lyrics of this Sheffield-based group. Referring to function of metaphor, metonymy and simile in cognitive

linguistics, and particularly to Lakoff's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) and its argument about the fundamentally metaphorical nature of "our ordinary conceptual system" (Lakoff 3), the author identifies the main figures of speech used in the songs and comments on the complex meanings they sometimes create.

Peripheries of literature and culture

The literature and culture section of the fifth issue of CURRENTS ventures into the peripheries of literature and culture. The section opens with **Iga Noińska's** article *On the periphery of literary and authorial truthfulness: Handcarved Coffins by Truman Capote*, exploring the problem of truthfulness and generic expectations in Capote's novella. Investigating the text's inconsistencies and fabrications, the author considers some of the peculiarities of the nonfiction genre, which Linda Hutcheon described as "seriously question[ing] who determined and created [the] truth" (116).

Drawing upon Louis Althusser's definitions of ideology as "images" and "structures" imposed and remaining unconscious (233), **Mateusz Dudek** in his article *Ideology and family relations—Philip Roth's American Pastoral from a political perspective* analyses the relationship between two characters—Seymour Levov and his daughter Merry. Focusing on social and political aspects, the author examines the connections of the fictional characters' choices and practices to real life ideologies and social structures.

In *How to explain the inexplicable? The portrayal of a supernatural character in The Skriker by Caryl Churchill*, **Bernadetta Jankowska** examines the main character of Caryl Churchill's experimental play from 1994. Referring to Jacques Derrida's and Nicholas Abraham's writings on the figures of the spectre and the phantom, the author investigates the character's multiple meanings and evasions, exploring—as hauntology often does—"the boundaries of between the thought and the unthought" (Davies 379).

In her article on *The anthropocentric perspective in Solaris by Stanisław Lem*, **Katarzyna Stępień** confronts the recent concepts developed within new

ecology and posthumanist theories with the human perspective presented in Lem's 1961 novel. Focusing mostly on the meanings evoked by the Ocean, the author discusses the anthropocentric attitudes evinced by Solaris inhabitants and how this limited perspective prevents them from using the potential to see beyond what Braidotti would describe as "the notion of species hierarchy and of a single, common standard for 'Man' as a measure for all things" (67).

Aleksandra Sieradzka examines the implications of transhumanism for contemporary culture in her article *A machine like a human being—transhumanism as new humanism in the movie Ex Machina*. Focusing on the figure of Ava in Alex Garland's 2015 film, the author explores the questions and doubts concerning the status of the cyborg and the redefinitions of what it means to be human in the times of crossed boundaries between humans, animals and machines (Haraway 698).

The final article *Almost Hollywood: The English and American influences on Australian cinema and its renaissance in the 1970s* by **Jacek Stopa** presents an overview of the development of Australian cinema, with particular focus on its relation to and cross-influences with British and American cinematic traditions. Tracing the revival of Australian cinema back to the political and social unrest of the 1960s following the period of what Brian McFarlane and Geoff Mayer call "a cinematic drought of roughly twenty five years" (1), the author outlines the major productions of Australian cinema in the 1960s and 1970s.

Book reviews

This year's issue of *CURRENTS* features a review written by **Joanna Antoniak**—*Living between the border and the centre—the migrant condition in modern Britain*, which comments on the publication *The Good Immigrant* (2016) edited by Nikesh Shukla, whose major theme is closely related—both conceptually and experientially—to the main concerns of the fifth issue of *Currents*.

Conference reports

During the academic year 2018/19 the members of the doctoral students association participated in, organized or co-organized a number of academic conferences at Nicolaus Copernicus University and elsewhere. This section contains brief reports from three such events: *Periphery: Against the Mainstream* - the third academic conference organized in November 2018 by our doctoral students association (by **Paula Budzyńska**); *Authored Cultures/ Authoring Cultures* —an international conference organised by the Section of Anglophone Culture at our Faculty in December 2018 (by **Bernadetta Jankowska**); and *Comparing e/migrations: Tradition—(Post)memory—Translingualism*—an international conference organised in April 2019 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Faculty of Languages at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (by **Joanna Antoniak**).

Endnotes

1. The term “socio(-)cognitive” is used by the authors with an optional hyphen due to the lack of unanimity with regard to terminology among researchers tackling this issue.

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**PERIPHERIES
OF LANGUAGE**

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ON LOADED LANGUAGE

Keywords: cognitive bias, connotation, emotion, influence, loaded language

Introduction

Language has the power to evoke emotions. A truism, one could say, but the implications arising from this truism are far-reaching and by no means obvious. Suffice it to say that an emotionally charged message has the potential to induce pleasant or unpleasant feelings, followed by impairment of logical thinking, consolidation of the initial—usually cognitively biased—judgement of such a message, and, eventually, benefit or harm in a broad sense. A noteworthy rhetorical means of influence which is in line with the above description and to which we will give thought in this paper is *loaded* (or *emotive*) *language*.

The paper is aimed to demonstrate that loaded language is a complex and effective rhetorical means of influence used commonly to the benefit or detriment of people. To demonstrate this, we have split the discussion into two parts. In the first, theoretical part, we will reflect upon loaded language as a rhetorical means of influence, we will learn for what reasons it is used, what happens when it is used, and with what phenomena it is connected. In the second, practical part, we will explore examples of loaded language use found in texts written for aesthetic and practical purposes. The discussion offered here will, hopefully, also allow us to see that the majority, if not all of us, exert influence on others by means of language and that we do that based on intuition rather than understanding. As we see it, the intuition–understanding axis corresponds to the mainstream–periphery axis in that the former elements of the axes represent what is shared by many, whereas the latter what is shared

by a few. Now, we will not touch upon this relation further in the course of this paper. We would only like to emphasise that such a relation exists and that it can be treated in this manner.

As defined by Macagno and Walton, loaded language is the use of language—e.g. words, phrases, sentences—with the intention to elicit an emotional response (Macagno and Walton 2014: 2; cf. Weston 6). This is instrumental in exerting influence on someone, that is in persuading someone of something or manipulating someone into something. Already in antiquity Aristotle was well aware of the persuasiveness of such use of language. He called it *pathos*¹ and argued that when men are cheerful they judge things differently than when they are depressed. It is, thus, necessary for anyone who wishes to be successful in affecting others to have a thorough knowledge of emotions, in particular of how they are evoked and of how they influence judgement (Aristotle 4625–4626).

Curious though these initial remarks are, one concept recurring throughout them demands at least concise elucidation because taking it at face value is often spurious. What we have in mind is the concept of emotion.

Emotion and Loaded Language

A countless number of texts have so far been written on emotions and they approach the subject from various perspectives, among others, biological (LeDoux 1996), cognitive (Lazarus 1991), evolutionary (Darwin 2009), linguistic (Davitz 1969, Wilce 2009), and sociological (Thoits 1989). Some scholars maintain that emotions are universal (Ekman 1973), others that they are relative, i.e. conditioned by culture and context (Galasiński 2004, Wierzbicka 2005); there are also some who strive to synthesise these opposing views (Kövecses 2004). Hence, a consensus on what emotion is and what it is not is hard to reach. We ourselves do not claim that we know how to cope with this predicament, and we will not attempt to define emotion as such. We will,

however, bring forward some fundamental assumptions as to the relevance of emotion to loaded language.

To begin with, we assume that the significance of emotion in the context of loaded language lies in the power of emotion to impair logical reasoning. This means that when we are in a non-neutral emotional state our reasoning is more apt to be incorrect. The academic discourse is abundant in texts which demonstrate that, as opposed to neutral emotional states, positive and negative emotional states²—elicited with the use of emotionally charged messages—correlate with decreased logical performance (Blanchette 2006, Eliades et al. 2012, Jung et al. 2014, Lefford 2012, to name but a few). There are notable exceptions to this rule, however. Blanchette and Caparos, for example, underline a converse correlation—war veterans as well as victims of sexual abuse tackled emotionally charged syllogisms connected with, respectively, combat and abuse better than emotionally neutral syllogisms (Blanchette and Caparos 399, 402–404). This, as the scholars suggest, has much to do with the usefulness of “integral emotions” drawing on past experiences (399–401, 412).

When emotion engulfs our bodies and minds, what comes to the fore is reasoning, the aim of which is to defend something rather than to be correct. It will not be an exaggeration to say that upon hearing or reading an emotive message we make an initial judgement of such a message and hardly ever assess whether the judgment is correct or not; instead, we take the judgement for granted and allow, as it were, the emotion to take control over us (Lazarus 16). Flaws in reasoning in such circumstances are not extraordinary.

Now, there is nothing wrong with the fact that upon hearing or reading an emotive message we feel emotions, think illogically, and make incorrect judgements. Indeed, in real-life situations where inductive reasoning—which revolves around probability—plays the dominant role, such reactions are adaptively beneficial because they signal that what is being processed is relevant to our life (Blanchette 1123–1124, Lazarus 6–7). For instance, should we be informed that a burglar is operating in our neighbourhood, we would

likely become anxious, if not nervous. Anxiety or nervousness is a sign of adaptation and is rational since—accompanied by, among others, tenseness, feeling of having “no control over [...] [a] situation”, and concern over “what will happen next” (Davitz 36)—it helps us realise the danger that a burglar poses.

Connotation and Loaded Language

If we take a closer look at the word *burglar* in combination with the phrase *in our neighbourhood*, we will understand why anxiety or nervousness may emerge. On closer inspection, this combination seems to have negative associations. Particularly, it invokes the image of someone who illegally enters private premises to steal goods, someone who endangers not merely our possessions, but also our peace of mind, sense of security, and, perhaps, other things, all of which are arguably dear to us and thereby require protection. This association is formally called connotation.

From the angle of loaded language connotation is definitely more important than denotation, i.e. the literal meaning that a unit of language has, because it is connotation that relates to emotions, not denotation. Connotation, in general terms, can be neutral (or, at least, near to neutral), positive, or negative (cf. Puzynina 118–119). Words are considered loaded in the last two cases. Bolinger notes that such words depict something in either a favourable (positive) or unfavourable (negative) light (Bolinger 72–73), whereas Bentham observes that they convey the idea of approval or disapproval of something (Bentham 95; cf. Puzynina 5). In either case, loaded words are to arouse positive or negative emotions.

Here, we need to highlight that connotations are not there in the language, that is they are not there objectively speaking. Words connote certain ideas, just as they denote others, on account of them being situated in a context conditioned by cultural, environmental, and personal influence. Therefore, the more often we are exposed to texts or utterances in which a syntactic unit

occurs in a neutral or positive or negative context, the more likely it will be for us to use and judge the unit accordingly (Corrigan 385, 396; cf. Puzyrnina 118–122). As pointed out by Frijda et al., someone who fights in a war and is not an army member will be a freedom fighter for some; for others he or she will be a terrorist (Frijda et al. 49; cf. Puzyrnina 6–7). Someone who emphasises the achievements of a government and de-emphasises or omits to mention its errors will be either telling the truth or spreading propaganda. Plainly, these pairs of words and phrases have contrasting connotations. People who are aware of what word connotations apply to given communities and situations have a considerable advantage over those who are not aware of that for such awareness facilitates “conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses” (Bernays 9).

Cognitive Bias and Loaded Language

Bearing in mind that connotations are not universal but context-specific, it is hard not to polemicise with Bolinger, who maintains that as an instrument “[l]anguage is not [...] neutral [...] [but] a thousand ways biased” (Bolinger 68). Language is not a biased instrument. Language is a neutral instrument; it is a system of signs and sounds which allows humans to communicate, and which is unique to humans on account of its complexity (Berwick and Chomsky 2016, Chomsky 2016). Biased is the way in which humans use language, that is to say select, verbalise, and interpret its pieces viewed as the bearers of information. For is it not biased to search for information on one website only? Is it not biased to speak exclusively about the achievements of a government? And is it, likewise, not biased to construe every warning against a burglar as an expression of sincerity? Perhaps, a website has some decent information to offer, a government has a number of achievements deserving acclaim, and a warning against a burglar may express sincerity at one time or another. Still, it is incorrect to hold that no piece of information on one website is untrustworthy, that a government does not make errors, and that a warning is

never insincere. Such ways of selecting, verbalising, and interpreting pieces of language encoding information are usually part of a cognitive bias.

As defined by Haselton et al., a cognitive bias is a departure from accurate and logical reasoning. It is grounded in effective, though often faulty, mental shortcuts (e.g. stereotypes); decreased cost of error of biased versus unbiased choices and judgements (e.g. locking doors is less costly than leaving them unlocked upon being warned against burglars); and mental unpreparedness for coping with a problem (e.g. emphasising the achievements and failing to address the errors of a government due to held beliefs and/or selective focus) (Haselton et al. 725–726). The above constitute human adaptive mechanisms developed in the process of evolution.

Ethics and Loaded Language

So long as knowledge of emotions, word connotations, and cognitive biases is not used deliberately to provoke responses which ease the inculcation of chosen values into people, it is reasonable to have recourse to loaded language. This is especially true when it comes to debates concerned with values. Nonetheless, loaded language is often used to deceive, praise violence, or make lies and propaganda sound truthful (Herbst ix; cf. Orwell 133, 136, 139; Schopenhauer 80, 84–85). Therefore, it is necessary to subject loaded language to criticism. With the use of loaded language some people manage to persuade their interlocutors that furthering counter-arguments is pointless or unacceptable (Macagno and Walton 2010: 2). This strategy is used to circumvent criticism or “disguise the need to prove a claim” (4).

To say that *Ayden Zulu is a cruel dictator* is, essentially, not meant to make an interlocutor question what was said, but to make him disapprove of Ayden Zulu owing to the persuasiveness of the emotional charge that the statement carries. To merely accuse someone of being a cruel dictator is not enough in a dispassionate, matter-of-fact, and polite discussion, and should not be enough in any other discussion (cf. Schopenhauer 106–107 and Weston 6–7). This

emotionally charged accusation would be rhetorically admissible provided that it was supported with arguments, e.g. Ayden Zulu (a) came into power by force, (b) has total control over the country, and (c) represses his political opponents, which is morally impermissible.

While deliberating on loaded language, it is also worth alluding to Stevenson's explications on *ethical judgements* and *persuasive definitions*, which overlap with loaded language semantically. Ethical judgements are suggestive opinions as to whether a given matter is ethical or not. Persuasive definitions, on the other hand, are non-neutral descriptions of known but usually imprecise and emotionally charged terms. Stevenson contends that the former are used to alter or enhance interest in something (Stevenson 1937: 18), whereas the latter to redirect attitudes (Stevenson 1958: 210). For example, to tell pupils that *cheating on an exam is wrong* is meant not only to inform them that it is considered unethical to cheat on an exam but also, and more importantly, to persuade them to assume the advocated view. Similarly, to define a socialist as *a supporter of the poor* is, essentially, not aimed to inform people of pro-social policy of socialists, but is aimed to create a positive image of socialists due to their helpfulness. The semantic closeness between loaded language, ethical judgements, and persuasive definitions lies, thus, in the influence and implicit appeals to emotion that the three involve.

A Model Reaction to Loaded Language

What we have so far discussed allows us to enunciate a sequence in line with which most of reactions to a message employing loaded language unfold. The sequence appears as follows: (a) an initial judgement of a message largely based on the connotation of the message and held preconceptions about something; (b) a subjective feeling of something pleasant (positive) or unpleasant (negative); (c) rational thinking pivoted on defending the lively interests and cherished values that the initial judgement invoked; (d) action (or inaction) running in parallel to or following (c); and (e) involuntary

consolidation of the initial judgement. The stronger the emotion, the stronger the reaction.

Analysis of Loaded Language Use

Let us now proceed to the analysis of loaded language use based on selected examples. We will analyse fragments of poetry and prose, of philosophical and religious texts, of press releases and political leaders' statements, of an online comment, and of a think tank report. This is aimed to show that loaded language may appear across a variety of texts, whether they be written for aesthetic or practical purposes.

During the analysis we will endeavour to indicate, first, the potential interpretations of emotive messages, second, emotions which the messages are likely to elicit, and, third, further cognitive and physical engagement resulting from the emotions based on the model reaction to loaded language sketched above. We will pay special attention to words and their connotations considered the triggers of emotions. Following Ekman (1973), we will give precedence to basic emotions—i.e. anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise—over more specified emotions such as awe or grief (Davitz 11). The latter emotions will be indicated (though not in all cases) in parenthesis.

We will strive for objectivity while analysing examples of loaded language use and filling in the particular points of the model reaction to loaded language. Still, we will not evade some sort of speculation while filling in points (c) and (d). This stems from the fact that thoughts and actions which result from emotions vary among people due to different cultural, environmental, and personal factors. For convenience, we will skip point (e) of the model reaction while analysing the examples.

In the end, we must emphasise that the analysis does not take into account “integral emotions” (Blanchette and Caparos 399), nor does it take into account other emotions experienced up to the moment of reading emotive messages. We understand the significance of such emotions in the context of reactions to

loaded language. However, the limited scope of this paper does not permit us to consider this problem with due attention. The analysis follows.

Example 1

The speaker in the first part of William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29" bemoans the situation in which he found himself. He stresses, among others, that he is "in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes", who "all alone beweeep[s] his outcast state", who "trouble[s] deaf heaven with [his] bootless cries", who "curse[s] [his] fate", and who "wish[es]" to be "rich in hope" (Shakespeare 29: 1-5). In the second part of the sonnet the speaker changes the tone of his narrative and notes, for instance, that when he "think[s] on thee", his "state [...] sings hymns at heaven's gate", and when he recalls "thy sweet love", he experiences great "wealth" (29: 10, 12-13).

In the first part of the sonnet, the words and phrases on which we should concentrate are *in disgrace*, *alone*, (to) *beweeep*, *outcast state*, (to) *trouble*, *deaf heaven*, *bootless cries*, (to) *curse one's fate*, (to) *wish*, and *hope*. In most general terms, they connote negative things such as anger, indifference, helplessness, loneliness, and pain. It is likely, thus, that the reader would, respectively, (a) judge that the poet is overwhelmed by ill fortune; (b) feel sadness (pity); (c) hope that the poet's situation improves; (d) continue reading the sonnet. In the second part of the sonnet, by contrast, our focus is on the following words and phrases: (to) *sing*, *heaven's gate*, *sweet love*, and *wealth*. These language units connote positive things, for example, bliss, pleasure, security, and tranquillity. Hence, the reader would probably (a) judge that the speaker is happy; (b) feel happiness (cheerfulness); (c) become lost in thought for some time; (d) not act.

Example 2

In the Homeric *Iliad*, we learn how the fight between Greeks and Trojans developed at the end of the siege of Troy. The motif of anger (and its derivatives), which recurs in the text, deserves special attention due to its

emotional salience. The motif applies not only to human beings, but also to gods and demi-gods. For instance, Agamemnon “blaz[ed] with anger” (Homer 81); Hera “could hold the anger in her breast no longer” (146); Paris “flared in rage” (362), whereas Achilles was “filled with rage” (522); Poseidon felt “his churning outrage” rising (342, 353); Ajax “rose in fury” (574), whereas Aphrodite “rounded on [...] [Helen] in fury” (142); Zeus rose over all gods “in deathless wrath” (592, 593), and his “blazing wrath” made Athena pity the Argives (232, 246).

Here, the words which should attract our interest the most are *anger*, *fury*, *outrage*, *rage*, and *wrath*. They have negative connotations pointing to uncontrolled behaviour, loud screaming, acts of violence, etc. That being said, the reader would presumably (a) judge that gods and demi-gods pose a threat; (b) feel fear (anxiety); (c) hope that the situation calms down; (d) attempt to mitigate the discomfort arising from (b).

Example 3

Edgar Allan Poe in his “The Angel of the Odd” tells a short story about a man who is sceptical of peculiar coincidences happening to people. The sceptic meets the title character of the text whom he describes as follows: a “personage nondescript, although not altogether indescribable”, with a “body” made of a “wine-pipe”; “two kegs [...] answer[ing] all the purposes of legs”; “arms” in the form of “two tolerably long bottles”; and a “head” of a “Hessian canteen” type (Poe 26–27). It is worth adding that following the meeting the sceptic experienced a series of unfortunate events.

We will risk a claim that none of the cited words or expressions has positive or negative connotations by itself, with the exception of the expression *personage nondescript*. The expression appears at the beginning of the description and it connotes the image of a dull and ordinary person or a person-like character (a rather negative image). That image fades away when the expression in question is put against the following word combinations: *body*

and *wine-pipe*, *legs* and *two kegs*, *arms* and *two bottles*, *head* and *Hessian canteen*. These word combinations, seen in inseparable relation to the expression *personage nondescript*, connote the image of a peculiar person-like character (a positive image). Given all of this, we assert that the reader would likely (a) judge that the personage has a curious appearance; (b) feel surprise and/or happiness (amusement); (c) become more interested in the plot; (d) continue reading the story.

Example 4

In *Tell No One*, Harlan Coben takes us on a journey through the life of David Beck, a young paediatrician, whose wife Elizabeth was murdered at Lake Charmaine eight years before the main plot takes place. The main plot unfolds on the day before the twenty-first anniversary of David and Elizabeth's first kiss, with David receiving an e-mail which comprised the initials of his and his lost wife and twenty-one slashes in the subject line. The e-mail included a hyperlink saying: "Click on this hyperlink, kiss time, anniversary" (Coben 25–28). When David clicked on the hyperlink, he saw a scene in which a woman appeared. His "heart stopped. [...] [He] couldn't breathe. [He] couldn't think. Tears filled [his] eyes and started spilling down [his] cheeks. [...] 'Elizabeth,' [he] whispered" (43).

The words and expressions on which we will concentrate are *heart stopped*, *couldn't breathe*, *couldn't think*, *tears*, and *Elizabeth*. All of them are strictly connected with David and all of them connote negative images such as death, helplessness, pain, and lost wife. Thus, the reader would not unlikely (a) judge that David is deeply distressed; (b) feel sadness (pity, grief); (c) wonder why that happened to David and wish that David felt better; (d) continue reading the novel.

Example 5

Apology by Plato acquaints us with how Socrates defended himself against the charges of impiety and demoralising the young during his trial in Athens in 399 B.C. The text includes noteworthy philosophical reflexions on death, which Socrates verbalised after receiving a death sentence. Death, according to Socrates, should be viewed in the context of good, irrespective of whether it entails “no perception of anything” or “a change and a relocating for the soul [...] to another place” (Plato 35). For the former is “a great advantage” and it can be regarded as “a dreamless [and sound] sleep”, , whereas the latter (arrival in Hades) is the “greate[st] blessing” of all and it can be treated as a chance to “find [...] demi-gods” as well as to “keep company” or “spend [...] time” with “all who have died” (poets, warriors, etc.) (35).

Socrates enhanced the persuasiveness of the two hypotheses as to what happens to humans beings after death by using the following words and their combinations: *great advantage*, *dreamless sleep*, *greatest blessing*, (to) *find* put against *demi-gods*, (to) *keep company* and (to) *spend time* put against *all who have died*. These connote positive things, e.g. benefit, divinity, honour, luck, and rest. Bearing this in mind, we assume that the reader would (a) judge that Socrates is calm and optimistic despite having received a death sentence; (b) feel happiness (cheerfulness); (c) reflect upon death as something good; (d) stop reading for some time.

Example 6

The *New Testament* generally revolves around the life, teachings, and legacy of Jesus Christ—the incarnation of God on earth in the view of many Christians. While searching the text for emotional content, it is worth alluding especially to the teachings of Jesus. Verses 7.24–7.27 of the Gospel of Matthew include such content. They teach us that we need to follow the words of Jesus in order to be “like a wise man who built his house on rock”; otherwise, we will be “like a foolish man who built his house on sand”. And while the first house will

withstand the “rain”, “flood”, and “the winds”, the second one will not (cf. Gospel of Luke 6.47–6.49). (The Bible 2005)

Evidently, in terms of connotation the word group made up of *wise man, house* put against *rock* is the opposite of the word group made up of *foolish man, house* put against *sand*. The former word group has positive connotations (e.g. experience, comfort, durability, security, and understanding), whereas the latter word group has negative ones (e.g. error, fragility, ignorance, infantilism, and insecurity). These connotations are intensified when the word groups are put against another word group, which includes the words *rain, flood*, and the phrase *the winds*, connoting unfavourable or even severe weather conditions. That being said, we presume that the reader would (a) judge that rejecting the words of Jesus leads to nothing positive; (b) feel fear (anxiety); (c) think that it is advisable to accept the words of Jesus; (d) attempt to mitigate the discomfort arising from (b).

Example 7

Similar thoughts echo in the *Quran*—a text which is intended to be a “Model, Light, Guidance, and Mercy” for Muslims (*The Quran* 752), and which is supposed to contain a revelation of Allah to the prophet Muhammad via the angel Gabriel. Verse 42 in chapter 39 entitled Al-Zumar reads that the *Quran*, “the Book with truth”, was made known “for the good of mankind”, and that “whoever follows guidance, follows it for the benefit of his own soul; and whoever goes astray, goes astray only to its detriment” (544). The verse ends with Allah pronouncing that the prophet, communicating the words of Allah to man, is “not a guardian over them [those who go astray]” (544).

First words which should attract our attention are *book* put against *truth* and *good*. This word group connotes the image of an important, interesting, and useful text, so something positive. The phrase (to) *follow guidance* in juxtaposition with the word *benefit* connotes a similarly positive image (i.e. adhering to advice is advantageous). The same cannot be said about the phrase

(to) *go astray* in juxtaposition with the word *detriment*; this word group connotes a negative image (i.e. disobeying advice is disadvantageous). A likewise negative connotation is embedded in the expression *not a guardian* put against the phrase (to) *go astray* (i.e. no help for those who disobey advice). This allows us to conclude that the reader would probably (a) judge that rejecting the guidance of the Quran leads to nothing positive; (b) feel fear (anxiety); (c) think that it is advisable to accept the guidance of the Quran; (d) attempt to mitigate the discomfort arising from (b).

Example 8

In *Wina i Kara* (trans. *Guilt and Punishment*)³, an article published in 2016 in *Nasz Dziennik Daily*, Guz deliberates on the problem of abortion from a Catholic perspective. He argues, citing and interpreting the teachings of Pope John Paul II, that abortion is, among others, a “sin”, an “abuse of power and law”, “an act of killing” (cf. a loaded definition of abortion as discussed by Weston 81), and “one of the most serious and dangerous [types of] crime, that is infanticide in the womb” (Guz M6–M7). Guz emphasises that voluntary pregnancy termination is an act performed on an “innocent, and helpless human being”, an act which is supposed to reflect “serious moral disorder” (M6–M7).

Here, the words and their combinations which demand referring to are *abuse, infanticide, sin, act of killing, serious moral disorder*, as well as *serious* and *dangerous* put against *crime*. All of them refer to abortion and all of them, alone or in combination, connote negative things revolving around contemptible, illegal, reprehensible, unacceptable, and unethical conduct. This impression is intensified by the use, likewise in the context of abortion, of the words such as *innocent* and *helpless* put against *human being*, which have negative connotations as well (e.g. a whimpering infant, craving for care and affection). It seems likely, thus, that the reader would (a) judge that abortion is a heinous crime which deserves the strongest condemnation; (b) feel anger, disgust (contempt) towards all abortion participants; feel sadness (pity) for the

aborted; feel sadness (guilt, remorse, shame) at having or performing an abortion; (c) wonder how demoralised the abortion participants are; wonder whether he or she (abortion participants) did something wrong or begin to realise this; (d) stop and resume reading uncontrollably.

Example 9

Aborcja jest OK (trans. *Abortion is OK*), an article by Karolina Domagalska published in *Wysokie Obcasy Weekly* in February 2018, discusses the subject of abortion from the pro-choice community point of view. From the article we learn that “abortion” as such is “normal” (Domagalska 10, 15) and that “medical abortion” is “legal, safe, and common” (13). The article also tells us that “each woman has the right to control her life in all respects” (13). Domagalska stresses that *Kobiety w Sieci* forum at Maszwybor.net is a place where women who decided to have a medical abortion can seek “psychological support” from “someone [...] who will never judge” them (13). She also refers to “pro-abortion” (10) billboards that read: “Statistically, one in three of your friends had an abortion. You are not alone” (10, 15; Hipsz 6).

The first word group to which we will give thought are *abortion* in juxtaposition with *common*, *legal*, *normal*, and *safe*. This word group seems to have positive connotations (i.e. abortion is a social good which serves the interests of people). The same can be said about the three following word groups: *woman* put against *right*, *control*, and *life* (i.e. female independence and freedom); *support* put against (to) *never judge* (i.e. help, no criticism); *you* put against *not alone* (i.e. friendship, support). The above would presumably cause the reader to (a) judge that abortion is a social good and that women have the right to abortion and support; (b) feel happiness (cheerfulness, confidence, hope); (c) reflect upon abortion as something tolerable, if not acceptable; (d) not act.

Example 10

In mid-April 2018, *The New York Times* released the transcripts of statements of the American President, the British Prime Minister, and the French President on the use of military force by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France against Syria. President Trump stressed that the three countries had taken action in response to an “evil and despicable attack” by the “very terrible regime” of the “Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad”, an attack which had been aimed to “slaughter innocent civilians” with the use of a “uniquely dangerous” means capable of “inflict[ing] gruesome suffering” and “unleash[ing] widespread devastation”, i.e. “chemical weapons” (Trump 2018). The attack, he asserted, “left mothers and fathers, infants and children thrashing in pain and gasping for air” (Trump 2018). In brief, what had taken place in Syria the American President termed “atrocities”, acts of “barbarism and brutality”, and “crimes of a monster” (Trump 2018; cf. Orwell 135). Prime Minister May in her statement explained that military intervention against Syria had been authorised to ensure that neither “horrific deaths” nor “casualties” result from a chemical attack by the “Syrian regime”, considered liable for conducting such an attack on the 7th of April 2018, in which—“in circumstances of pure horror”—over seventy people had been “killed” (May and Macron 2018). President Macron in his statement noted that France had joined the coalition against Syria to “prevent impunity and [...] any recurrence by the Syrian regime” that had “massacred” many “men, women and children” with the use of “chemical weapons”; “[t]he red line [...] has been crossed”, he said (May and Macron 2018).

Many words quoted above have negative connotations. The words (1) *dictator*, *monster*, *very terrible regime* connote an authoritarian and ruthless government; (2) *atrocities*, *barbarism*, *brutality*, *casualties*, *crimes*, *deaths*, *horror* connote cruelty, fear, pain, and violence; (3) (to) *kill*, (to) *massacre*, (to) *slaughter* connote blood, death, and pain; (4) (to) *thrash in pain* and (to) *gasps for air* put against *mothers*, *fathers*, *infants*, and *children* connote the suffering of

families; (5) (to) *cross* put against *red line* connote disobedience and disregard. Negative connotations are also embedded in the phrase *chemical weapons* put against the phrases *uniquely dangerous*, *gruesome suffering*, and *widespread devastation* (i.e. destructive, fearsome, and lethal arms). All things considered, the reader would likely (a) judge that the Syrian authorities committed an inhumane crime; (b) feel anger, disgust (contempt) towards the Syrian authorities; feel sadness (pity) for the victims; (c) wonder how uncivilised the Syrian authorities are; (d) stop and resume reading uncontrollably.

Example 11

The military attack by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France against Syria provoked reactions from Russia, Iran, and China. President Putin strongly denounced the attack as “[a]n act of aggression” and an “escalation [...] destructive for [...] international relations” (Putin 2018). The three countries, he stated, had not received a proper mandate from the United Nations Security Council, nor had they waited for the results of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons probe into the chemical attack, and yet—“in a sign of cynical disdain”—they had resorted to military force (Putin 2018). The Iranian President and the Iranian Supreme Leader were likewise critical of the attack. The former referred to it as a “blatant act of aggression” meant to cause “instability and turmoil in the region” (Rouhani 2018), whereas the latter called it a “crime” similar to the “criminal acts” that the United States, the United Kingdom, and France had committed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria in the past (Khamenei 2018). The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokeswoman was more diplomatic in her response than the Russian and Iranian politicians. She said that China “oppose[s] the use of force in international relations” (Chunying 2018). Whoever, she continued, engages militarily without the United Nations Security Council prior approval “violates [...] [the] international law and the basic norms governing international relations” (Chunying 2018).

The military strike against Syria was equated with *aggression* (or the enhanced *blatant act of aggression*), *crime*, *destructive escalation*, and the *use of force*. These words have negative connotations (i.e. harm, fear, violence). We also notice negative connotations in other words referring to the strike, that is in *instability* and *turmoil* (e.g. disorder, disturbance, uncertainty), (to) *violate* (e.g. contemptuous, illegal conduct), and *cynical disdain* (e.g. contempt, disrespect, egoism). This leads us to a conclusion that the reader would not unlikely (a) judge that the American, British, and French authorities are egoists who despise human life and believe that they are above the law; (b) feel anger, disgust (contempt) towards the authorities; (c) wonder whether there is anyone who could prevent the authorities from taking such action; (d) stop and resume reading uncontrollably.

Example 12

A March 2018 report by the Centre for Eastern Studies characterises Russia in terms of the socio-political situation, the country's economy, foreign policy, and the armed forces (Łabuszewska 3, 9). The report tells us, among others, that the "mature authoritarian system" (10) in Russia is "riddled with corruption [...] at all levels of social relations" (11). This has its most extreme reflexion in "direct and large-scale embezzlement of state wealth by chosen members" (11) of "a small ruling group [...] who believe that they are the owners" (5) of the country "entitled to parasitise it" (5).

The image of Russia that looms from the excerpts is negative. This is owed to the words and word groups having negative connotations, for instance, *corruption* (e.g. bribery, dishonesty, nepotism); *embezzlement* (e.g. fraud, theft); *authoritarian system* (e.g. censorship, regime); (to) *parasitise* (e.g. harm, egoism, exploitation); *chosen members* put against *small ruling group* and *country owners* (e.g. an unfairly privileged group). All in all, we assume that the reader would likely (a) judge that Russia is a fallen state run by cynical, egoistic, greedy, and immoral men; (b) feel anger, disgust (contempt); (c) wonder how

depraved the Russian authorities are; (d) stop and resume reading uncontrollably.

Example 13

It is worth noting that the report also contains passages which put Russia in a positive light. For instance, “the enhancement [of Russian] military potential has taken place in favourable financial conditions—regardless of temporary economic fluctuations—uninterruptedly” since 2000 (44). The enhancement includes, *inter alia*, (a) “large-scale professionalisation and technical modernisation” of the Russian military launched after 2008 (6), which “eliminated the technological advantage of the West” with the exception of that of the United States over Russia (6); (b) “development of offensive units” in parallel to the war in Ukraine (6); and (c) “the acceleration in the re-armament of the army with new-generation arms and military equipment” in parallel to the war in Syria (6).

Clearly, the words and word groups which have positive connotations contribute to the positive image of Russia. These include *development*, *enhancement*, *modernisation*, *professionalisation* (e.g. advancement, improvement, superiority); *technological advantage elimination* (e.g. consistency, determination, firmness); *new-generation* put against *arms* and *military equipment* (e.g. accuracy, effectiveness, modern technology). Bearing these observations in mind, there is likelihood that the reader would (a) judge that Russia was determined and resilient to elevate its military to a completely new level of advancement; (b) feel anger (jealousy) at, fear (anxiety) of, and/or surprise (awe) at Russia because of that advancement; (c) wonder what the cause of that advancement could be; (d) continue reading the report.

Conclusion

Loaded language is a complex concept, the intrinsic elements of which are linguistic messages, word connotations, cognitive biases, and the relation

between bodily, cognitive, and behavioural processes. We need to note that the four elements are interrelated in the sense that all of them should be taken into account in the context of loaded language. Therefore, we should always speak of loaded language as something which involves all four of these elements.

We have analysed fragments of texts written for different purposes. In all of them loaded language was present, or at least that is what we firmly believe to be true. If we combine this with the examples of loaded language use provided in the theoretical part of this paper, it should become clear to us that loaded language is a common phenomenon. And even though all examples of emotive messages given here are different, the differences have no bearing on what the examples share, that is the influence which they may exert by means of emotion.

Essentially, emotion is an adaptive mechanism which benefits us by showing how significant for us is the thing invoked by loaded language. To feel emotion while reading a poem or upon hearing someone shouting that the house is on fire (so long as the house actually is on fire) helps us, respectively, experience the beauty of poetry and realise the danger that fire poses to us. Nevertheless, since the impairment of logical thinking usually accompanies emotion, there are some situations in which our emotional responses do not serve our interests, but the interests of those who convey emotive messages. Taking heed of propaganda materials—such as one-sided pieces of news meant to smear political opponents—seems to validate these observations.

The major contribution of the paper to research on the subject in question is the model reaction to loaded language. In concert with knowledge of connotations, emotions, and cognitive biases, the model can be helpful in predicting how individuals or groups react to emotive messages conveyed by means of spoken or written discourse. This may find its application in literature, marketing, public relations, social campaigns, information and psychological operations, and other spheres of interest where influencing individuals or groups is important.

Again, we must stress that this paper did not explain how the interpretation of emotive messages is affected by “integral emotions” (Blanchette and Caparos 399) or other emotions experienced up to the moment of reading the messages. If these two cases were analysed in the context of loaded language, they would generously support our discussion. Another limitation of this paper is that it did not analyse examples of loaded language found in other forms of communication than texts, e.g. films, radio broadcasts, or speeches heard live. To conduct such an analysis, we would inevitably need more space to evaluate—aside from what we have evaluated here—how non-verbal communication affects the interpretation of an emotive message. Thus, we submit to the reader for consideration the case of non-verbal communication and its effect on the overall perception of loaded language.

Lastly, we can tentatively assume that knowledge of loaded language sensitises the reader to emotive messages, which should facilitate their identification. In the hope that this is so, we advise treating emotive messages with empirical scepticism at any time there is reason to believe that those who communicate the messages act upon dubiously virtuous premises. Since any natural language medium can carry loaded language, the advice may turn out helpful fairly soon. After all, what some people consider virtuous and what serves them well may not necessarily be virtuous for us and may not serve us well.

Endnotes

1. *Pathos* is one of the three “modes of persuasion” (Aristotle 4625), alongside *ethos* and *logos*, deliberated on by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. *Pathos* pertains to the ability of a speaker to evoke emotions in the audience, *ethos* to the ability of a speaker to convince the audience of his credibility, and *logos* to logical argumentation supporting a point of view. (4625–4626, 4794)
2. Throughout this paper, we categorise emotions (or emotional states) as *positive* or *negative* for convenience. By *positive* or *negative* emotions we understand, citing Lazarus, “the beneficial or harmful person-environment relationship, the appraisal of which is what generates an emotion.” (Lazarus 6)
3. All translations are our own.

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Abstract

The ability to evoke emotions by means of language, as Aristotle aptly observed in his *Rhetoric*, was crucial for successful persuasion already in antiquity. It is no different in contemporary world. Persuasion, however, is not the only thing that explains why language is used in such a way as to evoke emotions. In poetry and prose, for example, language is used in this way to impress aesthetically rather than to persuade per se.

The paper is aimed to show that *loaded* (or *emotive*) *language* is an effective rhetorical means of influence, the use of which may serve or harm people. The discussion is divided into two parts. The first (theoretical) one defines *loaded language* and other phenomena connected therewith, i.e. emotion, connotation, and cognitive bias. A model reaction to loaded language concludes this part of the paper. By contrast, the second (practical) part analyses the examples of *loaded language* use found in a variety of texts. It indicates probable interpretations, emotions, as well as further cognitive and physical engagement being the outcome of the use of *loaded language*.

The paper argues that *loaded language* is a common and complex phenomenon. Emotional responses arising from the use of *loaded language* are essentially adaptively beneficial. The responses, however, due to the impairment of logical thinking usually accompanying them, may well be unbeneficial, especially in situations in which *loaded language* is used to ease the inculcation of chosen values into people. Hence, it is necessary to subject *loaded language* to criticism in each case in which its use, according to our judgement, relies on dubiously virtuous premises.

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THE CONCEPTUAL SYSTEM OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS: AN ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSLINGUAL EXPERIENCE ON MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS

Keywords: translingual experience, mental representations, modal symbols

Introduction

The main debate in cognitive studies concerns the question of what a concept is. Nonetheless, although research has been conducted on concepts as either mental representations or abstract objects, the view of concepts treated as mental representations is considered a default theory in cognitive science (Pinker 1994) and “enjoys a good deal of support in the philosophy of mind” (Margolis and Laurence 2007: 563). Several attempts (see Fodor 1975, Jackendoff 1992, Prinz 2002, Barsalou 2008) have been made to determine the nature of mental representations, which have resulted in two main approaches that can be generally described as the autonomous approach and the non-autonomous approach. The former is characterized as an approach in which mental representations are treated as amodal symbols arbitrarily connected to what they represent, while the latter, considered a dominant view (Chatterjee 1), treats mental representations as coupled with human experience of various kinds. However, along with the growth of the non-autonomous approach, much uncertainty still exists about the influence of linguistic experience among people without a shared language. Thus, the purpose of the present article is two-fold; firstly, it aims to discuss the autonomous and non-autonomous approaches and, secondly, indicate what types of mental representations can be

determined if the role of the aforementioned type of linguistic experience is taken into consideration.

Shortcomings of the Plurilingual Approach

One of the key notions on which plurilingualism and pluriculturalism are based is mediation. Byram (67) defines mediation as “any procedure, arrangement or action designed in a given social context to reduce the distance between two (or more) poles of otherness between which there is tension.” In the CEFR, attention is paid to mediation, but it is difficult to state on what linguistic means the process of teaching and learning should be based. The document does not provide teachers with clear-cut instructions on what grammatical constructions or vocabulary should be introduced and what learning outcomes should be reached to be able to communicate as a plurilingual speaker. This incompleteness stresses that the proposal of a new approach by the CEFR focuses on processes rather than learning goals that have to be achieved. It should be emphasized that apart from improving one’s creativity or abilities to negotiate and communicate, teachers’ role is also to form learning outcomes that have to be measurable. In order to enable teachers to specify the learning outcomes of lessons, communicative language competence may be developed. The question worth answering is what should be taught to enable students to mediate in pluricultural and plurilingual society and how progress can be measured; yet another question is what can function as a starting point to balance the idea of mediation with the objectives of a lesson.

Mental Representations as Amodal Symbols

Theories about amodal symbols are characteristic of the autonomous approach to the human mind, seen as an abstract information processing device. According to this view, the human mind is made of autonomous modules (each of different cognitive function), which do not have any important connections to the body and the outside world (Langlotz 44). On the grounds of this

approach, there is a single type of mental representations that is responsible for human knowledge, i.e., amodal symbols, which “provide uniform knowledge representations” (Barsalou et al. 2008: 245). The importance of amodal symbols theory is supported by the claim that this approach “suffices to explain the way that we understand the world in terms of objects, their motions, our actions on them” (Jackendoff 1992: 3) and provides a solution how to collect and integrate information from various modalities to represent generalizations that are not specific to particular modalities (Dove 2011: 6–7).

As for the characteristics of amodal symbols, researchers agree that amodal symbols are highly abstract units. Due to their creation in a format that is not similar to perceptual states (Haimovici 2018), amodal symbols are fundamentally unlike and arbitrarily related to what they represent (Evans 254). Thus, because of their symbolic and abstract character, mental representations may be referred to different kinds of the same representation (Wilson and Foglia 2017). Moreover, research focused on amodal symbols adopts a form of nativism. However, studies devoted to amodal symbols do not provide a uniform theory about the innate character of mental representations since the opinions diverge as to what type of mental representation can be considered innate. The most influential and, at the same time, the most controversial theory is proposed by Fodor (1975) who claims that all lexical concepts are innate. Admittedly, although a great number of questions have been raised against his radical view, it has undeniably influenced the theories of cognitive development. Researchers who agree with the innate character of concepts usually differentiate the levels in mental representations in which only the most schematic primitives are considered innate. As for Wierzbicka (1972, 2015) or Jackendoff (1989), there are only innate conceptual primitives that, when combined, result in more complex lexical concepts. Consequently, studies are devoted to determining the innate, unchangeable elements of knowledge that enable people to acquire new concepts (Carey 2010) and

whether the innate conceptual primitives are present in potentially every language (Wierzbicka 1972).

All things considered, it may be said that theories about amodal symbols focus on their arbitrariness and potential universality. However, many researchers (see Prinz 2006, Barsalou 2008) have noted that symbols do not have to be arbitrarily linked to what they represent and studies devoted to the experience-based view of symbols may indicate the way in which they reflect the experience of humans, who are always situated in their physical and social surroundings. Consequently, it has been noticed that the processing of knowledge should not be detached from human experience, which may influence the way in which concepts are defined. Thus, even though early research on experience-based mental representations focuses also on the universality of concepts, it does not agree with the innate and abstract nature of mental representations, which has led to the emergence of a new, non-autonomous approach.

Mental Representations as Modal Symbols

A non-autonomous approach is characterized as rejecting the traditional view that cognition “is computation on amodal symbols in a modular system, independent of the brain’s modal systems for perception, action, and introspection” (Barsalou 2008: 617). Consequently, research within non-autonomous theories has revealed that simulations or bodily states are crucial to human cognition since it “does not simply reside in a set of cognitive mechanisms (...), [it] emerges from these mechanisms as they interact with sensory-motor systems, the body, the physical environment, and the social environment” (Barsalou 2016: 14). Therefore, due to the acceptance of mind-body interactions, the approach to mental representations has also been modified and, as a consequence, the notion of modal symbols was introduced. While in amodal symbols human experience is changed into an abstract, disembodied format, in modal symbols the information from various modalities

coming from the world is not changed into an abstract unit but functions as the base for mental representations. Nevertheless, while the role of experience is highlighted, the non-autonomous approach has no clear answer as to what type of experience becomes crucial to the emergence of concepts, since various types of human experience, e.g., sensorimotor and social, are emphasized.

The Role of Sensorimotor Experience

Glenberg (586) states that “all psychological processes are influenced by body morphology, sensory systems, motor systems, and emotions”. Lakoff and Johnson (265) seem to agree, since they state that “our conceptual systems and our capacity for thought are shaped by the nature of our brains, bodies, and bodily interactions”. Hence, the conceptual system cannot be seen as independent from experience and emerges not from innate prescription but sensorimotor experiences with the world (Evans 15) and, consequently, mental representations are derived from all “accessible human experience, including sensory experience in all modalities (visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory, and gustatory) and proprioceptive (run) and introspective (think) experience” (Kövecses 33). As noticed by Prinz (2002: 108), “all concepts are copies or combinations of copies of perceptual representations”. Since perceptual representations arise through human experience with the world and reflect this type of experience, they cannot be considered innate (Markman and Stilwell 392–393). However, even though the role of experience was introduced to theories about mental representations, the non-autonomous view was said to be deficient in its ability to represent experience in the mind (Hedblom 2019: 54), which has led to the introduction of the image schema theory (Lakoff 1987, Johnson 1987).

Mental Representations as Image Schemas

An image schema is defined as “a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our

experience” (Johnson 14). It is believed to function as the preconceptual and prelinguistic structure that stands for the earliest elements that the mind represents. Since image schemas emerge from human experience with the world, they capture such generalizations of this experience as, for example, CONTAINMENT or SOURCE-PATH-GOAL. However, although this structure is widely accepted as the one that underlies the conceptual system, there is an inconsistent view of what the examples of image schemas are since the list has never been seen as a closed one (Hampe 2).

Although researchers focus on not only the sensorimotor but also social aspect of image schemas (see Kimmel 2005), it may be assumed that the focus is put on the role of sensorimotor experiences. Moreover, it seems that the majority of studies devoted to image schemas treat all sensorimotor experiences as gathered into one category, i.e., image schemas, without taking into consideration that certain image schemas are, in fact, created from more elementary parts. One of the major drawbacks of adopting such a view arises from different character and order of sensorimotor experiences, which leads to a certain hierarchy of image schemas. Thus, Mandler and Cánovas (1-2) differentiate also between two other types of cognitive structures: spatial primitives and schematic integrations. In their view, the first theories do not take into consideration that different schemas may derive from either perception or action or “the internal feelings involved in actions” (2). It shows that if one looks at image schemas without distinguishing its more basic elements from which they are created, it may not be noticed that some elements of the preconceptual structure can be treated as either potentially innate semantic primitives or experience-based primitives that are acquired at a very early stage of the human life. However, since the main tenet of the non-autonomous theory stands for the emergence of concepts from human experience, the primitives, contrarily to the autonomous view, are seen as derived from the potentially universal experience of the individual body with the world. What may be seen as innate is the human ability to detect the

repetitive pattern of similar experiences. Thus, Langacker (1993) believes that humans are equipped with innate image-schematic abilities, but primitives are not innate as such. Hence, studies on the cross-linguistic presence of primitive concepts are explained from the perspective of not an innate structure but a potential universality of early human experience (see Talmy 2000).

Overall, early non-autonomous theories focus on the relation between the body and the mind; therefore, the way in which experience-based concepts are analyzed takes into account only the individual type of experiences. Even though it is possible to notice certain hierarchy of the preconceptual structure, it results in a rather universal perspective on the emergence of concepts from sensorimotor experiences. However, it has been noted that while the role of simulation of sensorimotor experiences seems to be adapted to the emergence of concrete concepts, this theory seems to be a matter of debate for the emergence of abstract concepts, which lack tangible referents in the world.

The Shift to the Importance of Social and Linguistic Experience

As Dove (2011: 4–5) notices, the non-autonomous perspective with the focus on sensorimotor experience is adjusted only to concrete and highly imageable notions, whereas the abstract ones, which refer to events, mental states, and situations (Borghini and Binkofski 2014), do not seem to be based on sensorimotor systems. In fact, “sensorimotor simulations seem ill-suited for representing conceptual content that is not closely tied to particular experiences” (Dove 2011: 5). Consequently, there is a need to reevaluate the non-autonomous approach and determine different degrees of experiences involved in various conceptual tasks (Pulvermüller and Garagnani 2014). Thus, it is believed that abstract concepts, which pose a challenging task for the non-autonomous perspective, are based on longer lasting social interactions (Dove 2014: 376) and their experience-based nature is derived from “everyday experience of being exposed to language in social context” (Scorolli et al. 2). In other words, while concrete concepts are acquired through sensorimotor

interactions, abstract concepts require explanations offered by others (Borghgi and Setti 2017) and involve more linguistic experience (Borghgi and Zarcone 2016). Thus, since not only sensorimotor, non-linguistic experience but also social and linguistic experience is considered crucial to cognition, it has been claimed that knowledge is represented by multiple systems. Consequently, concepts are encoded in at least two types of representations: “those associated with non-linguistic experience of the world and those associated with experience of language” (Dove 2011: 6). Hence, a mental representation “contains many multimodal components from vision, audition, action, space, affect, language, etc., and that retrieving a memory involves simulating its multimodal components together” (Barsalou 2008: 623). For example, on the one hand, the concept of a dog contains, among others, perceptual, motor, or auditory information, which are activated while a dog is perceived in various contexts. On the other hand, words and phrases tend to appear in various but closely related contexts, similar to their referents, which allows building up “substantial distributional knowledge of linguistic association” (Lynott and Connell 2010: 80). For example, the word *dog* is associated with words such as *bark* or *pet* and activates its own simulation information. Consequently, concepts are created not only by means of perceptual or motor but also social and linguistic experience (Lynott and Connell 2); however, what type of experience becomes crucial depends on the type of conceptualization in a given context (see Borghgi and Binkofski 2014).

Hence, it can be concluded that social and linguistic experiences are also important to mental representations. As it was rightly observed, the view focused on sensorimotor experiences pays attention only to the individual perspective of experience (Sinha 2002) and sees the mind as universal, without socio-cultural dimensions of the conceptual system. However, if one takes into account that experiences have an impact on mental representations, and individuals are usually located in a community of people, the question arises

whether the fact of being exposed to different social experiences among various social groups may result in concepts characteristic of a particular social group.

The Role of Social Experience

The importance of social experiences is increasingly becoming a vital factor in research on cognition since “simulations, situated action, social interaction, interaction with the environment, and bodily states” are seen as crucial (Barsalou 2008). As Blakemore (et al. 2004) argues, “much of the brain must have evolved to handle social communication and interaction”. Thus, apart from having potentially universal concepts, it has been proven that people differ in their conceptual systems and their applications of cognitive processes, depending on both the cultural experiences and individual variations (Kövecses 50). Kövecses suggests the existence of differential cognitive styles that arise when a particular group of people employs possibly universal cognitive processes in a different way (26). Much in the same vein, Sharifian claims that “although categorization seems to be a universal human faculty, the ways in which people across different cultural groups categorize their experiences may differ” (167). Hence, not only individual but also collective experiences have an impact on the conceptual system that is created. The idea of collective experience is developed by Sharifian (2009), who focuses on the cultural dimension of cognition. As he rightly notices, cultural cognition is not just an individual cognition or a collection of individual cognitions but their constant interactions lead to the creation of a holistic view of the new type of cognition (164). In his view, group-level cultural cognition is emergent and derives from the blend of different individual cognitions. However, the role of individual cognition is “necessary for collective cognition to come into existence: thus the latter is nomologically dependent on the former” (Panzarasa and Jennings 402) and an individual’s thought and behaviour may be shaped to a varying degree by cultural cognition. Thus, cultural cognition may be interpreted as a cognition with the two sides of a continuum with crucial mutual influences. Sharifian

(2009) sees it as a complex adaptive system because of various interactions that may construct and deconstruct the system and, consequently, it is difficult to determine its boundaries.

Therefore, it seems that mental representations also depend on what social group people belong to, which allows establishing at least two types of concepts, i.e., potentially universal concepts from early sensorimotor experiences and concepts specific to experience in a given social group. Nevertheless, concepts emergent from individual experiences may also be affected by the experience in a social group. What is more, it seems that the aforementioned studies focus on mental representations from the perspective of native speakers; however, if the role of linguistic experience is also highlighted, another key question in relation to mental representations is whether different linguistic experiences may have an impact on the emergence of concepts. Thus, it should also be established in what way mental representations of multilingual people may be defined since multilingual speakers have a greater ability to experience various social contexts and linguistic forms (Hall et al. 230). In other words, it should be established whether people who use more than one language may have different types of mental representation thanks to a greater amount of linguistic experiences.

Multilingual Mental Representations

Szubko-Sitarek (2015) notices that it appears to be a challenging task to determine strict regularities of multilingual concepts since they should not be determined for all multilingual speakers in the same way. She claims that in the case of bilingual mental representations “some external factors such as language proficiency, age of acquisition, structural differences between languages or relative language dominance” (74) may lead to certain differences regarding the conceptual system of bilingual people. On the one hand, it stresses the inevitable role of various experiences in the emergence of the conceptual system which tends to vary among people; however, on the other

hand, a number of tendencies of the multilingual conceptual system may be established.

A crucial aspect in the analysis of multilingual mental representation is whether people who have linguistic experience in more than one language develop a separate conceptual system for each language. Recent research, especially on bilingualism, has prioritized the question of whether bilinguals have a shared (Francis 1999) or separate (Gollan & Kroll 2001) conceptual systems. However, Paradis (1978) claims that the multilingual knowledge, in the example of bilingualism, is organized into three stores: a store for each language and one common conceptual system corresponding to both languages. Likewise, Kecskes (2007a) claims that the common conceptual system for all languages is questionable since the conceptual system is based on human prior socio-cultural experience and emerges through one particular language channel. Apart from the concepts that are common to experiences in the first and the second language, as well as concepts specific to experience in a given language, Kecskes states that multilingual speakers create synergic concepts, leading to the reconceptualization of already established concepts in the context of experience in one language. The creation of such concepts usually involves finding common features that function for all languages and consequently, a new conceptual domain is established, which is not identical to the socio-cultural character of the conceptual domain in either language (Kecskes 2007: 29).

All things considered, it may be claimed that multilingual speakers create three types of concepts: universal ones for all languages that emerge from sensorimotor experiences, specific ones for socio-cultural experience within one language, and synergic concepts characteristic of this type of language experience, which is not available for monolingual speakers. However, if one accepts the view that linguistic experience is seen as crucial, much certainty still exists in relation to the role of linguistic experience among people who do not have the same mother tongue (henceforth translingual experience).

Towards the Influence of Translingual Experience on Mental Representations

Due to the advantage of people who are able to use more than one language in terms of the diversity of experiences that affects the type of concepts they create, it is worth analyzing what type of concepts may be characteristic of experience among people without a common native language. In the context of studies devoted to English as a lingua franca, which may be understood as a type of translingual practice, Kecskes (2007b, 2015) argues that people have the tendency to base the process of communication on a transparent language. Because the aim of this group is mutual understanding regardless of cultural and linguistic differences, it may be claimed that one of the primary goals is to establish concepts that can be treated as transparent enough to be common for all speakers, irrespective of a wide variety of individual and collective experiences in the context of their native languages. Therefore, it seems that the best potentials for such concepts are concepts resulting from the universal early sensorimotor experiences with the world that are described above. Secondly, with reference to the theories of the socio-cultural influence on the conceptual system, if a group without a common language is treated as a new social group, it may be worth analyzing what types of emerging concepts are characteristic of this group, what superior cognitive processes they have, as well as how translingual experience can affect the concepts that have been established in the context of native languages. In other words, it seems crucial to delineate what the cognitive style, i.e., characteristic processes and/or concepts, of a translingual social group is. What is more, taking into consideration that people who have experience in more than one native language create a conceptual domain that is common for all languages they speak, it may be assumed that people who have linguistic experience in a group without a shared language can also establish a type of synergic concepts specific to translingual experience. However, this type of synergy results from

the blend of a native language and a language that is not acquired as a mother tongue e.g., a language that functions as a lingua franca. Therefore, it seems that research on the translingual conceptual system may facilitate the studies devoted to the establishment of potentially universal, cross-linguistic concepts, the description of the cognitive regularities of a translingual social group and the indication in what way a native and non-native languages can blend to form a common conceptual space.

Conclusion

Overall, it may be stated that research on mental representations focuses on the role of human experiences of various kinds which may influence the way in which concepts are created. However, what type of experience becomes crucial, i.e. non-linguistic or linguistic, depends on a type of concept that is created. However, whereas the vast majority of researches focus on the linguistic experience in the context of a language acquired as a mother tongue, this article has attempted to go beyond this, paying attention to the influence of translingual experience, i.e. the type of linguistic experience among people without a common mother tongue. As it has been initially demonstrated above, the influence of translingual experience on the conceptual system may be analyzed with reference to at least four types of concepts. First of all, due to the need to communicate without a shared language, it may be crucial to establish what concepts function as potentially universal, which probably emerge from the universal character of sensorimotor experiences with the world. Secondly, because of the emergence of a translingual social group, it is worth analyzing what types of concepts can be treated as characteristic of this type of experience and whether the collective experience in a translingual social group can influence the concepts that have been created in the context of a native language. What is more, with reference to the theories of multilingual mental representations, it should be established whether (or in what way) speakers, whose conceptual system is shaped by translingual experience, can create

synergic concepts that result from the blend of native languages and a language seen, for example, as a lingua franca. Admittedly, as it has been suggested for the multilingual conceptual systems, it seems to be a challenging task to determine strict regularities while all possible influences may shape the system in a given context; however, the attempt to determine certain aspects seems crucial concerning, for example, superior cognitive mechanisms or indicative regularities of the types of concepts that are characteristic of this type of linguistic experience. Thus, further research on the translingual conceptual system may indicate what the cognitive style of a translingual social group is. On the other hand, studies devoted to the role of translingual experience may have an impact on the development of the educational process. If the most common concepts (or indicative regularities about concepts) specific to the translingual experience are identified, it may facilitate the process of foreign language learning, which aims to prepare students to function in the transcultural and translingual world.

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Abstract

One major theoretical issue that has attracted great attention in cognitive studies concerns the question of what the character of mental representation is. Admittedly, a great number of studies have been devoted to the analysis of whether mental representations should be seen as either detached from or tied to human experience from the perspective of both monolingual and multilingual speakers. Nevertheless, along with the growth of the theory that mental representations ought to be conceptualized as experience-based, there is a considerable ambiguity of what the influence of experience among people who do not have the same linguistic background can be. Hence, the purpose of the present article is to discuss current approaches to mental representations and indicate what types of mental representations can be defined if the role of the aforementioned type of linguistic experience is taken into consideration.

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AN ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN SELECTED BRING ME THE HORIZON'S SONGS

Keywords: figurative language, non-literal meaning, metaphor, popular music, trauma

Introduction

Figurative language is an essential part of cognitive linguistics, a field of study which deals with, inter alia, literal and non-literal meaning. The latter is based on messages conveyed implicitly, therefore, its comprehension involves cognitive skills, such as ability to create mental images. The ambiguous character of figurative, or in other words non-literal, language may often be a source of misunderstanding in communication (Roberts 159). However, metaphors, which form the basis for figurative thinking, are used unintentionally and effortlessly. They constitute an essential part of cognition and enable people to understand one another and their environment. As a fundamental tool, metaphor is “a matter of thought” regarding various aspects of life (Lakoff 1989: xi-xii). Nonetheless, figurative language “function(s) largely at the periphery” (Ross 163), for example, the use of figures of speech, commonly associated with poetry, in popular music creates the relation between the periphery and the mainstream. The listener is often focused on the literal meaning of lyrics. A more profound understanding of texts may involve an analysis of often unclear and confusing figurative language, which can go beyond the listener’s (the receiver’s) expectations. A particularly original use of figures of speech can be noticed, for example, in lyrics of the British band Bring Me the Horizon. The band was formed in 2004 in Sheffield, England by a singer,

Oliver Sykes, bassist Matt Kean, keyboardist Jordan Fish, and guitarists Lee Malia and Curtis Ward. The group has played numerous music genres throughout their career; from heavy metal and deathcore to alternative metal, metalcore and electronic rock in their later music. The lyrics of Bring Me The Horizon are written by the lead vocalist, Oliver Sykes and the keyboardist, Jordan Fish. Interviews with the songwriters in which they reveal sources of inspiration for writing lyrics have an important role in their interpretation. In the interview for the website Kerrang.com, Jordan Fish said that the song "Medicine" describes toxic people and how their absence can improve one's life. He also implied that the lyrics is about Sykes' relationship with his ex-wife (www.kerrang.com). However, "Drown" and "Throne," as the lead vocalist explains in track-by-track commentaries for the audio streaming platform Spotify generally concern people and their unpleasant experiences. Many songs of the band contain various figures of speech, which, combined with the singer's voice and often heavy sound, make the lyrics imagistic. The article aims to identify types of figures of speech in selected songs and give interpretation of situations described in the lyrics.

Figures of Speech

The analysis of figurative language in the lyrics which constituted data of the research, identified rhetorical figures, such as a metaphor, simile, idiom, paradox, anti-proverb, pleonasm, alliteration, homeoptopton, and synecdoche. The research is mostly focused on metaphors as they are considered to be an intrinsic part of figurative language. The device is also a fundamental part of human thinking. In cognitive linguistics, it is defined as a linguistic expression in which different concepts (described as source and target domains) are given the same meaning, e.g. ARGUMENT IS WAR. The target domain is the one that the receiver tries to understand by drawing correspondences that are transported from the source domain, which provides literal meaning. The set of these correspondences is called "mapping" (Lakoff 1980: 6). For instance, in

order to understand a metaphor LIFE IS A PLAY (with life as a target domain and a play as a source domain), it is necessary to know the mapping of this metaphor—metaphorical expressions, such as people are actors and conversations are scripted dialogues.

Like metaphors, metonymies are based on experience and help a reader to organize concepts. As it is stated in *Metaphors We Live By*, metonymies are characterized by the use of one object or person to introduce the other which is linked to it (Lakoff 1980: 36–39). A synecdoche is a particular class of metonymy; this figure of speech is a part of an object standing for the whole. For example, “new wheels” stand for “a new car” (Lakoff 1980: 35).

Another figure of speech characterized by expressing similarities between two objects is a simile. As in the case of a metaphor, it involves the presence of a source and target domain; however, in the case of a simile, which employs markers “as” and “like,” the separation of the domains is more explicit (Fadaee 21).

Idioms, which are also found in the lyrics, according to the article “Idioms: A View from Cognitive Semantics”, can be defined as “linguistic expressions whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the constituent parts.” The significance of idioms is often motivated by conceptual metaphors and metonymies (Kövecses 326).

Analysis of Selected Figurative Expressions in the Lyrics

The table below reflects the results of the research—figures of speech identified in each of the selected songs—so as to show the variety of rhetorical figures that can be found in popular music. The following section explains the meaning of expressions which are considered to be the most uncommon and noteworthy in terms of interpretation.

Table 1. Figures of speech and idioms in songs: “Medicine,” “Drown,” and “Throne”

Title of a song	Lyrics of the songs	Types of rhetorical figures
1. “Medicine”		
	Some people are a lot like clouds, you know 'Cause life's so much brighter when they go	simile
	You rained on my heart for far too long (Far too long) Couldn't see the thunder for the storm	anti-proverb metaphor
	But I never dishd the dirt, just held my breath	idiom
	While you dragged me through the mud	idiom
	You need a taste of your own medicine	idiom
	'Cause I'm sick to death of swallowing	idiom
	Watch me take the wheel like you, not feel like you Act like nothing's real like you	idiom
	So, I'm sorry for this It might sting a bit	irony
2. <i>Drown</i>		
	What doesn't kill you Makes you wish you were dead	anti-proverb
	Got a hole in my soul growing deeper and deeper	metaphor
	And the weight of the world's getting harder to hold up	idiom
	It comes in waves,	idiom
	I'm not OK and it's not all right	pleonasm
	Won't you drag the lake and bring me home again	metaphor
	Who will fix me now? Dive in when I'm down?	rhetorical questions

	Save me from myself	paradox
3. <i>Throne</i>		
	Broke every promise you ever made	hyperbole
	I was an ocean, lost in the open	metaphor
	So you can throw me to the wolves	idiom
	Tomorrow I will come back Leader of the whole pack	metaphor
	Beat me black and blue	alliteration and idiom
	Every wound will shape me Every scar will build my throne	metaphors based on anthropomorphism
	The sticks and the stones that You used to throw have Built me an empire	metaphor
	So don't even try To cry me a river	idiom
	To cry me a river /r rɪvə/ 'Cause I forgive you /jə/	homeoptoton
	I'll leave you choking On every word you left unspoken	metaphor and dysphemism
	Rebuild all that you've broken	metaphor

“Medicine”

The song “Medicine” starts with the simile:

*Some people are a lot like clouds, you know
'Cause life's so much brighter when they go*

The first line “Some people are a lot like clouds” identifies the domains of the simile: “some people” as the target domain and “clouds” as the source domain. The similarity between the objects is explained in the second line as it describes the correspondences between them—a lack of the clouds in the sky is compared to the absence of the people in life. Therefore, if “some people” are like “clouds,” the sky is like life. The use of the concrete concept of “clouds in the sky” creates an image of the abstract “life.” In addition, the simile, which appears at the beginning of the song, establishes a link between other lines in the verse as they contain expressions related to rainfall, such as “rain” and

“thunder.” One can assume that “Medicine” portrays the turbulent relationship of the ex-spouses.

You rained on my heart for far too long.

The sentence contains an expression “rain on,” which commonly appears as the idiom “rain on me.” According to Urban Dictionary, it is defined as “to pour all of your emotional problems on someone” (www.urbandictionary.com). In the case of the expression in the song, “me” is replaced with “my heart,” which indicates the presence of another figure of speech, a synecdoche—a particular type of a metonymy, in which a part of an object stands for the whole object. Despite the change in the idiom, the receiver can easily recognize it and understand its meaning. The synecdoche creates more metaphorical meaning, as telling about all problems to a person’s heart, instead of to a person only, seems more abstract. Moreover, the metonymy draws the receiver’s attention to the nature of problems; when they are heard, their perception involves the emotional part of human personality, symbolized by the heart.

Couldn't see the thunder for the storm

This metaphor does not express domains explicitly; however, it can be stated that the storm as a source domain helps the reader (or the listener) to understand a target domain, which is an upcoming difficult and dangerous situation, the sign of which is presented as “the thunder.” This metaphorical expression appears after the line “You rained on my heart for far too long,” which creates a cause-and-effect relation between both lines—raining as a one of stages in storm formation leads to the one described in the song. The rain is not only the situation but also turbulent emotions.

Never dished the dirt

The expression “dish the dirt,” according to the Collins Dictionary, is an informal British expression for spreading scandalous gossip or revealing

secrets (www.collinsdictionary.com). The connotation between dirt and unpleasant rumours is emphasized by another idiom appearing later in the song, i.e.:

You dragged me through the mud

The expression “drag someone through the mud,” as it is found in Merriam Webster dictionary, means damaging someone’s reputation unfairly. Therefore, it can be noticed that the idiom used with the one “never dish the dirt” in the song are similar when it comes to the meaning; however, they are used in contradictory sentences to emphasize that, in contrast to the speaker, the addressee disgraced the other person.

You need a taste of your own medicine

'Cause I'm sick to death of swallowing

The sentence contains two idioms, namely, “a taste of one’s own medicine” and “to be sick to death.” The first idiom, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, means a cruel treatment similar to the treatment that a person has inflicted on other people (www.merriam-webster.com). The serious tone of the expression is emphasized by the other idiom, which appears in the second line of the chorus. “Sick to death of something” means being miserable about something. “Swallowing” refers to the medicine; this coherence indicates that the speaker suffered because of the addressee’s action and he wants her to feel the same. Moreover, the combinations of these idioms seem to be consistent as both refer to medical issues that can be compared to unpleasant experiences.

“Drown”

The title of “Drown” is an example of a metaphor itself. The song is not about dying by inhalation of water, but about feeling deep sadness which can lead to depression or drug addiction. This can be inferred from the polysemous word “depression.” Falling into depression (as a medical condition) is compared to

drowning—going down to the depression meaning a lower part of land that can be submerged in water. Another correspondence between drowning and depression is that they both require other people's help as a suffering person did not manage to solve the problem in the first place.

"Drown" starts with the sentence "What doesn't kill you makes you wish you were dead," which can be described as an anti-proverb. As for its definition, it is a modified proverb—a common fixed expression or a saying used by speakers in everyday language. Anti-proverbs can be formed as a result of changing a part of a proverb by omitting or adding new elements (Ababneh 712). The anti-proverb found in "Drown" is a modified version of the commonly used proverb "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." The substitution of the object complement in this sentence denotes the meaning of the proverb and provides its opposite meaning. The expression "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger" carries a positive message—failures should not be a source of sorrow and disappointment, but they should be regarded as a valuable experience. The anti-proverb "What doesn't kill you makes you wish you were dead" has a negative tone: the message is entirely contrary—unpleasant experiences lead to despair and the lack of purpose. The use of such expression can emphasize the topic of the song—not only does it describe the hopelessness of the situation that the speaker deals with, but it also presents the life attitude of a person suffering from depression.

Got a hole in my soul growing deeper and deeper.

This metaphor is based on the materialization of a soul as it acts like a body, an object whose physical properties can be changed by the growing hole. Taking the significance of the song title into consideration, the representation of the abstract soul as the concrete body may enable the receiver to picture the emotional pain of the speaker. The meaning of the expression "Got a hole in my soul growing deeper and deeper" can be interpreted as the speaker being overwhelmed by growing problems which seem to be intractable.

“Throne”

I was an ocean, lost in the open

The line is the metaphor with the target domain “I” and the source domain “the ocean.” The understanding of this unusual expression, which can be described as an aquatic metaphor, may involve taking a symbolic meaning of the ocean into consideration. According to the website of University of Michigan, the ocean can symbolize “formlessness, the unfathomable, and chaos.” Therefore, the person may compare oneself to chaos, which can also be inferred from the situation in the song. Another figure of speech found in the line is a synecdoche; the ellipsis “the open” refers to “open ocean,” which, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is defined as “an area of ocean that is far from land” (www.merriam-webster.com). Specifically, “open ocean” is synonymous with the pelagic zone. The part of the ocean may be described to emphasize that the speaker not only deals with chaos in his life, but he is also lost in the place which is so distant that cannot be escaped from easily.

In songs “Drown,” and “Throne” some metaphors are based on terms related to water, which are compared to the feelings of the speaker in the lyrics. In some dictionaries of literary terms, for example, the Polish “Słownik terminów literackich,” such expressions are distinguished as a particular class of metaphors called “aquatic metaphor” (Głowiński 1976).

Beat me black and blue

The line appearing in “Throne” combines alliteration and idiom. As for the definition of alliteration, it is a figure of speech, which, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, is characterized by the presence of similar sounds, mostly consonants, at the beginning of a few words that appear close to each other (www.cambridge.dictionaries.org). The use of alliteration in the sentence “Beat me black and blue” involving the repetition of the plosive consonant /b/, an abrupt sound commonly connoted with anger, maximizes the effect of inducing violence (Greig 2005).

Every wound will shape me

Every scar will build my throne

Both sentences are metaphors based on anthropomorphism that express a notion that the damage of skin (a wound and scar) will bring new experiences to the speaker and make him stronger. The action verbs, shape and build, usually applied to human activities, are attributed to a wound and scar, which can stand for negative consequences that are so emotionally damaging that can be suffered as if they were injuries causing pain. However, they can come out as something opposite; instead of being, as it is commonly believed, destructive, they are constructive. This situation corresponds to the track commentary in which one of the songwriters, Oliver Sykes, explains that the song is about his own experiences; he says, “all the people who wanna see me fail, got me to where I am and made me who I am” (Sykes 2015).

In addition, the accumulation of words like “leader,” “empire,” and “throne” combined with the song’s music video inspired by the American TV series *Game of Thrones* emphasize the meaning of the song; the nouns and the show associated with power struggle and consistency in achieving goals indicate that the speaker not only will not give up despite various life difficulties, but also will be more immune to problems and be successful in his further life.

I’ll leave you choking on every word you left unspoken

The metaphor is based on the materialization of “word” because it is expressed as if it were a concrete thing—a foreign body that may get stuck in throat. However, the choking can illustrate the figurative meaning of the text; it can be interpreted as the speaker claims that the addressee will regret a lack of communication and have to deal with its consequences on her own. Although the speaker says that he will leave her, the speaker is enraged insofar as he conveys his message using a serious verbal threat. Therefore, the line contains, apart from the metaphor, another figure of speech—dysphemism—a device characterized by using unpleasant words to express something neutral.

Tomorrow I will come back leader of the whole pack

The speaker extends the meaning of the idiom “throw to the wolves” to the metaphorical expression “leader of the whole pack,” which plays with the literal meaning of the idiom. The negative consequences of both throwing (meaning rejecting) and dealing with the wolves are denied by the sentence “I will come back leader of the whole pack;” not only the speaker will be back to the addressee’s life but he will also become the leader of the pack of the wolves, which emphasizes that controlling the adversities, he will overcome them and gain power and confidence embodied by wolves.

The sticks and the stones that

You used to throw have

Built me an empire

The sticks and the stones can be seen as obstacles and problems caused by the addressee, which paradoxically help the speaker to build an empire, meaning something that gives power and makes the person stronger than before. “Throne” contrasts with “Drown”; the songs present different attitudes towards difficult life situations. The latter describes the overwhelming sadness of a person prone to depression, who is hopeless about the future, whereas “Throne” is a portrayal of a person, who, despite obstacles, displays emotional strength.

Conclusion

Figurative language, despite its ubiquity in the mainstream culture, such as popular music, often creates lack of clarity and is a source of surprise, which positions metaphorical expressions at the periphery. The understanding of popular songs, for example, by the British band Bring Me The Horizon, involves an analysis of lyrics characterized by implicitness. The article, aiming to identify figures of speech and idioms in the music group’s songs: “Medicine,” “Drown,” and “Throne,” has contained an analysis of the most noteworthy

expressions which define the meaning of the lyrics. The underlying themes, such as anger, revenge, trauma, depression, emotional strength and invincibility are expressed by using numerous figures of speech and idioms, for example, a metaphor, simile, idiom, alliteration, and anti-proverb. Some of the rhetorical devices are combined in individual expressions which emphasize the tone of the lyrics. The use of figurative language also allows the creation of imagery in the situations presented in the songs. "Medicine" contains metaphorical expressions relating to rainfall, which facilitates understanding of abstract concepts. As for "Drown," the whole song describes struggles of a person suffering from depression without mentioning the illness. The speaker displays the emotions by describing expressions related to water, especially to drowning. Metaphors relating to the situation are called "aquatic metaphors" and they can also be found at the beginning of the "Throne" lyrics. However, in this song, adversities are presented differently. The imagery built, for example, on the idiom "throw someone to the wolves," alliteration, dysphemism and expressions connoted with power and control, shows the speaker who accepts unpleasant experiences and takes advantage of them insofar as he can be invincible. These conclusions prove that the songwriters of popular songs may employ figurative language, which seems unusual, and in this way, they can increase an artistic value.

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Abstract

The article explores the use of figurative language in songs of a British band, Bring Me The Horizon. The analysis is focused on figures of speech and idioms found in selected songs, namely: "Medicine," "Drown," and "Throne." The article begins with the discussion on the nature of figurative language and describes the background for writing the selected songs. Moreover, metaphor, simile, and idiom are defined as intrinsic parts of figurative language. The following rhetorical figures are identified in the analysed lyrics: metaphor, idiom, simile, paradox, rhetorical question, symbol, anti-proverb, hyperbole, pleonasm, alliteration, homeoptoton, and synecdoche. Figures of speech and idioms which are the most significant elements for the interpretation of the themes described in the songs are analyzed from a cognitive perspective; for example, linguistic expressions found in the lyrics are examined as conceptual metaphors.

**PERIPHERIES
OF LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

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**ON THE PERIPHERY OF LITERARY AND AUTHORIAL TRUTHFULNESS:
HANDCARVED COFFINS BY TRUMAN CAPOTE**

Keywords: Capote, nonfiction, murder, crime, truth

Handcarved Coffins, published in 1980, is part of a collection titled *Music for Chameleons*. The book is divided into three sections, with *Handcarved Coffins* being the middle part. It was a highly anticipated follow-up to *In Cold Blood*¹ and is considered Truman Capote's last major achievement. Generically *Handcarved Coffins* belongs to nonfiction, just like *In Cold Blood*, or at least this is the genre the writer argued the novella belonged to. This article focuses on *Handcarved Coffins* in the context of the discrepancies between Capote's own description of the novella, which—according to its author—belonged to nonfiction and the impression of the narrative as well as the outcome of critical research.

Capote did not mention the exact location of the story, nor did he provide the real names of the characters, unlike he did in *In Cold Blood*. The story begins with vague information: "A town in a small Western state" (Capote 67). The two protagonists' names are hidden behind pseudonyms: the rancher and killer Robert Quinn and Jake Pepper, the detective investigating the case. Capote claimed that it was necessary for legal reasons as the nature of the case imposed these conditions: "He [Quinn] was never accused of anything. That's why I had to be so careful in the book. If ever I was going to have a lawsuit, that's where I was going to have a lawsuit" (Grobel 155).

The subject of murder was hardly a novelty for Capote, who already had used that theme to write a relation of a multiple murder titled *In Cold Blood*. As

he explained, it was not the idea of writing about gruesome murder that attracted him:

I didn't choose that subject because of any great interest in it. It was because I wanted to write what I called a nonfiction novel—a book that would read exactly like a novel except that every word of it would be absolutely true (Grobel 112).

In Cold Blood was a great triumph, which understandably Capote might have wanted to repeat. He was very proud, not to say boastful, of pioneering the genre of a nonfiction novel and with *Handcarved Coffins*, it seems, he wanted to reach yet another level of a unique literary technique. Capote chose to write the story in almost a play and interview form as he “wanted to move with great rapidity.” “I wanted it to move with fantastic speed. I didn't want to fall into an *In Cold Blood* form. I wanted it to move as fast as the rattlesnake bites. And technically, that was the method that I felt moved fastest,” he explained (156).

Speaking of rattlesnakes, these were used at one point in the story to kill a married couple. Other townspeople are killed by equally ingenious methods: a razor-sharp steel wire hung between two trees decapitates one victim, another is poisoned with liquid nicotine, yet another is drowned and some others are burned alive. The detective assigned to the case cannot find the connection between the murders until another victim-to-be can see through the pattern and provides the answer as to why and who commits the murders. A group of ranchers had wanted to divert a river to irrigate their land; however, they were opposed by Robert Quinn, a rich and powerful rancher, whose property the river nourished. The committee members, appointed by the town council, voted against Quinn by 8–1, and consequently become his victims. This is what differentiates, apart from the nonfiction quality, *Handcarved Coffins* from a typical thriller or detective fiction: the murderer's identity is known and so are the intended victims. Once the pattern is revealed, it becomes obvious who the remaining victims will be. Still, one can find certain similarities between *Handcarved Coffins* and, for example, Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*: a limited number of victims is similar and in both cases the reader knows

who the victims are. However, unlike in Capote's novella, the murderer's identity is unknown in Christie's novel until the very end.

The tension is remarkably built up in the story with a number of aspects exciting the reader's imagination. To begin with, intended victims receive replicas of a coffin carefully carved from light balsam wood with their photos inside, the taking of which they were unaware. This meticulous preparation, an effort taken by the killer at the preliminary stage, preceding the very act of murder is intended at inspiring fear in the victims, prolonging their suffering and making their experience an ultimate punishment. A vast variety of the killing methods additionally arouses the reader's interest. None of the methods is repeated. It seems as if the killer was anxious not only to eliminate certain people but dispatch them in a gruesomely aesthetic manner, as if he wanted the acts of murder to be as spectacular as possible. Perfect precision of the executions as well as a wide spectrum of the killing methods make the reader shake their head in disbelief at the murderer's luck and arrogance. This is one of those questionable aspects raising the reader's doubts about the nonfiction quality of the book. The tension reaches its climax when we find out that the detective's partner, Addie, has also been sent a miniature coffin. In the story Truman Capote, Jake Pepper and Robert Quinn meet at the rancher's house, where they all have a casual conversation while playing chess, and the reader actually wonders if that can somehow prevent the sentence awaiting Addie.

As one of the top taboo themes, death makes a good material for a writer, and murder even better. Capote might have already become convinced of that after a huge success of *In Cold Blood*. In comparison, the story described in *Handcarved Coffins* offered even more provoking and thrilling ideas than *In Cold Blood*, the killer at large being one of them. Also, unlike in *In Cold Blood*, Capote included himself as a character in the narrative. In the novella Capote had an ideal setting in which to demonstrate his skills: an exciting subject and no less exciting literary form. *Handcarved Coffins* resembles a screenplay, with long stretches of dialogue occasionally interrupted by passages of descriptive prose

(Clarke 516). The author was very satisfied with the results, and “once again he claimed to have discovered a new art form: one that combined the techniques of film, fiction and nonfiction” (516). Even though some reviewers dismissed his claim, they still praised his achievement.

Undoubtedly, relating the truth is what makes nonfiction genre so powerful and thought-provoking. The awareness that what happened in a book, *really* happened, influences the reception of the book. At the same time, nonfiction puts the author in a rather advantageous and comfortable position, in the sense that he merely *reports* what happened and does not have to invent characters or plot. In the case of nonfiction, the writer’s responsibility is more *how* to tell the story rather than *what* to tell (once the subject has been picked). Since the writer can hardly take the credit for the story itself, as it was designed by life, his effort must then focus on the structure of the story, style and the literary form.

The process of reading fiction is based on a mutual agreement between the writer, who creates a fictional world, and the reader, who does not mind being lied to (that is to say, being fed with what was created in the writer’s mind). It is necessary for the reader to accept this condition to be able to fully appreciate the reading and the book. In the case of non-fiction it is quite a different story. Here the contract is based on the assumption that what the reader deals with is authentic; the truth is the essence of this genre and determines the whole reception of the literary work.

The appeal of *Handcarved Coffins* declines dramatically once the reader learns that what was to be “a nonfiction account of an American crime”, as Capote subtitled the novella, happens to be mostly fictional. Jack Pepper, the detective, was not a real person, but “a composite of several lawmen Capote had known”, nor did Capote “play Dr Watson to the detective’s Sherlock Holmes”, as was indicated in the novella (516). According to Gerald Clarke, Capote’s biographer, the idea for *Handcarved Coffins* came from Alvin Dewey, who had told Capote about a series of bizarre murders in Nebraska — in one

case the killer had used rattlesnakes to dispatch his victims (516). Alvin Dewey was the very same detective who led the investigation in the case of the Clutters' murder and was portrayed in *In Cold Blood*. Three years after Clarke's biography was published journalists Peter and Leni Gillman investigated the origin of *Handcarved Coffins*. Their investigation confirmed what Clarke had already stated in the biography: the supposedly true crime story was largely fabricated. It is believed that Capote's inventions included but were not limited to his meeting the suspected killer, Quinn. Clarke and the Gillmans were not the only people to voice their reservations and doubts about Capote's work. As early as in 1981, that is long before the biography and the Gillmans' article were published, David Lodge questioned the authenticity of the events reported by Capote in his review of *Music for Chameleons* for the Times Literary Supplement. He maintained that it was a work of fiction and "that no intelligent reader would believe that *Handcarved Coffins* was a true story for a moment if it were not subtitled 'a non-fiction account of an American crime' and described as a 'true story' by its publishers" (Lodge 149). Lodge's argument was based on two grounds: implausibility of the narrated events and "the literary 'feel' of the whole text" (140). In the passage quoted below Lodge points out a puzzling literary allusion in *Handcarved Coffins* that should make the reader wary:

TC: *A Coffin for Dimitrios*.

JAKE: What say?

TC: A book by Eric Ambler. A thriller.

JAKE: Fiction? (I nodded; he grimaced.) You really read that junk?

TC: Graham Greene was a first-class writer. Until the Vatican grabbed him. After that, he never wrote anything as good as *Brighton Rock*. I like Agatha Christie, love her. And Raymond Chandler is a great stylist, poet. Even if his plots are a mess.

JAKE: Junk. Those guys are just day dreamers—squat at a typewriter and jerk themselves off, that's all they do. (Capote 104,105)

A Coffin for Dimitrios by Eric Ambler is a novel from 1939 about a thriller writer who becomes involved in a murder through an acquaintance of his, a police officer. Lodge sees that as a rather obvious reference to *Handcarved Coffins* with Truman Capote becoming involved in the case through his

detective friend, Jake Pepper. Another allusion seems to be Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* with its similar "so-many-down-so-many-to-go plot" (Lodge 150). As far as Agatha Christie is concerned, she was one of the first writers to introduce liquid nicotine in literature (in *Three Act Tragedy*), yet TC remains ignorant of that poison when learning about the details of Dr Parsons' death ("TC: Liquid nicotine. I've never heard of it" [Capote 79]). It is fair to say that Christie's admirer though he might have been, Capote did not need to be familiar with this particular novel, nor did he have to remember this specific killing method used by Christie. However, TC's comments throughout the novella happen to be naïve to the point of being irritating. One can't resist the impression that their purpose is solely to spell it out and explain things to the reader in case they should not suss them out themselves ("TC: Incidentally, why were the snakes injected with amphetamine? JAKE: Why do you think? To stimulate them." [80]). Such comments surely make the story more coherent and readable; whether they are not added by the author specifically to make the narrative more transparent is less certain.

With the mouth of Jake Pepper Capote expresses the inferior status of fiction to nonfiction, which may or may not be the writer's personal attitude. Truman Capote, not the author, but his representation in the novella, is the one who defends fictional novelists, which—in the light of Capote's personal involvement in nonfiction may sound like a strenuous attempt to balance the criticism uttered by the detective.

In the context of Capote's denial of fabricating the story, the above mentioned hints may be interpreted as the writer's subconscious desire to become exposed. Interestingly, in the novella it is the narrator, Truman Capote, who voices the reader's (and his own?) doubts and reservations. Jake Pepper, the detective, is the one who drowns out those doubts and makes them sound less implausible, which has a reassuring effect on the reader:

TC: More than clever. Preposterous.

JAKE: Nothing preposterous about it. Our friend had simply figured out a nice neat way to decapitate Clem Anderson (...)

TC: So many things could have gone *wrong*.

JAKE: What if they had? What's one failure? He would have tried again.

And continued till he succeeded. (Capote 76)

The opening sentences of the first dialogue (“The amazing thing is nobody seems to know anything about this case. It’s had almost no publicity.”) are one of those instances where the protagonists articulate the questions the reader would like to raise themselves. Capote addresses the touchy issue that must have baffled many a reader, namely: how come we have never heard of this extraordinary story, if it really happened? By making this direct comment (which conveniently elicits a comforting reply: “There are reasons”) Capote pricks a bubble of mistrust forming in the reader’s mind before it has a chance to fully expand.

The novella ends with the murders remaining unsolved. The reader may feel unsatisfied with the failure to bring the killer to justice. Nevertheless, in a twisted way, this may have been yet another strong point of the novella. It fails to provide a happy ending we are used to in fiction and films. The triumph of evil may have emphasised the nonfictional character of the novella—that is, if it was nonfiction. It seems that Capote’s mistake was persistent maintaining that the story was true, which was later revealed not to be the case, and which cost him losing his credibility and his work a great deal of literary value: “We may be interested by the spectacle of life imitating bad art, but not by bad art (i.e. over-familiar, exhausted conventions) proposing to imitate life” (Lodge 149). From the reader’s point of view, there is a fundamental difference between agreeing to being lied to (when taking the created fictional world for granted and considering it real) and being lied to without one’s consent and awareness. In the case of *Handcarved Coffins*, the reader is lied to about not being lied to, which seems far more serious than conventional accepting the fictional illusion.

Capote insisted and assured everybody who questioned the accuracy of the story that it was by all means nonfiction. “That’s *exactly* what happened. That’s one of my best pieces of reportage”, he said in an interview (Grobel 156). The genre leaves no space for compromise in that matter (at least in the strict sense

Capote had in mind). It requires factographical accuracy, otherwise it is just fiction: a blend of facts and imagination. After Capote's hoax had been exposed, the reader could not help but feel embarrassed and cheated, though the novella can still be appreciated for the atmosphere, mood and style:

In reading [a] novel, we enter a unique linguistic universe; we learn a new language designed to carry a particular view of experience. [...] If this language is characterized by confusion, contradiction, internal inconsistencies and expectations unfulfilled, we will not adopt it, even temporarily, nor the view of [reading] experience it carries, however worthy and sincere the latter may be. (Lodge 73)

Capote puts to test the reader's judgement and confidence in the author and his work. Reading *Handcarved Coffins* may be a challenging reading experience in the sense that the reader is likely to reach a point where he starts doubting his own intuition and observation. A less experienced reader suspends his disbelief, does not dare to raise questions in the face of "nonfiction account" declared by the writer.

There is a number of confusing and inconsistent aspects that might seem unconvincing even if the novella was read as fiction, let alone nonfiction. The wire that decapitates one victim "caught him exactly where it was supposed to: just under the chin" (Capote 76). Not only did the wire slice off the right person's head, but it also hit the victim with an impressive mathematical precision: indeed, the Providence could not have been more favourable to the murderer.

The circumstances of the murder of the Robertses raise even more doubts: the killer placed nine big rattlesnakes in their car. The snakes had been previously injected with amphetamine to make them more ferocious. It is very unlikely that two people would open the separate car doors simultaneously and get into the car at exactly the same time, and all that without either of them noticing nine aroused big snakes in the vehicle. A much more plausible scenario would be for one person to get into the car and get attacked first before the other person did. What is more, not only did the couple manage to get into the

car, they also managed to close both doors before the reptiles started biting them “like crazy”. “We found nine big rattlers inside that car” (70) implies as much.

For a modestly sized novel *Handcarved Coffins* has a broad spectrum of memorable female characters, which does not help in resisting the fictional “feel” of the novella. Almost every female character is not insignificant. There are ultra-feminine ones: amethyst-eyed Amy (“the only girl I’ve ever seen with lavender eyes” (Capote 72)) as well as a lovely and pearl-skinned Mrs Parsons. Then there is Addie, who is an interesting mixture: a woman with a flawed face, whose figure is “not bad really”, and who “acted as though it was sensational: a rival to the sexiest film star imaginable. Her power resided in her attitude: she behaved as though she believed she was irresistible (...)” (86). Finally, the other pole of female characters comprises clearly masculine types: Mrs Quinn, a childless tequila enthusiast and Mrs Garcia, a snake farm owner, who had “almost solid gold teeth. At first I thought she was a man; she was built like Pancho Villa (...)” (97).

Suspiciously literary twist and suspense can be traced in the narrative when Clem Anderson, having received his coffin and unable at first to establish the connection between the victims and himself, all of a sudden gets an idea of what that connection might be. And just when Jake is about to get his big break, Clem leaves him with one mysterious hint: the river. He does not want to explain what he means by that until “the next time he sees Jake”, which, of course, never happens, as he gets murdered (74).

Robert Siegle points at the “apparently oxymoronic nature” of the nonfiction novel: “its mixing of reality and fiction, of journalist and novelist, of factuality and imagination”, which leaves many writers uneasy (437). Ironically, Capote himself, a pioneer of the genre, apparently was one of those writers confused by that mixture of the factual and the fictional. Before publishing *Handcarved Coffins*, Capote had already had a history of making inventions in his nonfiction. In the case of *In Cold Blood* these concerned mainly “sentimentalizing his

protagonist” (Heyne 482). Capote portrayed Perry Smith as a killer embraced by shame, who feels sorry, cries and apologizes for what he did, which is at odds with who he was in real life, as some researchers found out (Tompkins, 168). Therefore, not abiding by his own rules in Capote’s subsequent works may hardly be surprising.

In his article, *Toward a Theory of Literary Nonfiction*, Eric Heyne argues that although Capote “violated the principles he set up for himself in his book [*In Cold Blood*]”, it does not mean that “any nonfiction writer who makes up scenes would be cheating” (485). Heyne suggests we identify “two different kinds of truth—accuracy and meaning—for which different principles are important.” While the former involves “a detailed and sufficiently neutral verbal representation of events, the latter is much more vague and entails an individual processing of “the facts” (486). Two people witnessing the same event will come up with versions of this event that will be consistent to a certain degree but not identical due to “many variables in play—differences in sensory acuteness, (...) memory and conceptual skills available vocabulary, and so on” (486).

However, there is a huge difference between a subtle misrepresentation of details, for example those concerning one’s appearance and inventing events that never took place, perhaps even creating murders where there were none. While certain things depend on our subjective judgement, which makes it hard to go wrong when talking or writing about them, it is much more difficult to excuse a writer’s unleashed creativity when they are supposed to stick to facts.

Capote who emerges from Clarke’s biography is a man of significant self-confidence and ambition, “trying to show where writing is going to be”, and even if not getting there himself at least “pointing the way” (Clarke 516). Despite critical acclaim, *In Cold Blood* failed to secure Capote the Pulitzer Prize. He had prided himself on pioneering the nonfiction genre, which he must have wished to further explore and promote. Bending the truth, or rather fabricating it in a nonfiction work, though understandable on a human level—with all the

ambition and desperation consuming the writer—remains a disappointing generic achievement. Norman Mailer, Capote's fellow writer, called a nonfiction novel a "failure of imagination", which probably meant, as Capote himself assumed, that "a novelist should be writing about something imaginary rather than real" (Capote xv). *Handcarved Coffins* turned out to be rather the opposite: a triumph of imagination. As Capote admitted in the preface to *Music for Chameleons*, the professional dilemma he faced was a successful combination (within a single literary form) of everything he knew about "every other form of writing" (xviii). He wanted to escape the technical restrictions of "whatever form [he] was working on", being able to have "all his colours, all his abilities available on the same palette for mingling" (xviii). What is *Handcarved Coffins* if it is not a successful result of that striving, being a failure of nonfiction, nevertheless.

Endnotes

1. *In Cold Blood* is a nonfiction novel by Truman Capote, first published in 1966. It details the murders of four members of the Clutter family in Kansas in 1959. It is regarded by critics as a pioneering work in the nonfiction genre.

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the novella *Handcarved Coffins* by Truman Capote, which is considered to be one of the writer's major works. The article focuses on the issue of generic classification of the novella, which—by the writer himself and the publishers—was described and promoted as “a nonfiction account of an American crime”, which is the subtitle of the novella. According to a number of sources, including Capote's biography, such a classification happens to be untrue and it misleads the reader into thinking that he deals with a nonfiction work. The article brings up the following issues: the influence of generic classification on the reader's attitude and reception of the literary work as well as implausibility and inconsistency that can be traced in the novella and which can expose the fictional character of Capote's work.

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**IDEOLOGY AND FAMILY RELATIONS –
PHILIP ROTH'S *AMERICAN PASTORAL* FROM A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Keywords: Ideology, American Pastoral, Roth, Marxism

Introduction

This article proposes an analysis of a relationship between two characters selected from Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* (published in 1997, the Pulitzer Prize in 1998): Merry and Seymour the Swede Levov. Its main purpose is to discover and describe the ideologies that the characters unconsciously adopt or consciously believe in. The ideological perspective is also connected to the issue of their subjectivity. Thus, another aim of this paper is to consider in what terms the analysed characters can be described as social subjects. In such a context, it is also important to notice changes of identities that the characters undergo. Additionally, citing conflicting opinions expressed by critics makes it possible to place the interpretative issues in a specific historical context. Such a perspective helps to explore and understand the ideological interdependencies between Seymour Levov and his daughter Merry on the private and public levels.

Altogether, this approach, inspired by the thought of the French philosopher Louis Althusser, focuses on the basic questions with which the characters can interrogate the outside reality. Characterisation based on the issues of ideology and subjectivity attempts to uncover the subjects' personal practices that influence the ways in which they see the world. According to Althusser, one's ideology is not something conscious and clearly articulated but rather "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence"

(2001: 109). This means that the core of ideology is not a false image of the world but the unconscious “relation” of an individual to their real situation.

Moreover, as noted by Althusser’s translator, Ben Brewster, for Althusser, ideology is always directed at practices and social relations rather than empirical evidence and knowledge (1969: 252). Althusser believes that ideologies always exist in the form of particular practices (2001: 112). He also notices that ideological State apparatuses, such as religion, family, education, media, and culture, introduce ideological activities in “the private domain” and create a link between social institutions and private actions (2001: 96–98). Althusser’s emphasis on ideological practices enables to interpret characters as subjects performing certain functions in a determined system of socio-economic relations (1979: 180). In a work of fiction, this can mean using the construction of characters to connect their practices with real ideologies and social prototypes.

Out of many critical analyses concerning the political and ideological dimensions of Philip Roth’s *American Pastoral*, only a few connect addressing the issue of political involvement with approaching the characters as social subjects. When it comes to Merry Levov, Claudia Franziska Brühwiler’s nuanced interpretation entitled *Political Initiation in the Novels of Philip Roth* (2013) incorporates the problematic of social identity and subjectivity fluctuations. Another—less directly—relevant publication is Timothy Parrish’s essay entitled “The End of Identity: Philip Roth’s *American Pastoral*” (2000). Moreover, Sandra Kumamoto Stanley, Andy Connolly, and Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky make a valuable contribution to the discussion of the character of Seymour the Swede Levov.

In *American Pastoral*, Philip Roth builds a peculiar image of social and family relations based on two tragedies: the tragedy of the Levovs caused by their daughter’s involvement in a bombing and the tragedy of the Vietnam War. Merry Levov, changed under the influence of New Leftists’ ideological resistance to the war, plants a bomb under a local store and inadvertently kills

a doctor. After that, she continues to carry out other attacks. Her parents, mentally shattered, desperately try to find Merry. When her father finally discovers where she lives, he finds out that his daughter turned to another radical philosophy. In spite of this, he decides not to intervene. Although they might seem to form merely a background, the ideologies present in the novel and the historical context of the 1960s constitute the moving spirit behind a private tragedy. In view of this, it is possible to say that the events presented in the narrative are real consequences of seemingly abstract ideas. Consequently, these ideas influence the characters' decisions, which change their lives and identities.

Seymour the Swede Levov

The Swede is described by his brother as a liberal, permissive father in the first part of the novel entitled "Paradise Remembered" and at the end of the second part entitled "The Fall." This image of Seymour Levov can be supported by his attitude towards his daughter. The Swede avoids arguing with Merry and tries to understand her views. Finally, the most extreme manifestation of his fatherly liberalism may be the refusal to react when he has a chance to bring Merry home and to save her from danger. The Swede explains that it would happen against his daughter's will. At this point in the novel, it is clear that Merry's willpower is much stronger than her father's.

Moreover, the Swede would like to present himself as a liberal entrepreneur who does not harbour any racial or class prejudice. However, in a publication entitled *Philip Roth and the American Liberal Tradition*, Andy Connolly argues that "the Swede has reappropriated the cultural history of artisan producers as his own (nostalgic) property" (134). This interpretation does not seem to negate Seymour's liberal views but it demonstrates that he adopts an ideology of romanticised "workmanship" (Connolly 132). He "transforms" the proofs of gruelling work carried out at Newark Maid into a delightful story that focuses on "a desirable and easily consumable image of authentic craftsmanship"

(Connolly 136). Connolly openly claims that such an ideology “involves a process of reification” because the Swede is not able to objectively express the feelings of those who experience material and physical implications of labour (136).

In addition to his worldview, the Swede’s dream is to become a perfectly assimilated Jew “to whom practising Judaism means nothing” (Roth 314). He thinks that it is possible to live “the regular American-guy way” (89) which means a neutral American way in his understanding. An illustration of this idea can be found in the passage about Johnny Appleseed, who “[w]asn’t a Jew, wasn’t an Irish Catholic, wasn’t a Protestant Christian—nope, Johnny Appleseed was just a happy American” (316). According to Sandra Kumamoto Stanley, the Swede believes in a kind of “American universalism without fully realizing that he is in fact embracing not a universal but a particular form of gentile identity” (7). Additionally, he considers himself to be the final stage of “the ritual postimmigrant struggle” (Roth 86). One of the symbols of this assumption can be the “old stone house, the beloved first and only house” (189). Seymour’s youthful dreams reveal that he wants to come into the inheritance of the American history and mythology (Parrish 89–90). Nevertheless, this desire is what places him in the middle of the “postimmigrant struggle.”

Although the Swede believes in a certain ideology, he is, as his brother, Jerry Levov, calls him, “unrevealed” (Roth 276). Jerry means that the Swede does not articulate his opinions clearly. Zuckerman, the narrator of the novel, shows that Seymour reserves his views only for himself. He neither shares them frequently nor fiercely argues about them. Moreover, the Swede does not think about ideology in the way his daughter does. In other words, his is not an ideologue: he does not consider ideology to be the main motivation in his life. Additionally, the Swede’s views do not force him to make difficult moral choices. In Jerry Levov’s words, Seymour is “always trying to smooth everything over” (Roth 274) in order not to risk displeasing anyone with his decisions.

The only person who is able to force the Swede to think about ideology is his daughter. In this sense, he is confronted by Merry because she places beliefs at the centre of her life. When Seymour tries to perceive ideology in this way, he finds himself in a situation that he cannot fully control:

At the kitchen table one night Angela Davis appears to the Swede, as Our Lady of Fatima did to those children in Portugal, as the Blessed Virgin did down in Cape May. He thinks, Angela Davis can get me to her—and there she is. Alone in the kitchen at night the Swede begins to have heart-to-heart talks with Angela Davis [...] He tells her whatever she wants to hear, and whatever she tells him he believes. He has to. She praises his daughter, whom she calls “a soldier of freedom, a pioneer in the great struggle against repression.” He should take pride in her political boldness, she says. (Roth 160)

The imaginary conversations with the African American revolutionist demonstrate that Seymour Levov tries to comprehend the radical worldview but instead he develops an obsession. It is described in a deeply ironic manner that exposes the ridiculousness of radicalism as well as the Swede’s incapability of envisioning one’s thinking as pervaded by ideology.

In consequence, Seymour Levov’s ideological practices render his subjectivity “given” despite the fact that he considers himself to be newly “made” or neutral. It is important to realise that the Swede searches for the things that introduce him to the world of the American values, such as practising American sports or becoming a marine. Managing the family glove factory and retelling the traditional story about glove-making can also be considered rituals. For Levov, they constitute practices of success that signify contributing to the American economy and the American tradition. Altogether, the cultural State apparatus governing the Swede’s habits is the post-war American culture itself.

Another aspect of the Swede’s ideology is his pursuit of liberal neutrality. However, his practices expose the fact that he is not able to achieve the kind of impartiality he desires. When Merry is fascinated with Catholicism, he wants her to hide every sign of this fascination because of his parents’ visit:

The statue was what led him to sit her down and ask if she would be willing to take the pictures and the palm frond off the wall and put them away in her closet, along with the statue and the Eternal Candle, when Grandma and Grandpa Levov came to visit. Quietly he explained that though her room was her room and she had the right to hang anything there she wanted, Grandma and Grandpa Levov were Jews, and so, of course, was he, and, rightly or wrongly, Jews don't, etc., etc. (Roth 94)

This passage shows how the Swede tries to impose something on Merry without doing it explicitly. On the one hand, he does not oppose his daughter's beliefs. On the other hand, he is not able to explain his request without admitting that he is also a Jew. In spite of being born a Jew, the Swede wants to see himself as religiously neutral. This kind of neutrality might seem easy to obtain since he does not practice Judaism. Nevertheless, Seymour Levov emphasises his lack of religious identity although he is a descendant of practising Jews, which seems to be an ideological practice as well. It is accentuated by Zuckerman, who describes the Swede's dream as "the desire to go the limit in America with your rights, forming yourself as an ideal person who gets rid of the traditional Jewish habits and attitudes, who frees himself of the pre-America insecurities" (Roth 85). For Seymour Levov, abandoning Judaism is a part of becoming an ordinary American. In this regard, being an American appears to be an artificial construct based upon the reinvention of the self.

In the final analysis, the Swede seems to appear as a cautionary character. His unaccomplished neutrality causes him to regularly escape into a kind of conformism. In addition, Zuckerman presents the readers a tragically ironic portrayal of what it means to believe in a myth of impartiality. Seymour's worldview does not prove to be neutral. On the contrary, it embraces a particular ideological position the Swede does not notice. Due to such unawareness, he is destined to suffer consequences he cannot predict.

Merry Levov

For the readers of *American Pastoral*, the character of Merry Levov might become a synonym of evil. An unperceptive analysis of this character may reduce her motives to anger and ingratitude. On the contrary, the construct of Meredith Levov with her ideologies and practices is a colossal philosophical and ideological exploration of Nathan Zuckerman and Philip Roth. Timothy Parrish in his article entitled “The End of Identity: Philip Roth’s *American Pastoral*” sees Merry as a “postmodern horror” and as “someone who has ventured so far toward the outer edges of subjectivity that she finally chooses not to have a self at all” (93). In contrast to Parrish, I believe that Merry is not a postmodernist because she unconsciously believes that there exists some truth she is supposed to discover. Additionally, the truth she finds enables her to establish a kind of moral absolutism that provides her thinking with stability.

The first of Merry’s two major ideologies is Marxism combined with an anti-war radicalism. Due to this worldview, “[t]he ‘Rimrock Bomber’” (Roth 68) can morally legitimise her crime. She believes that her deed was politically motivated and necessary. This aspect of her felony makes it similar to what Michel Foucault defines as popular illegality in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Foucault 66–68; 273). Merry wants to see her criminal act as a form of class struggle and as a part of the anti-war revolution. Additionally, she naively wishes her doings were defended as popular illegality and recognised as a significant articulation of a bigger political movement. Surprisingly, Merry manages to provoke a reaction of the US government, since the authorities cannot accept her crime as such. In this way, her seemingly irrelevant attack on a shop in a small New Jersey village becomes a matter of power because it is perceived as an ideological articulation of discontent with the Vietnam War. What is more important, from Merry’s point of view, her ideology gives her such strong moral self-assurance that she is able to carry out further attacks and murders.

In regard to identity, Merry Levov follows the logic her father was not able to exercise. According to Claudia Franziska Brühwiler, Merry's "story of an initiation into political extremism only thinly veils the underlying dominant narrative of a quest for selfhood which followed any referential frame available, political or religious, whatever promised certitude and stability instead of her parents' relativism" (2013: 107). Merry desperately wants to give herself a sense of identity she did not acquire from her parents. Moreover, she starts to despise the subjectivism and freedom she was given. Although Michael G. Festl sees Meredith in social terms and calls her "Missing Embarkment" a "pathology of reconciliation to society" (98-101), it appears that her "pathology" occurs more on the private level because she struggles to provide herself with "order and security in her life" (Parrish 96). However, she is not able to develop a full identity. Instead, she embraces ideologies. After Marxism and a compassionate anti-war worldview, she chooses Jainism. This Indian religion encourages Merry to abnegate her identity by such practices as covering her face, eating only vegetables, and refusing to wash so as not to harm any living organism. This happens because, as Timothy Parrish claims, "[w]ithout a grounded sense of herself, rooted in a specific cultural identity, Merry is condemned to the performance of the self's loss, the self's absence" (95).

Another important part of Merry's ideologies is a set of unconsciously held views and practices. Merry's compassion, asceticism, ethics of nonviolence, and, using Anthony Hutchison's words, "preoccupation with moral and political purity" (327) show that "the books that led her to leave behind forever the Judeo-Christian tradition" (Roth 262) never did it. In fact, when the Swede's daughter becomes a Jain, she does not reject the post-Judeo-Christian morality she was born into. Additionally, by converting to Jainism, she performs a kind of Cartesian conscious choice. Nonetheless, it is influenced by the Judeo-Christian culture she lives in. The truth of the matter is that Merry is left to interpret the concepts she acquired from society on her own.

Furthermore, it might seem that Merry's family and social group did not have any significant influence on her thinking. On the contrary, her class background and her father's liberalism directly affected Merry's reasoning. It is possible that Meredith's awareness of her social class was necessary for her to notice the underprivileged and to turn to Marxism. Due to this, she could rebel against her own privileged class. The Swede's worldview seems to be equally important. Without it, Merry would never experience the freedom to express her radical views in the first place. In addition, her father's progressive attitude taught her that she can think on her own and that the limits of recreating one's identity almost do not exist. In conclusion, it occurs that liberal upbringing and the influence of her social class laid the foundation for Merry's philosophical explorations and indirectly inspired her rebellious inclinations.

It is visible that Merry Levov has "a map" of moral and philosophical intuitions she freely interprets. By trying to shape her practices on her own, Merry becomes probably the "freest" and the most "individual" subject among the characters from *American Pastoral*. She can be also perceived as a "made" or even as an almost "re-made" subject. However, although Merry assumes that by changing her practices she is able to change her identity, she dedicates herself to any unified systematic structure of beliefs she performs as if it expressed the fullness of morality and truth.

Consequently, the issue of extreme identity changes seems to be the problematic behind the character of Meredith Levov. On the one hand, Merry Levov is constructed by Philip Roth on the postmodern assumption that identity is not stable and may be changed with practices. On the other hand, Roth produces characters that expose defects and threats of this theory. He demonstrates that the identity performed by the Swede becomes one of the causes of his family's tragedy. Moreover, Zuckerman explicitly states that Merry's new religious identity leads her to death, probably because of self-starvation. Nevertheless, Philip Roth does not unambiguously turn to Neoplatonism in regard to identity. Yet, by writing *American Pastoral*, he

acknowledges a kind of insufficiency of the postmodern and poststructuralist views.

In summary, it appears that there is a certain irony arising from the philosophical implications of Merry Levov's beliefs. Ideologically speaking, Merry seems to be a "knowing" subject who is able to reinvent her thinking about her identity and violent crimes to a certain extent. Ironically, because of the ideology she adopts, Merry knowingly wants to stop being a subject altogether. She comes to the conclusion that she has to become selfless in order to achieve a "Perfect Soul" (Roth 242). To conclude, in this way, Merry becomes pure ideology put into action.

Several reviewers and critics attempt to expose certain flaws in the construction of *American Pastoral* through interpreting the character of Merry Levov only in relation to youth political movements of the late 1960s or almost exclusively to some kind of predestination. According to Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky, due to the fact that Roth "[used] events occurring in the political and cultural milieu of the late 1960s as part of" his novel, he "made his work vulnerable" to certain kinds of political "appropriation" (221). The presence of irony might also create the possibility of reading the novel in oversimplifying ways. An example of an ideologically motivated commentary on *American Pastoral* can be the review entitled "The Adventures of Philip Roth" by Norman Podhoretz. As a conservative reviewer, he tends to see Roth's novel as an unambiguous "celebration" of "ordinary [Jews']" "decency, their sense of responsibility, their seriousness about work, [and] their patriotism." As Podhoretz criticises Roth for structuring his novel as an embedded narrative, he openly expresses his desire for it to show an "unambiguous *mea culpa*" for Roth's early liberalism (Podhoretz www.commentarymagazine.com). However, as Andy Connolly points out, this may suggest that Podhoretz perceives *American Pastoral* only as an "indictment" of New Leftists, who, in the latter's opinion, are "either pathologically nihilistic or smug, self-righteous, and unimaginative" (Podhoretz www.commentarymagazine.com; Connolly 127).

By way of contrast, while Podhoretz clearly emphasises the role of history in the novel, Tod Gitlin, in his review entitled “Weather Girl,” argues that Philip Roth could not, even through the character of Merry Levov, “bring the wildness of that time [the 1960s] to life” (201). According to Gitlin, Roth did not understand the mechanisms that should really lie behind Merry Levov’s radicalisation. He suggests that the private and fatalistic plot of the novel is much more important than the historical “backdrop.” This might indicate that “much of the story’s atmospheric [is] redundant” and that the family tragedy is actually influenced or even “cursed by fate, not history” (202).

For Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky, the historical or political context of *American Pastoral* is much more tragically ironic. He correctly argues that it “has nothing to do with the irreverent author’s inability to appreciate the rage of the Weather Underground (he does) or his supposed ‘born-again,’ ‘mea culpa’ shift toward political conservatism (he doesn’t)” (222). In my opinion, both Podhoretz and Gitlin fail to see the ambiguity in Roth’s novel. I believe that it can be read in a way that acknowledges moral and political uncertainty as well as bitter irony created in the novel by private ideologies of such characters as the Swede and Merry Levov.

Conclusions

The above analysis helps to draw a distinction between two types of ideology. The first one constitutes a kind of conformist worldview, which does not challenge the traditional order. In *American Pastoral*, it is depicted as insufficient for providing stable identity models and as incapable of answering the questions raised by the radicals. In addition, the character holding such views is portrayed as a liberal, who is not able to understand the ideological element of the extremist orientation. Altogether, he seems to follow a non-ideological paradigm of thinking, which does not acknowledge the ideological side of the world and, as a result, becomes one of the factors that lead to the tragedy of the Levovs.

The second paradigm is a radical one. It may be distinguished by a desire to destroy the established order by various revolutionary practices. Surprisingly, it includes ideologies that focus on compassion and “purity” (Hutchison 326–327). Nevertheless, it is criticised for being inconsistent and based to some extent on the things it wishes to reject or reinterpret. In contrast to the first one, this paradigm can be called ideological. It emphasises the ideological dimension of reality as well as the commitment to enacting one’s ideas. Due to the character of Merry Levov, Roth is able to address the issues underlying personal tragedies numerous American families suffered in the turbulent 1960s.

Finally, there is a correlation between the mainstream and the subversive. It should be remembered that Merry takes her father’s mainstream ideology and its assumptions, and builds her own kind of revolution on its basis. This exemplifies the fact that what is generally accepted by the major part of society can have subversive potential. Moreover, in Roth’s novel, the Swede’s mainstream ideology seems prone to being interpreted as conformist or even socially submissive. In other words, Merry thinks that her father’s ethical and moral standards should not be considered acceptable because she is convinced that she judges him against moral principles that are much stricter than the ones he adheres to.

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Abstract

In my article, I propose an analysis of a relationship between two characters selected from Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*. The main purpose of the article is to discover and describe the ideologies that the characters unconsciously adopt or consciously believe in. The ideological perspective is also connected to the issue of their subjectivity. Thus, another aim of this paper is to consider in what terms the analysed characters can be described as subjects. These two aspects of characterisation are interconnected by personal practices of the subjects and by the ways their identities change with and by practices. Altogether, this approach, inspired by the thought of the French philosopher Louis Althusser, focuses on the basic questions with which the characters can interrogate the outside reality. To put it another way, the interpretation attempts to uncover a "problematic" behind the selected characters. Additionally, citing conflicting opinions of a group of critics makes it possible to place this "problematic" in the historical context of the 1960s. Such a perspective helps to understand that one of the characters represents the mainstream and connects his philosophy to the American liberal tradition, which propels him further to conformism; whereas the other character personifies the subversive by exploring Marxist views and Jain philosophy, which together form an individualistic narrative of rebellion.

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HOW TO EXPLAIN THE INEXPLICABLE? THE PORTRAYAL OF A SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER IN *THE SKRIKER* BY CARYL CHURCHILL

Keywords: hauntology, spectre, phantom, Caryl Churchill

The Skriker (1994) by Caryl Churchill differs significantly from other works in her artistic output, mostly because of its complexity and incoherent, distorted language used by the title character. The difficulty in the reception of that play resulted in rather negative reviews just after its premiere at the Royal National Theatre in 1994 (Aston 28). The reviewers were biased against the form of the performance and the choreography, let alone an odd language used by the supernatural creature. Yet the critics indicate that the creation of the title character reveals many important issues, such as the critique of capitalist “sick” society (Godiwala 77), a warning about the ecological disaster (Cousin 189), the figure of the Skriker as an opposition to the patriarchy (Cunnally 44), a metaphor of young single mother’s position in society (Aston 32). Bearing in mind these interpretations, the aim of this paper is to analyse the complexity of meaning that hides beneath the central character of Caryl Churchill’s play under the same title, using the hauntology theory.

The term “hauntology”, undoubtedly present in contemporary literary and cultural studies, has two different sources that permeate each other to some extent. There is a typical distinction between them (*cf* Davis 373), but both indicate that a supernatural figure—a ghost, a spectre or a phantom—plays an important role in the text. In “État Présent: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms,” Colin Davis makes a few remarks about the origin of the word, for

“its French *hantologie*, was coined by Jacques Derrida in his *Spectres de Marx* from 1993” (Davis 373). For Derrida, the concept of hauntology is closely connected with the appearance of the ghost, or the spectre as “the specter is a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some “thing” that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other” (Derrida 5). Moreover, a spectre is a phenomenon that goes beyond human perception, for “this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge” (Derrida 5). Further, Derrida (10) points out that “[t]his logic of haunting would not be merely larger and more powerful than an ontology or a thinking of Being [...] It would harbour within itself, but like circumscribed places of particular effects, eschatology and teleology themselves. It would comprehend them, but incomprehensibly”. Derrida’s remarks aim at forcing the reader to examine the essence of “what is strange, unheard, other about the ghost” (Davis 378).

Analysing Derrida’s remarks concerning hauntology, Colin Davis (378–379) adds that “the ghost’s secret, [in Derridean sense] is not a puzzle to be solved; it is the structural openness or address directed towards the living by the voices of the past or the not yet formulated possibilities of the future. The secret is not unspeakable because it is taboo, but because it cannot (yet) be articulated in the languages available to us. The ghost pushes our boundaries of language and thought”. It seems that the meaning (the ghost is willing to express) is actually open to human interpretation in many convoluted dimensions; thus, the way of experiencing it in fact depends on the individual.

The second but chronologically prior source of hauntology are the studies made by psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Their area of interest was, in particular, transgenerational communication. They studied if, and how, undisclosed traumatic events of the ancestors might influence the lives of their descendants. Abraham and Torok created the figure of “phantom”, that is, “the presence of a dead ancestor in the living Ego, still intent on

preventing its traumatic and usually shameful secrets from coming to light” (Davis 374). According to Abraham and Torok, the phantom is a liar, and its aim is to “mislead the haunted subject and to ensure its secret remains shrouded in mystery” (Davis 374). Again in his remarks, Davis (378) points out that “the secrets of Abraham’s and Torok’s lying phantoms are unspeakable in the restricted sense of being a subject of shame and prohibition. It is not at all that they cannot be spoken; on the contrary, they can and should be put into words so that the phantom and its noxious effects on the living can be exorcised”.

Edyta Lorek Jezińska (21) indicates that although some critics, among others aforementioned Collin Davis (2005), use a strict division between the motives of Derrida’s spectres and Abraham’s and Torok’s phantoms, the current analyses of dramatic texts suggest that these categories often intersperse with each other in practical interpretative contexts. Such an intertwining of two different concepts of hauntology is visible in Caryl Churchill’s *The Skriker* (1994). The text of the play uses experimental language and concept, as the central character is a spirit which is able to change its shape immediately and personify different beings; by different disguises, the supernatural serves as a reflection of both women’s hidden desires and fears. The Skriker comes from the underworld to haunt two young women—Josie, who is in mental hospital after killing her baby and Lily, her friend, who is pregnant. Josie accompanies the Skriker in the underworld and comes back after a while but it seems to her like years to be there. Lily, worried about her baby’s safety, also comes with the Skriker to the underworld, hoping that her journey will be in blink of an eye as that of Josie’s, but she is trapped in a dark place for years.

Who or what is the Skriker? At the beginning of the play, it is described as “a shapeshifter and death portent, ancient and damaged” (243); it takes different forms to achieve her own goals and to obtain specific results on the people she is haunting. Elaine Aston (30) offers another interpretation of the Skriker’s figure: “As an androgynous, archaic spirit, the Skriker offers the possibility of a point of origin outside of the gender binary, but one that s/he is not allowed to

take up; it is not allowed to 'be'. It is significant, for example, that the Skriker cannot actually remember living in a time when s/he was made welcome, when s/he and the other spirits 'mattered', rather s/he has to 'think it was so' that that was how 'it should have been'. Instead, s/he is forced to live through centuries of man-made 'history'. By this lack of corporeal form, the Skriker crosses the boundaries of human perception; she can assume any form, either of a living organism or a thing.

As a death portent, the Skriker is definitely a sign of something other, something that goes beyond human cognition. The Skriker exists outside the boundaries of time and such concepts as time and history do not exist for her. During her talk with Lily, the creature describes itself as:

SKRIKER: I am an ancient fairy, I am hundreds of years old as you people would work it out, I have been around through all the stuff you would call history, that's cavaliers and roundheads, Henry the eighth, 1066 and before that, back when the Saxons feasted, the Danes invaded, the Celts hunted, you know about any of this stuff? Alfred and the cakes, Arthur and the table, long before that, long before England was an idea, a country of snow and wolves where trees sang and birds talked and people knew we mattered, I don't to be honest remember such a time but I like to think it was so, it should have been, I need to think it, don't contradict me please. That's what I am, one of many, not a major spirit but a spirit. (257)

Taking Derrida's concept of spectre into consideration, the Skriker's actions may be perceived as an attempt to express her secret—the mystery of her origin and existence—by the language it speaks. It seems to be damaged, distorted, with a conglomeration of words which do not match one another. It is also full of alliterations and homophones, for example:

SKRIKER. Shriek! shrink! shuck off to a shack, sick, soak, seek a sleep slope slap of the dark to shelter skelter away, a wail a whirl a world away (...). Slit slat slut. That bitch a botch an itch in my shoulder blood. Bitch botch itch. Slat itch slit botch. Itch slut bitch slit. (243)

As Godiwala (2003: 78) points out, the language spoken by the Skriker is "identified variously as 'dense pun-packed Joycean prose', 'children language' and 'schizophrenic language'". In further observations, Godiwala (2003: 78)

indicates that the Skriker's speech "does indeed sound like a Deleuzian 'schizzes-flow', and the monologue is a lateral flight from reason, a dark verbal kaleidoscope which draws its bizarre substance from the national subconscious". Godiwala (79) suggests it combines a myth—"spun the lowest form of wheatstraw into gold, raw into roar (...)", a warning about an imminent degradation of the world—"the beast is six six six o'clock in the morning becomes electric stormy petrel bomb (...)", indecent language—"or pin prick cock a doodle do you feel it?" and a dark, ghastly prediction—"put my hand to the baby and scissors seizures seize you sizzle". By employing these different linguistic methods, the language used by the Skriker forces its audience to consider the complexity of its form and its in-betweenness which might be misunderstood by human beings.

Another feature associated with the Skriker's spectrality, which is outside human perception, is the place it comes from—the underworld. In the text of the play, when Josie accompanies the Skriker, it is described as:

Light, music, long table with feast, lavishly dressed people and creatures (...). It looks wonderful except that it is all glamour and here and there it's not working—some of the food is twigs, leaves, beetles, some of the clothes are rags, some of the beautiful people have a claw hand or hideous face. But the first impression is of a palace. (268–269)

However, the underworld also changes; when Lily visits the underworld, it appears as a dark, desolate place. According to Aston (28), "the spirit world [...] frames our 'own' (...). The mimetic is disturbed and 'taken in' by the other world, spilling it of the margins to which it as previously confined. (...) Moreover, accessed through the Skriker's underworld, the 'real', the mimetic, as we conventionally know it, is only a small, tiny part (...)." The underworld is a different dimension, where the passage of time, the space and even mortality is distorted. It is the fairy, magical world which exceeds human perception, and makes 'real' world small and claustrophobic.

The figure of the Skriker also corresponds to the concept of Abraham's and Torok's phantom, yet the supernatural creature should be perceived both as an

ancestor of the whole mankind and those young women, whose role is to reveal hidden fears, traumas and desires of people who need some attention. To realize this goal, the Skriker uses the method of shape-shifting when it haunts Lily and Josie.

The first time when the Skriker takes a human form is at mental hospital, where Josie is a patient after having killed her baby. She feels guilty and realizes what she had done. Lily who is probably her friend, is visiting Josie. In spite of the fact that she is expecting a baby, she seems to be absolutely reckless and does not realize the problems which people with mental disturbances have to tackle. While Josie perceives her treatment as a punishment, Lily advises her to take more pills for fun. It might be perceived as a trace of Josie's mental instability, but in fact she becomes aware of the presence of an odd creature in a room:

JOSIE. (...) she's hundreds of years old. And then I was impressed by the magic but now I think there's something wrong with her. (...) She looks about fifty but she's I don't know maybe five hundred a million, I don't know how old these things are. (250)

The Skriker emerges as a "woman about 50" (251). The creature's appearance may be interpreted that Josie's dark side—her guilt and mental breakdown which Josie tries to repress is now disclosed. As Josie rejects the Skriker's presence (and her own feelings which she cannot confront), the fairy appears in front of Lily on the street. After fulfilling the Skriker's request, Lily finds some money coming out of her mouth. According to Graham Wolfe (243), that scene might be interpreted as Lily's encouragement to say more and more words to the Skriker. Money, as a specific but also misleading reward for Lily, also serves as a sign of the Skriker's further interactions and hauntings.

By other disguises—as a 40 years old drunk woman, a child and a man, the Skriker preys on Lily's helpfulness, kindness and compassion. The central figure in Skriker's actions is a baby; using manipulation—hitting Lily's stomach or picking up the baby, Lily's repressed fear is coming into light—that she would not be able to care for the baby properly and protect it from danger.

Both Josie and Lily visit the underworld, but it signifies something different for each woman. For Josie, the travel to the underworld with Skriker might be understood as an attempt to evade the trauma after having killed her baby; she seems to be joyful in the underworld, she drinks wine and eats cakes and twigs. But after a while, when Josie comes back, her mood changes dramatically and she warns Lily against the fairies' tricks concerning babies. Josie's speech becomes distorted and the woman mistakes the figures of her dead daughter and the Skriker. It becomes obvious that Josie cannot cope with the trauma after killing her baby; she says to Lily:

JOSIE. (...) I killed her. Did I? Yes. I hadn't forgotten but. She was just as precious. Yours isn't the only. If I hadn't she'd still. I keep knowing it again, what can I do? Why did I? It should have been me. Because under that pain oh shit there's under (...) Don't let me feel it. It's coming for me. Hide me. This is what. When I killed her. What I was frightened. Trying to stop when I. It's here (...). (279)

Here, the figure of the Skriker's personifies Josie's overwhelming remorse for having killed her baby; probably that feeling is so unbearable that Josie sinks into madness.

Lily, however, visits the underworld for a slightly different reason as she is worried about both Josie's and her own baby's safety. She hopes that her visit will be short; instead, she is "lost and gone for everybody was dead years and tears ago, it was another cemetery, a black whole hundred years" (290). In that dark place, she sees her granddaughter and her great-granddaughter, both deformed and sad. This vision might be understood as Lily's attempt to confront her fears concerning raising the baby as a single mother. According to Elaine Aston (32), the play should be read "as a kind of tale for a contemporary moment". In the 1990s, that is, when the play was produced, the number of single mothers significantly increased in the UK; in order to remedy that situation the then Conservative government raised a campaign whose aim was to reduce welfare benefits. Deprived of financial benefits, the young mothers found it difficult to provide for themselves and their children. As Aston (32-33)

further points out, “traditional tales in which young women get rescued from danger, poverty and loneliness may have their uses as fantasy, but bear no relation to the social reality of the (...) Lilies and Josies in the modern, urban world of the 1990s. For these young girls there is no ‘magical’ way in which their lives are suddenly transformed [and] made better”. The story of Josie and Lily proves that the young single mothers are very often left outside alone, with no support either from the state or their relatives.

All these things considered, we can observe that both Derrida’s concept of spectre and Abraham’s and Torok’s concept of phantom are intertwined in the figure of the Skriker. It is a creature which exceeds human understanding—an ancient fairy who has lived for thousands of years and lacked any gender form. The language that Skriker uses is distorted, schizophrenic, based on some sound similarities between words and gone away from the basic phrase. The place the Skriker comes in, is a dimension where all ‘real’ factors, such as time, space and mortality are distorted. It also deforms the shape of the ‘real’ world, making it small and limited in comparison to the underworld. The Skriker also resembles the concept of phantom; as it has lived for hundreds or even thousands of years, it might be perceived as a figure of the ancestor of the whole mankind. In order to reveal hidden fears and desires of the haunted girls—the trauma after killing a baby, the desire for having a lover, the anxiety of raising a baby and ensuring it is safe—the Skriker is shape-shifting and appears as different creatures.

Endnotes

1. This article is a development of theses stated in my article “Spectre and phantom. The portrayal of a supernatural character in *The Skriker* by Caryl Churchill”, published in *Ro-Brit Student Journal. English Annual Review of the Romanian Students from “Vasile Alecsandri” University Bacău*. 2019. Available on-line: http://www.ub.ro/litere/files/RoBrit_2019v3.pdf.

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyse the title character of Caryl Churchill's *The Skriker* (1994), by means of hauntology theory. The starting point for the analysis will be a short introduction of two different sources of hauntology: Jacques Derrida's concept of spectre based on deconstructive approach and the figure of phantom, introduced by the psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. The detailed study of the title supernatural character is intended to demonstrate the extent to which the both above-mentioned concepts of hauntology intertwine with each other in the figure of the Skriker.

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THE ANTHROPOCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE IN *SOLARIS* BY STANISŁAW LEM

Keywords: Solaris, Stanisław Lem, Material Ecocriticism, humanity, Surrealists, interspecies communication

Human nature has always been one of the main concerns of humanity; it became the subject of uncountable studies and attracted the attention of scholars and authors as early as in the Antiquity. For Marcus Aurelius, “[t]he universe is transformation: life is opinion” (Aurelius, Book IV: 3). In the nineteenth century William James thought that “[t]he deepest principle of human nature is the craving to be appreciated” (James). More recently, e.e. cummings stated that “[t]o be nobody-but-yourself—in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting” (cummings 13). Those comments on human nature were concerned with specific terms and rules: Aurelius referred to humans’ way of thinking that creates the outside reality; James described their need to be accepted and admired by others. In contrast, cummings stated that to be considered human, one should never stop fighting the war for personal independence. All of them focus on highly essentialist and subjective attitude towards the idea of human nature. Moreover, people have tried to understand nature as a concept with particular characteristics and boundaries. In the 20th and 21st century those boundaries are shifting due to new researches and the evolution of technology, which may be called a revolution. Today, there is an attempt to “remake the codes that have shaped our civilisation in its present form and that have largely created

the ecological crisis” (White 23). Humanity has always been inseparably bound with the nonhuman aspects of life, such as the surrounding nature. Thus, the ecological crises may be perceived also as a crisis of humanity itself. Humans are and always were, by definition, animals, a part of a larger ecosystem. As Karen Barad states in her *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, “[we] are a part of that nature that we seek to understand” (in Iovino, Oppermann 1). It is no longer stated what it means to be a human. It is not depicted in particular terms or rules as it was the case for Aurelius, James, Cummings, and many more before and after them. As Iovino claims in her article, “boundaries, especially those between human and nonhuman, are not only shifting, but also porous: based on the biological, cultural, structural—combination of agencies flowing from, through, and alongside the human, the posthuman discloses a dimension in which ‘we’ and ‘they’ are caught together in an ontological dance whose choreography follows patterns of irredeemable hybridisation and stubborn entanglement” (Iovino 2016: 1). Human nature became a product of the culture-nature unity. In addition, it has been stated by Stacy Alaimo in her definition of “trans-corporeality” for *The Posthuman Glossary* “all creatures, as embodied beings, are intermeshed with the dynamic, material world, which crosses through them, transforms them, and is transformed by them” (Alaimo 1). Every living creature acquires some distinct characteristics from the surrounding world, thus the inseparable network of life is what defines the ecosystem.

Henry David Thoreau in his *Journal* claimed that: “Man is altogether too much insisted on. The poet says the proper study of mankind is a man. I say study to forget all that—take wider views of the universe. That is the egotism of the race” (Thoreau 369). The idea of a relatively minor place of human beings in the wider perspective is the basis of Thoreau’s theology. This way of thinking invites us to go beyond the strict and archaically fixed borders of humanity. In this essay, I will analyse *Solaris* by Stanisław Lem as a text that explores and questions such strict and previously defined borders. After the examination of

particular names, which Lem chose for his characters, I will focus on the anthropocentric perspective and how it influences the possible perception and interpretation of the book.

If one is to treat *Solaris* as a mirror or a reflection of the real world, there is a need to point to particular names, which Lem chose for his characters and which direct readers to the world outside the book. He gave the readers an image of a world, but this image is not necessarily a true one. The image can be distorted in reality, perceived as distorted by society as a whole or even completely lost among other incentives. Moreover, names function here with their relation to the cultural context. Readers tend to treat this context as something natural and obvious, thus it determines what one understands as reality. Lem chose names for his characters to relate them to their namesakes outside the book. The first significant name is the character of Kelvin. It is impossible here not to think about Lord Kelvin, an Irish-Scottish mathematical physicist, famous mainly for his absolute temperature scale. Despite being one of the most remarkable scientists, he was also famous for his psychotic episodes. Moreover, he often used Christian faith as an explanation for his researches. He even claimed that “[t]he more thoroughly I conduct scientific research, the more I believe science excludes atheism. If you think strongly enough you will be forced by science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion” (Lord Kelvin 1903). From the very beginning, Lem’s Kelvin doubts his state of mind and blames this situation on something beyond his person. For Lord Kelvin, the outside source was his faith; here madness plays the same role, as something which is impossible to control:

There was only one possible explanation, one possible conclusion: madness. Yes, that was it, I had gone mad as soon as I arrived here. Emanations from the ocean has attacked my brain, and hallucination had followed hallucination. Rather than exhaust myself trying to solve these illusory riddles, I would do better to ask for medical assistance, to radio the Prometheus or some other vessel, to send out an SOS. (Lem 2008: 48)

Moreover, his attempts to prove himself sane are immensely naive, as from his perspective it is impossible to understand that something may not be comprehended in simple, human terms. He tries to measure orbital coordinates of the artificial satellite circling the planet and checking the results through the radio. However, if we assume that he suffers from psychosis, all of his thoughts would be only a projection of a sick brain. Not only the planet or the surrounding world would be a hallucination, but everything he experiences, also the satellite or the radio which has disseminated the results. However, the slight chance of psychosis is what gives him the biggest hope:

Assuming that I was ill, there was reason to believe that I would get better, which gave me some hope of deliverance—a hope irreconcilable with a belief in the reality of the tangled nightmares through which I had just lived. (Lem 2008: 48)

Another important name that blurs the fixed boundaries of reality is the name of the popular Solarist, Breton. This name can be referred back to André Breton, who was one of the leading figures of Surrealism. He was also an author of two, out of three, Surrealist Manifestos. There, he included the definition of Surrealism:

Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern. (Breton 22)

This definition can be also successfully applied to Lem's novel. The psychic automatism of Solarists reflects the human constraints that make them perceive reality only and always through their own experience and perspective. It also brings another relation to Oniristic interpretation and strengthens the feeling of uncertainty. Breton in *Solaris* was one of the most famous Solarists, just as André Breton was one of the most famous Surrealists.

Lem presents the Ocean as an independent and active entity, as a generator of events which come from the most hidden parts of Solarists' thoughts. This

image comes from the relation with another notable name, which is Sartorius. In medicine, it is the name of a thigh muscle (both in Polish and English). As Lem studied medicine, from 1940 in Lvov Medical Institute and after 1945, when his family was relocated, at the Jagiellonian University, he probably did not choose that name by accident (Hosch 1). The Sartorius muscle is the longest one in the human body, and it is called the tailor's muscle from Latin *sartor*, which means a tailor. Sometimes, it is also called the honeymoon muscle. If Lem's character is to be recognised in relation to its medical meaning, then it may be assumed that his child "visitor" is not a child, but the beloved one, just as in the case of Harey and Kris Kelvin. Such an assumption leads to the conclusion that the ocean is giving another chance for lovers to reconnect on their second honeymoon. The situation seems to be similar to the relation between the brain and different parts of a body, where Sartorius is the muscle, and the Ocean, the perpetrator. Muscles, such as here the Solarists, act nearly at a level of the unconscious. Solarists are unable to control the contact between them and the Ocean, as it functions at the level far beyond their comprehension.

It is also possible to read the Ocean as the unknown, even womb/woman-like creature, contrasted with the stereotypically male and cold inside of Prometheus, the ship that has brought Kelvin to Solaris. While leaving the capsule of Prometheus, Kelvin observes the Ocean:

The wave crests glinted through the window, the colossal rollers rising and falling in slow motion. Watching the ocean like this one had the illusion—it was surely an illusion—that the station was moving imperceptibly, as though teetering on an invisible base; then it would recover its equilibrium, only to lean the opposite way with the same lazy movement. Thick foam, the color of blood, gathered in the troughs of the waves. For a fraction of a second, my throat tightened and I thought longingly of the Prometheus and its strict discipline; the memory of an existence which seemed a happy one, now gone forever. (Lem 2008: 8)

Mythological Prometheus, the Greek Titan, who stole fire and gave it to humanity, is also associated with being sentenced to terrible torment and agony. In *Solaris*, the element of mythological agony would be an irresistible

desire for contact between the Solarists and the Ocean. The Ocean is depicted as a living, undefined creature:

It "sees" in a different way from ourselves. We do not exist for it in the same sense that we exist for each other. We recognise one another by the appearance of the face and the body. That appearance is a transparent window to the ocean. It introduces itself directly into the brain. (Lem 2008: 193)

Problems in communication between the Solarists and the Ocean appear at a very basic level as it is related to meaning. Humans tend to apply the anthropocentric perspective always when they are confronted with something new for the first time: "Any attempt to understand the motivation of these occurrences is blocked by our own anthropomorphism. Where there are no men, there cannot be motives accessible to men" (Lem 2008: 134). As Manfred Geier, German researcher of Lem's works, points out, "[in] perceiving, human beings orient themselves to *objective meaning*, which objects possess concerning people's vital activity" (Geier 196; italics in the original). This means that, in the context of literature about interspecies communication, the objective meaning would always involve the anthropocentric perspective, as people function in the world of fixed borders created by language and meaning associated with previous experiences and culture. Moreover, Geier mentions that "[s]ince the Solarists are human beings who can perceive through the lenses of their language only what is known and understood by them through the verbalisable experience of their world, the ocean is for them an alien, and therefore necessarily incomprehensible existence" (Geier 195). However, it does not mean that the Ocean is outside the living part of Solaris. It functions as the main axis of life on the Planet and appears to be a rational organism, which reacts in a specific way. According to Jerzy Jarzębski, a Polish professor and researcher of Lem's works,

the ocean seems to understand the language of emotions in its underdeveloped way (...) Maybe emotions (fear, love, sadness, cheerfulness, aggression, etc.) constitute this "first language", the most elementary means of communication between radically different beings

from different orders of existence? In this language, however, it is impossible to communicate the content of rational cognition. (Jarzębski 4)

After some time even the Solarists start to doubt the evil nature of the Ocean: “Perhaps it wishes well...perhaps it wants to please us but doesn’t quite know how to set about the job. It spies out desires in our brains, and only two per cent of mental processes are conscious. That means it knows us better than we know ourselves. We’ve got to reach an understanding with it” (Lem 2008: 183). They have strived to understand the Ocean’s motives, although those motives appeared to be beyond their level of understanding as they were not actions performed on Earth by humans. As Lem points out in his *Fantastic and Futurology*, “the difficulties in establishing contact between the people and the ocean...may represent relations between the individual and society” (Lem 1970: 372). If the language of emotions used by the Ocean causes problems for Solarists, then one may interpret it as pointing to the dusk of humanity. The inability to communicate through emotions, on the most basic and simple level, proves the anthropocentric and sometimes even solipsistic aspirations of humans, that they are superior and should be the only ones to exist. As Lem’s Snaut points out, “[we] need no other worlds. We need mirrors. We do not know what to do with other worlds...We want to find our own idealized image” (Lem 2008: 72). Looking from this unusual perspective, everything is treated only as a reflection of ourselves. Moreover, people tend to reject those parts of reality that are placed outside the human way of understanding. In his main assumptions, Lem is similar to Klaus Holzkamp, an academic psychologist. In 1973 Holzkamp proposed an experiment depicted widely in his book on the topic of sensual knowledge, *Sinnliche Erkenntnis*. He claimed that people tend to change the perception of surrounding contradictions due to their subjective perspective. Holzkamp's views on perspective included a claim that “a real understanding of perception in general psychology would be possible only by including the natural history, the prehistory, and the history of humanity” (Teo 9). Moreover, in his opinion “the meanings of objects originate

through *objectifying* work. By the virtue of this quality, locating meanings in objects is exclusively a characteristic of the human world" (Holzkamp 119; italics in the original). Taking it into consideration, meaning is constructed in perception, which is a subjective part of human nature. Solarists perceive Solaris in the well-known terms transferred from the Earth. They have not reckoned with the fact that the surrounding world may be different from what they already know.

Lem leaves his readers with an overwhelming feeling of emptiness. Of all aspects of humanity, he does not give us the answer to what it means to be human or to the question "What is the Ocean?". What he does, though, is to point out our weaknesses in understanding and perceiving the world from the anthropocentric perspective. He focuses on the slow process of self-collapse, which is an inevitable element of inter-species contact when the characters start to doubt their senses or even to compare themselves with the Other. In *Fantastic and Futurology* he points out that "in the bosom of "other" cultures, as well as in our distant future so far, certainly there will be castles so complicated that our imagination and contemporary concepts are primitive wires" (Lem 2008: 34). We, as humans, may not be capable of understanding some, even the easiest, concepts which involve otherness. This deficiency comes from what Holzkamp calls "the subjective perspective," which results in the narrowed vision of human beings. Recognizing that they are a part of nature, humans are losing their safe and outside perspective from which it is possible to judge every event and every part of the universe. In Lem's narrative we can also notice what Iovino describes as the basic aim of material ecocriticism, the recognition that there is "an alternative vision of a future where narratives and discourses have the power to change, re-enchant, and create the world that comes to our attention only in participatory perceptions" (Iovino 2012: 88). It is this alternative vision that the world of Solaris and Lem's book help us become acquainted with. As readers we become participants in the process of creating meaning throughout the book. To

understand humanity, we should no longer use only the subjective part of our perception as there is a necessity to connect humans with their culture, and nature, that we are only a small part of. To go beyond Barad's opinion that people "are a part of that nature that [they] seek to understand" (in Iovino, Oppermann 1), Lem's novel demonstrates that humanity itself cannot aspire to understand the surrounding world as long as people will hold to the artificial division of culture and nature as two separate entities.

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Abstract

This article offers an analysis of *Solaris* by Stanislaw Lem to demonstrate how human characters tend to perceive reality only in relation to the well-known schemes, where they can apply a limited, anthropocentric perspective. I analyse *Solaris* by Stanislaw Lem as a text that explores and questions the strict and predefined borders of humanity. After the examination of particular names, which Lem chooses for his characters to indicate the relation to the world outside Solaris, I focus on the anthropocentric perspective and its influence on the possible readings of the book.

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A MACHINE LIKE A HUMAN BEING—TRANSHUMANISM AS NEW HUMANISM IN THE MOVIE *EX MACHINA*

Keywords: transhumanism, android, *Ex Machina*

Introduction

With the emergence of humanism in Renaissance people started to believe that they are the greatest and the most important creatures in the universe. However, current rapid technological progress has forced us to change our views. It is more than highly probable that the emergence of a new conscious intelligent entity or species is just a matter of time. This is believed to be a breakthrough not only in the field of technology but also in our perception of humanity. Such approaches as transhumanism examine the blurring line between humans and machines. The assumptions of transhumanism can be found in many different areas of popular culture, especially in modern cinema, such as the movie directed by Alex Garland, *Ex Machina*, in which there are attempts to establish whether machines can reach the same level of consciousness as humans and what features might prove one's humanity.

Definition of Humanism and Transhumanism

Humanism is defined as a world view based on anthropocentrism, the belief that the human being is the centre of the whole universe, the reason and the purpose of everything that exists. It denies the existence of any deity or supernatural driving force. Humanists support development of science and technology as means of meeting human needs (philosophyterms.com).

Nevertheless, they oppose the idea of enhancing human body and achieving eternal life. They are afraid that conquering death would make life purposeless and meaningless. This attitude has led to the emergence of transhumanism.

Transhumanism, in contrast to humanism, does not consider humans to be the most perfect creation in the universe, or even in the evolution of humankind. Max More in his essay "Transhumanism. Towards a Futurist Philosophy" notes that "[h]umanity is a temporary stage along the evolutionary pathway" (More 1990: 11). The main concept of this movement is the desire to exceed limitations of the human body and gain immortality through technological and medical enhancements. Nick Bostrom in his essay "In Defence of Posthuman Dignity" claims that humankind does not depend on nature anymore. In the future, thanks to science and technology, humans will not have to deal with the limitations of their bodies and minds, and will be able to move beyond them. This includes medical devices which are used on everyday basis, and technologies which seem to belong to a science-fiction scenario: human mind digitalization, fusion of the human mind and an artificial body, self-aware artificial intelligence, and, eventually, creation of a posthuman (Bostrom 202).

According to Nick Bostrom, humans are no longer forced to accept natural obstacles, due to rapid medical progress (Bostrom 203). The number of diseases and conditions that are considered to be incurable is shrinking every day. Max More in "On Becoming Posthuman" states that "we are beginning to incorporate our technology into our selves" (More 1994). Myopes and presbyopes are able to see thanks to glasses; insulin pumps and pens reduce the complications of diabetes; prostheses enable physically disabled people to lead normal independent lives. Nick Bostrom in his "In Defence of Posthuman Dignity" emphasizes that, according to transhumanists' assumptions, enhancing devices should be available to all individuals; moreover, he makes a controversial statement that parents should have the freedom to choose the features and improvements of their unborn children (Bostrom 202).

Transhumanists claim that humankind is able to not only correct nature but even to move beyond it. Joan Maloof in her “De-evolution and Transhumanism” states that “the transhumanists [...] advocate continuing and accelerating the transformation of the human condition through technological means—in other words, turning our tools on ourselves to create superhumans (posthumans)” (Maloof 216). The tools mentioned by Maloof include both biology-oriented fields, such as genetic engineering and neurobiology, and areas dealing with electronics, like, for example, research on artificial intelligence and robotics. Max More acknowledges that it is only a matter of time before nanotechnology enables us to build every object “atom-by-atom,” which includes also human (or rather posthuman) bodies (More 1994).

The more the line between the natural and the artificial is blurred, the more urgent it becomes to reassess what can be perceived as human. This is the reason behind the popularity of the figure of the posthuman in popular culture.

The Figure of the Android in Popular Culture

The ongoing progress of technology and science is the reason behind the increasing interest in predictions about humankind’s “techno-future”. According to Magdalena Radkowska-Walkowicz, due to technological progress boundaries between reality and fantasy have been blurred. The capabilities of science are oddly fantastic and sometimes seem to be less real or probable than science fiction (Radkowska-Walkowicz 137). Every new discovery, especially in fields concerning interference in human body but also in studies on artificial intelligence and robotics, inspires an enormous number of pop cultural works. A figure very frequently used in popular culture that can be perceived as the embodiment of transhuman ideas is the android.

Definitions of the term ‘android’ proposed by different authors, dictionaries, and encyclopedias can vary slightly, although the basic concept remains the same in every definition. According to Online Etymology Dictionary, the word ‘android’ derives from the combination of two Greek words: ‘andros’, which

means 'man', and '-eides', which means 'form, shape' (www.etymonline.com). Therefore, the etymological and original meaning suggests that an android is some kind of a creation whose form resembles the human body. William S. Haney, in his book *Cyberculture, Cyborgs and Science Fiction: Consciousness and the Posthuman*, compares the android with an automaton, which is simply a non-autonomous machine whose moves have previously been programmed, and a robot, a machine that can have human-like shape, but not necessarily, and which can be either "autonomous or semiautonomous". The common feature shared by the android, the automaton and the robot is the fact that they all have an artificial, non-biological form. However, androids, as their name indicates, have to be humanoid (Haney 20). Magdalena Radkowska-Walkowicz, in her book *Od Golema do Terminatora: Wizerunki sztucznego człowieka w kulturze*, connects the android ("an anthropomorphic robot") with the robot, which does not have to be humanoid and which is created for a certain purpose, and the cyborg, which is a creature made of both organic and artificial parts. Radkowska-Walkowicz claims that these definitions are not precise and may blend together (Radkowska-Walkowicz 27–28). The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction emphasizes the fact that contemporary android "[is] usually [...] an artificial human of organic substance" (<http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com>). This definition contrasts not only with the definition proposed by Haney but also with the depiction of the posthuman moving beyond organic body. A wider definition can be found in M. Keith Booker's book, *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction in Literature*. According to this dictionary, the term android refers to an artificial human which can be not only organic or "electromechanical" but can even combine features or parts of both. Booker, in his definition, also indicates that the image of the android in culture questions "the very definition of the human" (Booker 26) since, although the android resembles the human in form (and sometimes in other features, such as self-consciousness), it is not considered to be one.

The Figure of the Android in the Movie *Ex Machina*

The main plot of Alex Garland's *Ex Machina* focuses on three characters: Nathan, Caleb and Ava. Nathan is an extremely famous programmer and the creator of the most popular search engine, Blue Bird, whereas Caleb is one of his employees who has been invited to Nathan's private research facility to test his latest creation: Ava. Ava is an android with very advanced artificial intelligence. Caleb's role is to check if Nathan has managed to create a conscious AI.

Ava has a humanoid artificial body. Her face, hands and feet are covered with artificial skin, whereas the rest of her body is either covered with a net-like or scale-like metal coating, or is left transparent. Her electronic internal organs, which are visible through the transparent parts, hum all the time. This sound becomes louder when Ava moves, and abates when she sits or stands still. These features intensify the feeling that Ava is a mechanical artificial being. Her skeleton is made of a shiny metal-like material. Ava has visible secondary sex characteristics typical for women, such as breasts, small waist, fine facial features. Her face has been made with extreme attention to detail; furthermore, it enables her to perfectly imitate human facial expressions. Ava's body is made of modules which can be attached and detached. With an artificial body, replaceable parts, and possibility of transmitting the mind from the android's brain to a computer and back, Ava can live almost forever or at least significantly longer than humans.

Describing what is inside Ava's head, Nathan divides it into parts: hardware and software. Hardware is like a brain, physical housing for the mind. To make it, Nathan used structural gel; therefore, it does not look like an ordinary computer or hard drive. Ava's hardware has the shape of a smooth human brain made of transparent glass or plastic filled with thick bluish fluid. Nathan claims that AI cannot reach its full potential closed in a stiff and rigid environment, since human brains do not work in such way either, so he disposed of circuitry. He tells Caleb that he "needed something that could arrange and rearrange on a

molecular level but keep its form when required" (*Ex Machina* 0:37). This structure becomes stable when Ava learns something, and more fluid to enable flow of thoughts. Nathan has been able to create an artificial organ, even as complex as the human brain, functioning like its organic archetype. Ava's software, which may be called the mind, is Blue Book, the search engine created by Nathan. According to him, search engines are devices that illustrate not what people think, but how they think. The thought process is based on the relation between an impulse and the response to that impulse. Furthermore, Ava is able to recognize and react to facial expressions when she interacts with someone. In order to achieve this, Nathan has been illegally downloading data, including audio and visual recordings from every smart phone that has a camera, a microphone and a data transmitter. That procedure gave him access to "a limitless resource of vocal and facial interaction" (*Ex Machina* 0:37), which he could later use to program Ava's behavior.

As already mentioned, Ava undergoes the modified version of the Turing Test. The Turing Test takes place basically, according to Caleb, "[w]hen a human interacts with a computer. And if the human doesn't know they're interacting with a computer, the test is passed" (*Ex Machina* 0:10). Caleb is the human component of the Turing Test. However, Nathan has changed the test: Caleb interacts with Ava face-to-face; therefore, he is obviously aware of the fact that his interlocutor is a machine. Nathan claims that Ava is on such a high technological level that if she were hidden, she would pass the test without any doubts. Therefore, they meet in so-called "sessions" and speak with each other through a transparent plastic or glass surface. Nevertheless, Nathan finally confesses that the real test was to check if Ava is able to convince Caleb to help her escape from Nathan's facility. It is supposed to prove that Ava is a true AI, because she has to use features characteristic only for humans, not machines, such as "self-awareness, imagination, manipulation, sexuality, empathy" (*Ex Machina* 1:25). It is proved in the movie that Ava indeed possesses all these qualities.

Ava proves her self-awareness during the very first conversation with Caleb. When she introduces herself to him she tells him “you can see that I’m a machine” (*Ex Machina* 0:14). She knows that she is different from Nathan and Caleb and that she is not a human being. She uses imagination in her conversations with Caleb. Some of the questions he asks her require improvisation. Gajewska proposes the hypothesis that anthropomorphic robots may be able to control us (Gajewska 172). This hypothesis seems to apply to the case of Caleb and Ava. The android manages to manipulate Caleb and use him as a tool to escape from Nathan and the prison he kept her in. Ava also uses her sexuality to create a bond between her and Caleb which she can later use to convince him to help her. During the third session she openly speaks with Caleb about their supposed date and flirts with him. When she later undresses, her moves are slow and full of sexual tension, as she knows that Caleb is watching her on the television in his room. Nathan tells him that “Ava’s not pretending to like you. And her flirting isn’t an algorithm to fake you out” (*Ex Machina* 0:50). He lies, since Ava is actually pretending to be interested in Caleb. However, the fact that her flirting is not an algorithm may be true since flirting is a way of manipulation which according to Nathan is a proof of consciousness, not programming.

Discovering a footage of previous androids and the fact that Kyoko, Nathan’s servant, is not human, as Caleb thought before, but one of Nathan’s androids, strongly confuses him. Caleb encounters a basic ontological question: “what does it mean to be human?” and he realizes that he is not able to answer it. Donna Haraway states in her essay “A Cyborg Manifesto” that due to the emergence of the posthuman “the certainty of what counts as nature [...] is undermined, probably fatally” (Haraway 294). Caleb starts to question not only whether he is a human being but also if his body is biological. This feeling of uncertainty is so intense that he cuts his skin with a razor to check what is under it. Caleb seems to be afraid that he may discover his body is made of the same metal-like material as Ava’s, Kyoko’s and the rest of the androids’. David

Bell in his “Leaving the meat behind” states that “posthumanism [...] raises numerous questions about what makes us human: our minds, our bodies, our mind-bodies?” (Bell 147). Based on the result of Nathan’s test and the fact that Ava proves to be conscious, the answer to this question should be: the mind. However, Ava dresses up as a human woman a few times during the whole movie. It suggests that the mind is not the only thing that determines who (or what) can be perceived as a human being. Therefore, according to what Bell suggests, the figure of the posthuman is a vector and embodiment of this ontological uncertainty. N. Katherine Hayles claims in her book *How We Became Posthumans: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* that “cybernetics radically destabilizes the ontological foundations of what counts as human” (Hayles 24). The technology that Nathan uses is so advanced that creating and bringing to life creatures that not only look but even think like humans becomes possible. According to Hayles, definitions exist (or existed) due to the fact that they have stable origins (Hayles 285). The creation of a conscious artificial human being destabilizes this basis since a human being can become a life-creating God and a machine can become human, and questions the meaning of such concepts as mind, body, consciousness, human being. The boundary between what can be counted as human and non-human is blurred.

Final Thoughts

Movies like *Ex Machina* make it difficult to answer the basic ontological question “what it means to be a human being” and point to the fact that humans may not be the only conscious beings anymore. The question that is constantly asked by transhumanists is what makes us human: our bodies, our minds, or our minds and bodies. In the movie, Ava covers herself with artificial skin, wears a wig and a dress to resemble a human being as much as possible. It may indicate that the mind is not the only thing that determines who (or what) can be perceived as a human being since, as it was previously stated, Ava has proved her human-like level of consciousness.

However, the motif of Ava's consciousness can be interpreted differently. It can be inferred that Ava has never achieved consciousness, since the escape may not be her true desire. She is trying to escape from the facility because she was programmed to do so. She is not conscious—she simply follows her programming and her behavior is just a slight improvisation on her programming.

Nevertheless, it may also mean that people too are programmed—by society, rules, ethics, religion, their own genes. Human consciousness and identities are developed on the basis of a set of rules established by the society and biological desires and needs. It is suggested in the movie that humans seem to be, just like Ava, programmed to achieve certain goals by using certain tools and methods. People are like the machines they create, but with a considerably more developed ability to improvise.

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Abstract

In my article, I focus on the emerging worldview, transhumanism, which is becoming more and more popular nowadays due to rapid technological development. The main concern of philosophers, anthropologists and other researchers has started to shift from the human to the new being, posthuman, that is supposed to be the final stage in human advancement. The more the line between the artificial and the natural blurs, the more urgent it becomes to reassess what can be perceived as human. This issue inspires not only cultural experts but also people connected with popular culture, such as filmmakers. This subject has been raised by Alex Garland in his movie *Ex Machina*. A female android, Ava, one of the main characters in the movie, becomes the embodiment of uncertainty whether the machine can be perceived as human and what distinguishes humans from machines, and makes viewers ask themselves the question if the machine should be given the same rights as humans if it looks, acts and has similar desires as a human.

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ALMOST HOLLYWOOD: THE ENGLISH AND AMERICAN INFLUENCES ON AUSTRALIAN CINEMA AND ITS RENAISSANCE IN THE 1970S

Keywords: Australia, Australian Film Commission, cinema, *Mad Max*, Ozploitation, *Wake in Fright*, *Walkabout*

“Today there is no industry in this country making feature films”, rather bluntly states an Australian newsreel, “we rank with Ecuador and Iceland, which, like us, are the great non-filmmakers” (*Not Quite Hollywood* 4:35). “Today” in this particular case refers to the cultural decline of the 1960s. The government, led by Robert Gordon Menzies, was not quite sure what it cared about more: the old English colonial heritage or the new American hegemony (Haltof 30). What it very clearly cared little about was Australia’s own culture, a fragile thing indeed in a country whose nationhood dates only as far back as 1901 (Teoplitz 7). When put beside the more celebrated British and American film industries, Australian cinema was perceived as an impoverished and uncultured cousin from the Outback, a pariah in his own land. Thus, it was allowed to deteriorate and in the 1960s ended up on the verge of atrophy (Haltof 30). Only 17 feature films were made in Australia during that decade (Haltof 17).

Bushrangers and Stockmen—The Golden Age of Australian Cinema

The situation was not always so grim. In fact, the Australian film industry was once vibrant and enjoyed some major artistic and financial successes on both local and international scale. Its history is as long as the history of independent Australia itself. In 1900, the Salvation Army produced *Soldiers of the Cross*,

considered to be the first narrative drama film presentation in the world (salvationarmy.org.au). Even more significant was the 1906 motion picture *The Story of Ned Kelly Gang*, directed by Charles Tait. The first in a long line of bushranger films, it exemplifies the peculiar mixture of outside (in this case American) influences and uniquely Australian 'flavor', a mixture that would define the cinema of Australia for many decades to come. The American inspiration was obvious; Edwin S. Porter's seminal *The Great Train Robbery* had come out just three years earlier and virtually established the Western film as a genre, delineating its basic conventions. Australian filmmakers, such as Tait, did not fail to notice that these conventions would work not only in the American Wild West, but in the equally lonesome and lawless scenery of colonial Antipodes (Jackson and Shirley: nfsa.gov.au). The bushranger films would deliver as many gunfights, robberies and horseback chases as their American counterparts.

However, the Australians would not merely imitate the Western pictures, but rework their key tropes into an original film genre. Unlike Westerns, which only occasionally depicted real individuals, such as Billy the Kid or Wyatt Earp, more often using fictional heroes and villains, the bushranger genre focused on historical figures, the Australian outlaws who took up robbery as a way of life, men such as Ned Kelly, Mad Dog Morgan and Harry Readford. Another significant difference was the moral ambivalence; before the arrival of Revisionist Western in the late 1960s, Western cinema preferred a clear division into good and bad guys. The bushrangers, on the other hand, were simultaneously criminals and folk heroes, using armed robbery not only as a source of income but also, at least in the eyes of the Australian public, as a challenge to the colonial power and an expression of the independent spirit of the continent (Teoplitz 9). Finally, unlike Westerns, the bushranger films typically ended in tragedy, with the heroic criminals suffering their historical fate: either an execution or death in a shoot-out. The genre proved successful enough to attract the attention of the acclaimed English filmmaker Tony

Richardson (of *Tom Jones* fame), who in 1970 directed his own version of the *Ned Kelly* story, starring the rock star from Kent, Mick Jagger, as the Australian legend.

The bushranger genre is perhaps the clearest example of successfully combining American and British formulas with strong Australian elements, but it is hardly unique in that regard. The English film company Ealing Studios, best known for its comedies, produced several important pictures in Australia, the most significant being *The Overlanders* (1946), the story of an enormous cattle drive across 1,600 miles from Western Australia to Queensland. The picture, starring the Australian leading man Chips Rafferty as a heroic stockman, was a possible source of inspiration for the similarly themed Howard Hawks classic Western, *Red River* (1948) (Haltorf 29). Rafferty at that point was already a big star in Australia thanks to Charles Chauvel's *Forty Thousand Horsemen* (1940), a World War I epic which combined the blueprint of a Hollywood spectacle with the celebration of the Australian cultural idiom known as 'mateship' (a particularly strong bond of friendship and loyalty between males of equal standing) (Haltorf 112).

In the 1960s, however, those days of glory were long over. Instead of using Hollywood as a source of inspiration, the Australian film industry was in danger of being substituted by it. Politically, Australia was also increasingly under the influence of the USA, which led to its active participation in the Vietnam War. This disastrous conflict, which undoubtedly reminded many of the tragic Gallipoli campaign, served as a wakeup call for the Australian society. Accompanied by the general disillusionment with the American hegemony and the sudden explosion of counter-culture movements, it led to significant political and cultural upheavals (*Not Quite Hollywood* 3:11). Menzies, the longest-serving prime minister in Australian history, finally retired in 1966. Two of his successors, John Gorton (in office from 1968 to 1971) and Gough Whitlam (1972–1975), proved to be deeply concerned with the preservation and development of Australian culture, including the film industry

(primeministers.naa.gov.au). Their efforts culminated in the establishment of the Australian Film Commission in 1975 (Haltof: 36). The purpose of this agency was the promotion and financing of prestigious films that would once again put Australia on the cinematic world map. Simultaneously, numerous private investors became interested in financing independent, genre and exploitation cinema (Haltof 63).

***Walkabout* and *Wake in Fright*—The Ur-texts of New Australian Cinema**

The year 1971 saw the release of two pictures that would prove highly influential for the further development of Australian cinema. Both were co-productions (one with Great Britain, the other with the USA), both starred British leads and neither was directed by an Australian; they also proved equally unpopular with the Australian audience (Haltof 43). And yet the two films, *Walkabout* and *Wake in Fright*, would delineate the two main paths Australian film industry would take in the next two decades. Additionally, the fact that both pictures were nominated for the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival greatly increased the prestige of Australian cinema on the international scene.

Walkabout was directed by the English filmmaker Nicholas Roeg, based on the novel by another Englishman, Donald Gordon Payne (writing under the pseudonym James Vance Marshall), and starring the English actress Jenny Agutter in the central performance. Still, the film is set in the Australian outback, features an Aboriginal actor David Gulpilil in a major role, and its narrative is built around the theme of the eponymous 'walkabout', an Aboriginal rite of passage. The story begins with a tragic picnic, during which a seemingly cultured white father goes berserk and tries to murder his two children; when his attempt fails, he commits suicide. The two siblings, a teenage girl and her younger brother, are left stranded in the middle of the outback. They are saved by a chance encounter with a young Aborigine who is undergoing the ritual of walkabout. He shows the siblings how to survive in the

wilderness and accompanies them on their journey back to civilization. Tragically, the communication barrier leads to the death of the Aborigine; after his courtship advances are rejected by the confused girl, he also commits suicide.

Walkabout would serve in many ways as a blueprint for the later prestigious Australian pictures financed by the AFC and meant to create a new artistic vision of the land. Even though the film is nominally set in the 1970s, its remote scenery and the contrast between the white civilization and Aboriginal way of life evokes the memory of the colonial relations. The AFC pictures would often focus on these relations and the colonial period in search of the Australian identity, characterized by a sense of independence and primal innocence, and juxtaposed against the imperialistic and corrupt English identity. The encounter between the two would usually end in tragedy. In the bushranger films, the main hero invariably died at the hands of the colonial government. In war films such as *Breaker Morant* (1980) and *Gallipoli* (1981), Australian soldiers were sacrificed or betrayed by the English military. In *Walkabout*, the source of tragedy is a lack of understanding rather than malice, but the outcome is the same; the sole major Australian character (both siblings are played by English actors and seem to represent European civilization) is destroyed. The fact that this character is Aborigine is also significant. Australian cinema would often feature Aborigines in prominent roles. In fact, the first Australian picture shot in color, *Jedda* (1955), starred two Aborigine leads and focused on the native cultural and racial issues. The aforementioned actor in *Walkabout*, David Gulpilil, would later become a star in Australia, playing memorable parts in such pictures as *The Last Wave* and *Crocodile Dundee*. Finally, the seemingly innocent picnic that ends in tragedy would become something of a staple in Australian cinema, thanks to pictures such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *Long Weekend*.

Wake in Fright had an even greater influence on the New Wave of Australian cinema. However, the films it influenced were not so much the government-

approved prestige pictures, but rather the exploitation and genre productions, especially in the field of horror. The film was directed by the Canadian Ted Kotcheff, who would later gain international fame as the director of the original Rambo movie, *First Blood* (1982) and the morbidly black comedy *Weekend at Bernie's* (1989). The filmmaker's predilection for violent genre cinema is already visible in *Wake in Fright*, even though the film is typically classified as psychological drama. It tells the simple story of a young country teacher (played by the English actor Gary Bond) who is stranded in a remote mining town in the Outback. There, surrounded by its vicious and primitive inhabitants, he gradually descends into madness. This personal downfall culminates in a harrowing sequence of a sadistic kangaroo hunt.

Kotcheff's film suffered poor box office returns in Australia (ozmovies.com.au), in all probability due to its provocative nature. The unflinching and uncompromising depiction of the morally degenerate community could be perceived as an attack against the Australian society in general, especially the caricatural portrayal of mateship and the brutal treatment of the country mascot. Alcoholism, gambling and violence are omnipresent. Equally shocking to the audience was the appearance of the national treasure Chips Rafferty, often considered the quintessentially Australian actor, as a corrupt police officer who sets the unfortunate main character on his path towards degradation. The Outback scenery, depicted in *Walkabout* as mythical and fascinating, is turned by Kotcheff and his crew into hell on Earth. Interestingly, the film is also based on a novel, but his time written by an Australian author, Kenneth Cook. This fact did not, however, protect the film from accusations of outsider bias (Burton: www.worldcinemaguide.com).

On the surface, it would seem that Australian cinema should decidedly reject this unflattering vision of the country. And yet, what seemed unacceptable in a 'serious' film, was readily absorbed by the genre and exploitation cinema, typically recognized as divorced from reality and therefore less harshly

evaluated in terms of depiction. Even though *Wake in Fright* is a drama, its nightmarish esthetics clearly belong to the horror genre. In fact, the aforementioned kangaroo hunt sequence was copied by the killer pig picture *Razorback* (1984), as was the depiction of ‘ockers’ (uncultured, provincial Australians) as sadistic barbarians rather similar to the cannibal family from *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. This portrayal also influenced the villains of numerous thriller and action pictures, such as *Fair Game* (1986), in which a female animal sanctuary director battles three kangaroo hunters. Finally, the appearance of Donald Pleasence in *Wake in Fright* as a misanthropic doctor should also be mentioned. This English actor enjoyed a long and varied career, including Roman Polański's *Cul-de-sac* and the Bond movie *You Only Live Twice*, but is now mainly associated with horror and exploitation cinema, especially due to his appearance in John Carpenter's *Halloween* and its sequels (Weedman: pleasence.com). Pleasence would later appear in several Australian genre pictures, including *Race for the Yankee Zephyr* (1981), filmed in New Zealand but produced by the Australian exploitation king Anthony I. Ginnane (Alderton 24). As the AFC was diligently working on the creation of a respectable, ‘official’ film industry, independent producers like Ginnane were equally busy with what would later become known as Ozploitation—low-budget genre cinema (Kuipers: aso.gov.au).

Psychopaths and Crocodiles—Horror Down Under

Among the different genres of popular cinema, horror was perhaps most eagerly embraced by the new Australian film industry. The low production costs of a typical horror picture were undoubtedly a major attraction for independent filmmakers. A work of this genre required neither elaborate sets nor complex set pieces; generous amounts of fake blood were usually enough to attract the horror audience. Additionally, *Wake in Fright* has already proven that the desolate Australian landscape could be used very effectively to evoke a sense of dread. Finally, horror cinema, with its clearly delineated subgenres (for

example gothic, slasher, animal attack) and instantly identifiable figures (ghost, vampire, werewolf) was relatively easy to market. Financial and critical successes of very inexpensive American slasher films, such as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* or *Halloween*, attracted small Australian producers to a genre that promised major returns on minimal investments (Stanton filmink.com.au).

Possibly the most prominent Australian horror director of the late 1970s and early 80s was Richard Franklin. Unlike many genre directors who had no formal education in the field of cinema, he studied filmmaking at the University of Southern California. There, he became acquainted with Alfred Hitchcock, whose body of work would influence many of Franklin's own pictures. After returning to Australia, Franklin directed several soft-core erotic films (Graham: sensesofcinema.com). His first significant work, however, was *Patrick*, made in 1978. *Patrick* was a part of a horror sub-genre popular in the second half of the 70s called the 'psichopath' film. According to Kim Newman, one of the most influential British horror critics, psichopaths are "seemingly ordinary individuals with hidden, awesome paranormal powers. The wish-fulfilment fantasy element of the psichopath film is obvious. The usual formula finds the psichopath humiliated, abused and pushed beyond endurance, whereupon immense mental powers are unleashed in an orgy of mass destruction" (Newman 65). Other films in this sub-genre include the American *Jennifer* and British *The Medusa Touch* (both in 1978) and the Australian *Harlequin* (1979). The tale of catatonic Patrick, who stalks his nurse with the use of telekinesis, is a fairly typical example of a psichopath film, but it also includes a clear reference to Hitchcock, with the eponymous character's backstory including *Psycho*-style incestuous undertones and matricide. The film proved popular enough to be plagiarized by Italian exploitation filmmakers, under the title *Patrick Still Lives* (1980). Unlike Franklin's fairly restrained original, the Italian offering substituted suspense with explicit sex and violence (*Not Quite Hollywood* 31:43). Nevertheless, the mere existence of the unauthorized sequel was a proof of Australian horror cinema's growing international stature.

Franklin next directed a more openly Hitchcockian picture, *Roadgames* (1981). The tale of a truck driver and a female hitchhiker pursuing a serial killer on a lonely Australian highway was strongly influenced by the *Rear Window*. Additionally, the main female part was played by Jamie Lee Curtis, the daughter of *Psycho* star Janet Leigh and a horror icon in her own right after the success of *Halloween*. The use of two American actors in the main parts (the truck driver was played by Stacy Keach) sparked some controversy in the increasingly self-protective Australian film industry, but also helped with international distribution of the picture (Murray and Ryan 245). Franklin's effective use of the two Hollywood stars and his capable treatment of the Hitchcockian material indicated that the director was ready to move back to the US, where he confirmed his title of 'Australian Hitchcock' with *Psycho II* (1983), an unexpectedly successful sequel to the British director's famous thriller.

Hitchcock's influence on Australian horror cinema was not limited to Franklin. The master of suspense established the conventions of the animal attack sub-genre with his 1963 classic, *The Birds*. The idea of the natural world turning against humans was sure to attract the attention of genre filmmakers on a continent famous for its particularly dangerous fauna. Everett De Roche, who later wrote the screenplays for both *Patrick* and *Roadgames*, reworked the ideas found in *The Birds* into *Long Weekend* (1978), directed by Colin Eggleston. The story of a married couple that embarks on yet another disastrous cinematic picnic pointed directly to Hitchcock's film in a scene where a radio message informs the viewers of unexplained bird attacks. It also shared the enigmatic, nightmarish tone of *The Birds*, unlike the more action-oriented and visceral American animal attack pictures such as *Jaws*. The entire landscape in the *Long Weekend* seems to turn against the doomed protagonists, not only in a series of direct attacks (by an eagle or a possum), but also through threatening noises and seemingly supernatural events, like a corpse of a sea cow slowly approaching the camp. The animal aggression is presented as a form of revenge against the central couple for their numerous crimes against nature, which

points to the ecological undertones of the film. De Roche, like Hitchcock, intentionally focused on typically benign animals rather than obvious predators like sharks or crocodiles. Perhaps this contributed to the greater popularity of the picture overseas than in Australia. The local audience was too familiar with the fauna presented on the screen to feel properly threatened by it (*Not Quite Hollywood* 33:49).

This would also explain why other Australian animal attack directors went more in the direction of *Jaws*, opting for large, clearly dangerous creatures as the source of horror. Such animals include the eponymous wild boar in *Razorback* (1984) and a saltwater crocodile in *Dark Age* (1987). Both films, however, offer interesting twists on the Hollywood formula. Russel Mulcahy's *Razorback* (again written by De Roche) borrows certain elements from Spielberg's blockbuster, including the figures of an experienced hunter who is killed by the beast he pursues and an amateur who ultimately defeats the creature, but those familiar characters are put into a surreal, dreamlike scenery reminiscent of *Wake in Fright*. The main character is an American tourist, and the film uses the outsider perspective to defamiliarize the Australian landscape and turn into in a place of nightmares. In an especially effective sequence, the hero stumbles through the desert pursued by hallucinatory visions of demonic creatures. Another feature borrowed straight from *Wake in Fright* is the introduction of two human villains, a pair of sadistic ockers who are depicted as more savage and terrifying than the giant boar.

The portrayal of human antagonists as more dangerous than the killer animal is a key element of Arch Nicholson's *Dark Age*, one of Australia's most unique and surprising horror films. The picture initially follows the *Jaws* formula: a crocodile starts killing people on Queensland beaches, a heroic ranger is tasked with stopping the animal. The familiar plot suddenly changes direction with the introduction of two Aboriginal characters (one of whom is played by David Gulpilil). The Aborigines inform the ranger that the crocodile is a sacred being that has to be protected from a gang of ruthless poachers. *Dark*

Age disposes of the animal attack clichés halfway through and becomes an adventure film in which the human protagonists try to save the animal rather than kill it. The film, with its combination of scares, action and Aboriginal mysticism, perhaps better than any other motion picture exemplifies the uniqueness and eccentricity of Ozploitation. It also serves as a reminder that Australian genre cinema has more to offer than horror pictures. In fact, the country's most popular genre picture is a combination of science fiction and Western.

Mad Max—The Pinnacle of Australian Genre Cinema

The place of *Mad Max* (1979) in the canon of Australian cinema is a peculiar one. It is arguably the most famous Australian film of all time, and was in fact the most profitable motion picture ever made at the time of its release (Robertson 34); yet it had much more influence abroad (especially in the US and Italy) than in Australia itself, where very few later productions tried to imitate its style or explore its themes. It is a film with a clearly Australian setting, with accents so thick and slang so specific that the US distributor chose to redub it with American voices; yet it is sometimes accused of lacking a strong Australian 'flavor' (Haltorf 67). It is also a film often confused with and overshadowed by its more popular and significantly different sequels. Nevertheless, it remains a key title in the history of Australian cinema and perhaps its most successful attempt at using Hollywood and European influences and reworking them into an original work of cinematic art.

The film's director, George Miller, began his career as a medical doctor, working in an emergency room of a big Sydney hospital. This allowed him to witness what he considered a typically Australian brand of bloodshed—one that employed cars rather than guns. "In Australia we had autocide rather than homicide" (*Not Quite Hollywood* 1:13:47), he stated in an interview. Dealing with numerous victims of car accidents, he was inspired to work on a film about vehicular mayhem, an exaggerated, nightmarish vision of his country's

highways and the violence that took place there. To make this heightened reality more convincing, he chose to set *Mad Max* in the near future, a dystopian vision of a world slowly falling apart due to an oil crisis. In the sequels, this vision would be further developed into a fully post-apocalyptic wasteland ravaged by a nuclear holocaust. In this setting, a bloody conflict takes place between the eponymous lawman (young Mel Gibson in his first significant film role) and a gang of marauding bikers, a conflict that leads to the destruction of Max's family and his descent into vengeful madness.

The cinematic sources of inspiration for *Mad Max* seem very clear for the most part. The basic plot resembles a typical Spaghetti Western, with a violent antihero seeking revenge for the death of his loved ones against a group of sadistic outlaws. Gun violence of a Western picture is translated into car violence in a scene where Max challenges a homicidal driver into a game of chicken, an automobile version of a traditional duel. In fact, only a single secondary villain is actually shot in the entire film. Most characters die in car crashes, are run over or burn alive in their vehicles, with the director staying true to the central theme of automobiles as weapons. The use of a motorcycle gang as bad guys suggests inspiration by Sandy Harbutt's Australian crime drama *Stone* (1974); in fact, Hugh Keays-Byrne appears in both pictures as a violent biker. Finally, the dystopian scenery is reminiscent of several earlier American anti-apocalyptic pictures, such as *Panic In Year Zero!* (1962) and *A Boy and His Dog* (1975), as well as Roger Zelazny's novel *Damnation Alley* (1969), which was also adapted in 1977.

As was already mentioned, the success of *Mad Max* had little direct impact on Australian cinema. Instead of a wave of post-apocalyptic action fantasies, only few pictures took some inspiration from Miller's work. Two most obvious examples starred Steve Bisley, who appeared in *Mad Max* as Max's doomed best friend, Goose. *The Chain Reaction* (1980) was an action film that combined a threat of nuclear disaster (although on a local rather than global scale) with generous doses of vehicular mayhem. A more offbeat picture was the 1987

Hard Knuckle, in which Bisley played a drifter participating in futuristic billiard matches. The theme of post-apocalyptic sports would be later developed in the Australian-American *Blood of Heroes* (1989), although quite understandingly billiard would be substituted with a particularly vicious form of rugby. A significantly more cinematic sport, rugby was also already associated in Australia with brutality. Finally, there were the direct *Mad Max* sequels, most importantly *The Road Warrior* (1981), which moved the series into an openly fantastical setting filled with surreal figures of barbarians and mutants. The films also boasted an increasingly international cast, which culminated in English actor Tom Hardy taking over the role of Max himself in the 2015 *Fury Road*. The casting, as well as growing involvement of a major Hollywood studio (in this case Warner Bros), led to the series becoming less and less Australian with each installment.

This movement of the franchise away from Australia was an understandable development considering that *Mad Max*, more than any other Australian film, became a truly international phenomenon. Hollywood jumped on the post-apocalyptic bandwagon early on. Kurt Russel, a major American action star, admitted being greatly impressed with Miller's work. A private screening of *Mad Max* during his visit in Australia encouraged him to work with John Carpenter on their own dystopian thriller, *Escape from New York* (1981), set in a penal colony on Manhattan Island populated by colorful gangs of criminals not unlike Max's foes (Hewitt 135). Other American pictures that followed the *Mad Max* formula of combining post-apocalyptic scenery with Western conventions included *Wheels of Fire* (1985), *Steel Dawn* (1987), *Hell Comes to Frogtown* (1988) and *Cyborg* (1989) (Williams: empireonline.com). Even more enthusiastic about following Miller's example, and much less scrupulous about openly plagiarizing his work, were once again the Italians. A whole wave of low-budget action pictures about biker gangs terrorizing the futuristic deserts of Spain (where many of the narratively similar Spaghetti Westerns were also shot) flooded the screens. Some of these films, for example *2019—After the Fall*

of New York (1983), also copied Carpenter's *Escape*. Others, such as *Atlantis Interceptors* (also 1983) transplanted the villainous bikers and action set pieces of *Mad Max* into other contexts, in this case the eponymous sunken city. The influence of Miller's picture was not limited to cinema; in Alan Moore's acclaimed graphic novel *Watchmen* (1986–1987) a scene in which the character of Rorschach forces a criminal to choose between sawing off his own leg or dying in a fire appears to be borrowed directly from the climax of the first *Mad Max* (Moore and Gibbons 25). The scene would famously return to the big screen in *Saw* (2004), directed by the Australian filmmaker James Wan (*Not Quite Hollywood* 1:17:38). Wan's recent international success as a horror and superhero film director indicates that the continuous exchange between Hollywood and the Australian film industry is far from over.

Final Thoughts

In the 1970s and 80s several countries, most notably Italy and Turkey, tried to imitate Hollywood pictures in hope of creating a vibrant genre cinema industry. Such attempts proved largely unsuccessful. The mechanical use of American templates, coupled with small budgets and often the lack of technical expertise, led them into an empty cycle of short-lived genre trends. With the notable exception of Italian Spaghetti Western, these trends led to the production of mostly forgettable imitations of more popular Hollywood titles, often only remembered as *Turkish Star Wars* (*The Man Who Saved the World*, 1982) or *Turkish Rambo* (*Rampage*, 1986). Unlike the filmmakers behind those pictures, Australians treated American and British cinema as a base on which to build a rich, unique and in some cases exceptional body of work, which in turn inspired other film industries, including those the Australians borrowed from in the first place. The almost Herculean effort of overcoming the deep crisis Australian cinema found itself in halfway through the 20th century was a significant achievement in itself, but the fact that this renaissance led to the creation of such important and influential pictures as *Wake in Fright* and *Mad Max* makes it

one of the major turning points in the history of world cinema. As the Australian cinema continues to produce memorable and successful films, such as Ivan Sen's neo-westerns (*Mystery Road*, *Goldstone*) and Jennifer Kent's horror movies (*The Babadook*, *The Nightingale*), it is important to remember how close to disappearance the entire industry once was and how the disaster was ultimately prevented thanks to the efforts of institutions and individuals discussed in the article.

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Filmography

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Abstract

In the article, I discuss the influence of Hollywood and British cinema on Australian films, specifically during the revival of film production in Australia in the 1970s and 80s. This renaissance came after a period of inactivity caused, to a large degree, by the Australian government's lack of interest in supporting and developing local culture. This attitude changed in the late 60s and early 70s after a period of social and political upheaval. Institutions such as the Australian Film Commission supported the production of prestigious, artistic pictures often inspired by British templates. At the same time, private investors financed the development of genre and exploitation cinema modelled after popular American pictures. The Australian film industry proved

so successful in using these inspirations that it became a major player in world cinema, influencing in turn both American and European productions.

BOOK REVIEWS

Joanna Antoniak
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**LIVING BETWEEN THE BORDER AND THE CENTRE—THE MIGRANT
CONDITION IN MODERN BRITAIN**

Editor: Nikesh Shukla

Title: *The Good Immigrant*

Publisher: Unbound, London 2016

Pages: 254

Keywords: postcolonial literature, language and identity, minority writing, multicultural society

In his ground-breaking work, *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha introduces the concept of cultural hybridity and the role it plays not only in the modern post-colonial discourse, but, most importantly, in the multicultural, post-colonial, and postmodern societies. According to Bhabha (159), hybridity is a condition and a process of creating a new identity, one that is neither that of the colonizer nor of the colonized (or, in the case of the diasporic and immigrant communities, neither that of the host culture nor of the immigrant one); therefore, hybridity escapes the classical binary opposition and, instead, creates a third space within which migrants can construct their own identity.

It is this condition of hybridity, of being a second or third generation migrant in modern Britain that constitutes the central theme of *The Good Immigrant*, a collection of twenty-one essays and personal stories. Edited by Nikesh Shukla, the collection contains short (no longer than twenty pages) essays and stories whose authors—writers, journalists, and artists—describe their experiences as people of colour living in the United Kingdom. According to Shukla, the idea for

the collection comes from the exposure to casual and systematic racism immigrants and their children experience on everyday basis:

This constant anxiety we feel as people of colour to justify our space, to show that we have earned our place at the table, continues to hound us. For while I and the 20 other writers included in this book don't want to just write about race, nor do we *only* write about race, it felt imperative, in the light of [racist] comment[s] [...], the backwards attitude to immigration and refugees, the systematic racism that runs through this country to this day, that we create this document: a document of what it means to be a person of colour now. Because we're done justifying our place at the table. (i)

The essays included in the collection can be divided into six categories: the representation of minorities and people of colour in popular culture; the experiences of racial discrimination and cultural misappropriation; the social standing of cultural hybrids; the need to and impossibility of fitting in; the question of sexuality and gender roles in migrant communities; and the connection between the immigrant and British culture.

The problem with the representation of minorities and people of colour in British popular culture is approached in the collection from different angles. In his essay "Is Nish Kumar a Confused Muslim?", Nish Kumar, a British comedian of Indian descent, discusses how his image was used for comedic purpose with racist undertones. The lack of the proper representation of people of colour in the British media is the central theme for Reni Eddo-Lodge's "Forming Blackness Through a Screen" and Darren Chetty's "You Can't Say That! The Stories Have to Be About White People" with the former focusing on the representation of blackness in cinema and television and the latter – of children of colour in British children literature. Meanwhile, in "The Wife of a Terrorist" Miss L presents the source of problems of representation—as a British actress of Indian descent, she is always type casted as suffering wives trapped in arranged marriages or the eponymous wives of terrorists (Shukla, 199). The same issue is discussed by Bim Adewunmi in "What We Talk About When We

Talk About Tokenism". Adewunmi claims that even in the era of political correctness, a person of colour still has to justify their place in popular culture:

Whiteness—or, you know, white people—exists as the basic template. And that template covers all human experience, by the way: the ability to be special or ordinary, handsome or ugly, tall or short, interesting or dull as ditchwater. On the other hand, *our* presence in popular culture (as well as in non-stereotypical 'issue' roles) must always be justified. Our place at the table has to be *earned*. (209, original emphasis)

According to Adewunmi, it is the dissonance between the image of multicultural society built by the British government and the real treatment of people of colour that becomes the main reason that pushes non-white actors and actresses to look for work in the United States and other parts of the world.

The first essay belonging to the second category also happens to be the opening essay for the whole collection. In the piece entitled "Namaste", Nikesh Shukla discusses the linguistic misappropriation of the traditional greeting by the young white British people; however, as Shukla notes, this misuse of a single word is merely a tip of an iceberg of misappropriation of Indian culture within the British society. A similar notion is discussed by Chimene Suleyman in "My Name is My Name"—the authoress, whose first name was constantly changed and adjusted to the English pronunciation by the British officials, states that "you cannot have meaning without knowledge of the environment from which it stems" (24), highlighting that when used out of contexts or changed, the meaningful names and words become just strings of sounds. Racial discrimination and harassment is a central theme of Vera Chok's "Yellow". Chok also points to the fact that for the white British all East Asians constitute a homogenous mass, with one East Asian culture being easily replaced with other. The experience of racial abuse is also explored by Daniel York Loh in "Kendo Nagasaki and Me". In his memoirsque essay, Loh, who was a victim of racial prejudice as a child, explains how he was advised by his teachers to simply accept the racial slurs (49) and how his frustration finally

resulted in aggressive outbursts. In “Beyond ‘Good’ Immigrant” Wei Ming Kam notes how the label of ‘the model minority’ attached to the Chinese diaspora makes the racial discrimination invisible. Finally, Riz Ahmed in his essay “Airports and Auditions” discusses how travelling by plane changed for the people of colour after the 9/11.

The social and cultural standing of cultural hybrids and mixed-raced people constitutes the third category of texts published in *The Good Immigrant*. In “A Guide to Being Black”, Varaidzo discusses her experiences as the only mixed-race child in his London neighbourhood. Lacking any role models of blackness—as this is how she is perceived by her white British friends—she describes her struggle in accepting her mixed-race identity and the complexity of it as her blackness “is both a performance and a permanence” (20). Kieran Yates’ “On Going Home” focuses on the issues the mixed-race children face when they return to their parents’ or grandparents’ homeland. Upon visiting her family in India, Yates discovered that she was a stranger both in her British homeland and in the land of her ancestors: “the plurality of my strangeness – of being split, of being Indian, too fresh, too Western, too bizarre, too independent, isn’t as welcome as I hoped” (116). This otherness and strangeness of the mixed-race people is also the main topic of Salena Godden’s “Shade”.

The idea of cultural hybridity is closely connected to the next issue discussed in the collection, namely the desire to and impossibility of fitting in. Himesh Patel describes in his essay “Window of Opportunity” the very basic desire of a British-Indian boy to fit in with other children. Meanwhile, Musa Okwonga’s “The Ungrateful Country” is the story of realising that, no matter how culturally British a person of colour may be, they still will be perceived as the other, the alien. An Etonian and Oxford graduate of Ugandan descent, Okwonga for years believed that he can change the way in which the British elites perceive the people of colour only to realise that, in their eyes, he will always be an exception to the rule.

The last two categories of essays in *The Good Immigrant* deal with a wide variety of social and cultural issues. In “Flags” Coco Khan discusses the fetishization of bodies of young British women of Asian descent which are still presented in the British society through colonial lens as oriental and exotic. In turn, Inua Ellams’ “Cutting Through (Black Barbershops and Masculinity)” compares the models of black masculinity observed in barbershops in Africa and the United Kingdom. In “Wearing Where You’re At: Immigration and UK Fashion” Sabrina Mahfouz focuses on the influence the immigrant fashion had—and still has—on the contemporary British fashion. Sarah Sahim’s “Perpetuating Casteism” is devoted to describing how the colonial exploits of the British contributed to the existence of the caste system in India and how, combined with British classism, resulted in transference of the said system into Indian diasporas in Britain. Finally, in “Death is a Many-Headed Monster”, Vinay Patel points to the shallowness and hypocrisy of Western Christianity in the face of trauma and otherness.

The Good Immigrant presents an insight into the lives of the immigrants in modern Britain, creating the counterpoint for the rhetoric of the harmonic and peaceful multicultural society built by the British media. The authors of the essays included in the collection show how the systematic racism is not only thriving in the British society, but also that it is, at least partially, socially accepted. However, it needs to be remembered that the contributors to *The Good Immigrant* constitute a very specific group of people—well-educated intellectuals with well-paid jobs—and, as such, they cannot speak about the experiences of an average non-white migrant living in the twenty-first century Britain. Furthermore, as the collection was published in 2016 before the Brexit vote, it would be interesting to create a follow-up to *The Good Immigrant*—a volume dedicated to showing how the everyday lives of immigrants changed after Britain’s decision to leave the European Union.

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

PERIPHERY: AGAINST THE MAINSTREAM
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE (HORIZONS 3)

Organised by: Academic Association for Doctoral Students, Department of English, Faculty of Languages, Nicolaus Copernicus University

Conducted in: English

Took place on: 16 November 2018

Took place in: Toruń

Report by: Paula Budzyńska

On the 16th of November, 2018, Department of English at Nicolaus Copernicus University and Doctoral Students Association operating in this department organised the 3rd interdisciplinary conference 'Horizons' that was entitled 'PERIPHERY: AGAINST THE MAINSTREAM.'

Arguably, the opposition between the periphery and the mainstream is dynamic; depending on an adopted perspective, other issues can be regarded as central or peripheral. What is more, the discrepancy in question is applicable to various fields of studies, including but not limited to linguistics, literature, and culture. Due to the wide range and ambiguity of the aforementioned contrasted concepts, the event aimed at providing space for discussion on potential ways in which they can be comprehended in contemporary society and culture as well as how this opposition can be perceived in the very academic context.

The conference encompassed 13 papers dedicated to such topics as transhumanism as new humanism (Aleksandra Sieradzka), disability studies (Klaudia Muca), subcultural studies (Urszula Świątek, Adam Pawlak), Y generation poetry (Mikołaj Pawlak), periphery and mainstream with respect to the evolution of language (Monika Boruta-Żywiczyńska), generative grammar (Marek Placiński), sociocognitive approach to textbook discourse (Paula

Budzyńska), translation (Piotr Osiński), indigenous people (Julia Siepak), renegade communities (Jacek Stopa), or diaspora (Joanna Antoniak) as well as experimental drama (Bernadetta Jankowska). The participants represented a few tertiary education institutions, including Jagiellonian University and the University of Warsaw. Furthermore, they had an honour to attend a plenary lecture entitled “Post-periphery: the nature/culture divide in contemporary literature and criticism” delivered by Professor Katarzyna Więckowska from Department of English, NCU, in Toruń.

As demonstrated above, the way of understanding the concepts of “periphery” and “mainstream” can be influenced by various factors and the organised conference constituted an excellent opportunity for young scientists to share their experience and broaden the horizons of other participants.

**AUTHORED CULTURES/AUTHORING CULTURES:
NEGOTIATING CONTROL OVER MEDIA TEXTS
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Organised by: Department of English, Faculty of Languages, Nicolaus Copernicus University

Conducted in: English

Took place on: 7–8 December 2018

Took place in: Toruń

Report by: Bernadetta Jankowska

The international conference on *Authored Cultures / Authoring Cultures: Negotiating Control over Media Texts* took place in Collegium Maius, December 7–8, 2018. The conference was another event after “Haunted Cultures/Haunting Cultures: Spectres and Spectrality in Cultural Practices” that explored various aspects of contemporary culture¹.

The conference focused on the re-examination of authors and readers’ roles (both in theoretical and practical aspects) in contemporary culture. The speakers were invited to examine the problem of authorship from different perspectives and disciplines, including the following themes and problems: (re)negotiated authorship, (de)constructed authorship, marginalized authors in terms of disability, gender and decolonisation, new models of authorship and readership for new media, authorship in game texts, translation and authorship, intertextuality and adaptation².

We had the honour to welcome our two keynote speakers: Professor Mia Consalvo, Canada Research Chair in Game Studies and Design at Concordia University in Montreal, who presented a lecture about “The Business and Culture of Life Streaming on Twitch” and Professor Anna Backman-Rogers, a

Senior Lecturer in Feminist Philosophy and Visual Culture at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, who presented a paper “Not Because My Heart is Gone; Simply The Other Side: Francesca Woodman’s Female Self-Authorship in Light”¹.

Over the two days of the conference, the speakers from different countries: Poland, Canada, Romania, Germany, Belgium and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China presented 36 papers on various topics connected with the issue of authorship and readership. Each panel ended with a discussion where participants could comment on the themes that were touched upon by the speakers.

Authored Cultures/Authoring Cultures: Negotiating Control over Media Texts turned out to be an important academic event by which many new acquaintances were made. The Conference results are to be published soon.

Endnotes

1. On the basis of authoredcultures.wordpress.com.
2. Ibid.

**INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE
CONTEMPORARY E/MIGRATIONS: TRADITION—(POST)MEMORY—
TRANSLINGUALISM**

Organised by: Faculty of Languages, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń in cooperation with the Polish Comparative Literature Association

Conducted in: English

Took place on: 24–26 April 2019

Took place in: Toruń

Report by: Joanna Antoniak

The second decade of the 21st century, tainted by the European refugee crisis, added fuel to migration studies and different academic approaches to migrants, their history and their memories. International interdisciplinary conference *Contemporary e/migrations: Tradition—(Post)memory—Translingualism* was organised to provide a space for a discussion for scholars working within the broad scope of migration studies. The conference was also held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of establishing the Faculty of Languages.

The conference lasted three days and was held in Collegium Maius. There were thirty-seven participants representing both Polish (Pedagogical University in Krakow, University of Silesia, University of Gdańsk, University of Warsaw, University of Łódź, State University of Applied Sciences in Konin, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and Jagiellonian University in Kraków) and foreign universities (University of Bucharest, Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Case Western Reserve University, Ouachita Baptist University, Bar-Ilan University, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, American University in Cairo, and Queen Mary University of London).

The conference also hosted seven esteemed keynote speakers. The opening plenary lecture, entitled *Exilic Writing and the Making of World Literature*, was delivered by Galin Tihanov of Queen Mary University of London. The second keynote speaker, Bożena Shallcross of University of Chicago, discussed the different approaches to migration during her lecture *A Certain (Dis)advantage: Comparison and Itinerant Thinkers*. The first day of the conference ended with the plenary lecture entitled *'We cannot keep out self or our identity intact, whether we stay at home or wander far away from it'. Comparing e/migrations and migrant narratives in Canada* delivered by Dagmara Drewniak (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland), in which the author compared Polish-Canadian literature with other examples of migrant minority literature in Canada. The second day of the conference began with Olga Solovieva's (University of Chicago) lecture *Migration—Memory—Translingualism: Akira Kurosawa's Adaptation of Vladimir Arseniev's "Dersu Uzala" (1975)*. Another keynote speaker of the second day of the conference was Haun Saussy from University of Chicago who delivered the speech entitled *Pushkin, Ji Yun, and the Torghuts: Poetry, Migration and Banishment in an Era of Jostling Frontiers*. The last day of the conference began with the lecture by Dorota Kołodziejczyk (University of Wrocław) entitled *Mobility and/as European identity in migrant fiction*. The conference ended with the plenary lecture by Stanley Bill of Cambridge University entitled *Migration, Populism, and Post-Dependence in Poland*.

The papers presented during the conference discussed different aspects of the notion of migration. The question of migrant identity was the main focus of the papers by Magdalena Rewerenda (*Migration, memory, identity. "Our violence, your violence" by Oliver Frljić*), Bethany Hicks (*Shifting borderlands—shifting identities, 1989–2019*), Michał Głuszkowski (*The question of identity for successive generations of emigrants. On the example of Vershina, a Polish village in Siberia*), Richard Osei Bonsu (*Failing and lost identities through migration and socio-exclusions programs in the Western world*), Joanna Antoniak

(*Diasporic identity in the face of trauma—the depiction of diasporic identity in the post-WWII reality in Kerri Sakamoto’s “The Electrical Field”*), and Marta Roman (*Literary renditions of shifting senses of un/belonging of the South Asian women in Canada*).

Another topic often discussed in papers delivered during the conference was trauma and experiences of the migrants and refugees as exemplified by Ewa Macura-Nnamdi’s *The noise of the sea: refugees and the necronautics of water*, Mateusz Dudek’s *“Krik? Krak!”: The experience of female refugees in selected stories by Edwidge Danticat*, Michał Ben-Horin’s *Translingualism, trauma and migration in the work of Tuvia Ruebner*, Edyta Lorek-Jezińska’s *Haunted crossroads: War and post-colonial identities in “Black Diamond: The Years the Locusts Have Eaten” by J. Nicole Brooks*, Ewa Urbaniak-Rybicka’s *The monster immigrates—Migrant traumas in Aga Maksimowska’s “Giant”*, and Piotr Osiński’s *Plutarch’s of Chaeronea and Favorinus’ of Arelate writings on exile: Two experiences of exile in Ancient Greek literature*.

The motivation and reasons for migration and the importance of space and movement were discussed by Anna Fin (*Transatlantic dimensions of the emigration from Europe: Between old reflections and new processes (case studies of the United States)*), Mary Patrice Erdmans (*Nation, family, and life course in refugees’ decisions to leave and return*), Zuzanna Szatanik (*Toward an agoraphobic travel narrative. France Daigle’s “Just Fine”*), Sinsha Rudan, Sasha Rudan, Lazar Kovacevic, Eugenia Kelbert and Bob Holman (*Poetry on the Road: An intercultural and multidisciplinary IT-argued dialogue on the topic of refugee and migrants*), and Jakub Czernik (*Cities and natural environment in migrant literature*). Meanwhile, Eugenia Kelbert (*Force Your Reader to Remember What You Remember: Émigré Writers Teach*) and Aleksandra Nocoń (*How to be a nation of migrants? Colonial post-memory versus global citizenship in contemporary Mauritian poetry*) focused on the question of memory in the context of migration. The speakers also explored the connection between migration and art—Tereza Stejskalova’s *This is (not) my country. The cultural*

production of Vietnamese diaspora in the Czech Republic and Krzysztof Majer's *Musical spaces of resistance and complicity in Madeleine Thein's "Do Not Say We Have Nothing"* and Esi Edugyan's *"Half Blood Blues"*—and the social and cultural dimensions of immigration as seen in Dominika Michalak's *Refugee biographies and state administration in contemporary Poland*, Anna Mazurkiewicz's *When migrants become assets. Free Europe's World Operations Division and East Central European diaspora during the Cold War*, May Hawas' *Precarious citizens, Mediterranean glimpses* and Marzenna Cyzman's *Grinds and leaks, On (dangerous?) meetings of thought styles*.

Finally, some of the speakers talked exclusively about the experiences of Polish migrants (Monika Tokarzewska's *Polish and German forced migration after World War II through the eyes of a Polish-Palestinian writer: Aida Amer's "Life Chronicles of Birds and Humans"*, Mikołaj Golubiewski's *Artificial homes: Czesław Miłosz between "Far West" and "Kresy"*, and Dominika Kruzińska's *The reality of a newcomer during the Gilded Age*) as well as other specific groups: Romanians (Bogdan Stefanescu's *Noica and the discourse of paraexile in pluricolonial Romania*), Japanese (Jacek Stopa's *Revenge of the Yellow Peril: Depictions of Asian American crime in late 20th-century literature and cinema*), Jews (Katarzyna Taczyńska and Aleksandra Twardowska's *Balkan Jewish Women as mediators of knowledge: Cases of emigrants*) and the representatives of the First Nations (Anna Branach-Kallas' *Savage warriors, cosmopolitans, genocidaires: Migrant Indians in recent World War I fiction*).

International Interdisciplinary Conference *Contemporary e/migrations: Tradition—(Post)memory—Translingualism* proved to be a successful event. The presented papers sparked lengthy discussions which took place not only during coffee and lunch breaks but also during the conference dinners held on the first and the last day of the conference. The conference participants also had a chance to visit the Ethnographic Museum and Olender Ethnographic Park and to see Marina Abramović exhibition in the Centre of Modern Art in Toruń.

ABSTRAKTY

Mateusz Dudek

Ideology and family relations—Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* from a political perspective

W moim artykule proponuję analizę relacji pomiędzy dwiema wybranymi postaciami z powieści Philipa Rotha pt. *Amerykańska sielanka*. Głównym celem artykułu jest odkrycie i opisanie ideologii, które bohaterowie nieświadomie przyjmują lub w które świadomie wierzą. Ideologiczna perspektywa powiązana jest również z problemem podmiotowości. Stąd kolejnym celem analizy jest rozważenie w jaki sposób bohaterowie mogą być opisani jako podmioty. Te dwa aspekty charakterystyki połączone są poprzez osobiste praktyki podmiotów oraz przez to, jak ich tożsamości zmieniają się wraz z owymi praktykami, a także poprzez nie. Ogółem, zastosowane podejście, zainspirowane myślą francuskiego filozofa Louisa Althussera, skupia się na podstawowych pytaniach, poprzez które kreacja bohaterów odnosi się do zewnętrznej rzeczywistości. Inaczej mówiąc, przedstawiona interpretacja ma na celu odkrycie „problematyki” stojącej za wybranymi postaciami. Ponadto, sprzeczne opinie cytowanych krytyków pozwalają umiejscowić tę „problematykę” w historycznym kontekście lat 60-tych dwudziestego wieku. Taka perspektywa pomaga zrozumieć, że pierwszy z wybranych bohaterów reprezentuje to, co powszechnie akceptowane i łączy swoją filozofię z liberalną amerykańską tradycją, która popycha go dalej w konformizm, podczas gdy druga bohaterka uosabia to, co wywrotowe poprzez zgłębianie marksistowskich poglądów i filozofii dżinizmu, które razem tworzą zindywidualizowaną buntowniczą narrację.

Bernadetta Jankowska

How to explain the inexplicable? The portrayal of a supernatural character in *The Skriker* by Caryl Churchill

Celem artykułu jest analiza tytułowej postaci dramatu Caryl Churchill "The Skriker", z wykorzystaniem teorii hauntologii (widmontologii). Punktem wyjścia jest przedstawienie dwóch źródeł hauntologii: opartej na podejściu dekonstrukcyjnym postaci widma (spectre) zapoczątkowanej przez Jacquesa Derridę oraz teorii fantomu Nicolasa Abrahama i Marii Torok, wykorzystującej podejście psychoanalityczne. Szczegółowa analiza tytułowej postaci nadprzyrodzonej zmierza do zbadania na jej podstawie zakresu wzajemnego przenikania się obydwu wspomnianych wcześniej źródeł teorii hauntologii.

Iga Noińska

On the periphery of literary and authorial truthfulness: *Handcarved Coffins* by Truman Capote

Niniejszy artykuł jest poświęcony minipowieści Trumana Capote'a, pt. *Ręcznie rzeźbione trumny (Handcarved Coffins)*, którą uważa się za jedno z najważniejszych dzieł tego autora. Artykuł skupia się na kwestii klasyfikacji gatunkowej tejże minipowieści, którą zarówno sam autor, jak i wydawcy opisywali jako „Oparte na faktach sprawozdanie o amerykańskiej zbrodni”, jak brzmi zresztą jej podtytuł. Według różnych źródeł, w tym biografii Capote'a, sugerowana przynależność minipowieści do gatunku nonfiction okazuje się być nieprawdziwa i wprowadza czytelnika w błąd. Ma to wpływ na ustosunkowanie się czytelnika do dzieła, które jest inne w przypadku obcowania z fikcją literacką lub tekstem opartym na faktach. Artykuł koncentruje się na aspekcie wpływu gatunku literackiego na odbiór tekstu przez czytelnika, jak również zwraca uwagę na pewne nieścisłości czy niespójności, które można znaleźć w minipowieści i które obnażają jej fikcyjny charakter.

Agata Piasecka

An analysis of figurative language in selected *Bring Me The Horizon's* songs

Artykuł bada zastosowanie języka przenośnego w piosenkach brytyjskiego zespołu Bring Me The Horizon. Analiza skupia się na elementach języka figuratywnego oraz idiomów w wybranych piosenkach, o tytułach: „Medicine,” „Drown” i „Throne.”

Pierwsza sekcja jest wprowadzeniem opisującym cechy języka figuratywnego oraz tło dla napisania utworów. Artykuł także podaje definicje metafory, porównania oraz idiomu jako najważniejszych środków języka metaforycznego. Wynikiem badań jest usystematyzowanie licznych elementów języka figuratywnego, takich jak metafory, idiom, porównanie, paradoks, pytanie retoryczne, symbol, wyrażenie oparte na przekształceniu przysłowia, hiperbola, pleonazm, aliteracja, homeoptoton, czy synekdocha. Elementy języka figuratywnego oraz idiomy, które są najbardziej znaczące w interpretacji motywów opisanych w utworach, są analizowane z perspektywy kognitywnej, na przykład wyrażenia językowe pochodzące z tekstów piosenek są badane w oparciu o metaforę konceptualną.

Aleksandra Sieradzka

A machine like a human being—transhumanism as new humanism in the movie *Ex Machina*

W mojej pracy skupiam się na transhumanizmie, którego rosnąca popularność wynika z gwałtownego rozwoju technologicznego. Głównym obiektem zainteresowania przestaje być człowiek, a zaczyna być postczłowiek, ostateczny etap rozwoju gatunku ludzkiego. Im bardziej granica pomiędzy sztucznym a naturalnym się zaciera, tym bardziej naglące staje się zdefiniowanie, czym właściwie jest człowiek. Zagadnienie to inspiruje nie tylko badaczy kultury, ale również twórców działających w różnych obszarach kultury popularnej, jak chociażby filmowców. Temat ten został poruszony w filmie *Ex Machina* Alexa Garlanda. Androidka Ava, jedna z głównych bohaterek tego filmu, staje się symbolem i ucieleśnieniem rozważań dotyczących maszyn i ludzi: czy maszyny mogą być postrzegane jako ludzie, co odróżnia ludzi od maszyn. Dzieło Garlanda wymusza na widzu zadanie sobie pytania, czy maszyna powinna mieć takie same prawa jak człowiek, jeśli wygląda, zachowuje się i ma podobne pragnienia do człowieka.

Arkadiusz Sokolnicki

On loaded language

Umiejętność wzbudzenia emocji w ludziach poprzez język, jak słusznie zauważył Arystoteles w swojej *Retoryce*, była kluczowa dla skutecznej perswazji już w czasach antycznych. Nie inaczej jest w świecie współczesnym. Perswazja jednak nie jest jedyną rzeczą, dla której wykorzystuje się język w taki sposób, aby wzbudzić emocje. W poezji i

prozie, dla przykładu, takie wykorzystanie języka służy raczej celom estetycznym aniżeli perswazji.

Artykuł ma na celu wykazać, iż język emotywny (język nacechowany emocjonalnie) jest efektywnym retorycznym środkiem wpływu, którego użycie może ludziom służyć lub szkodzić. Artykuł podzielono na część teoretyczną i praktyczną. W pierwszej omówiono język emotywny, jak i zjawiska, które są z nim związane, tj. emocje, konotacje i błędy poznawcze. Część ta zawiera również schemat przebiegu reakcji emocjonalnej wywołanej przez użycie tego środka wpływu. W drugiej części natomiast przeanalizowano przykłady użycia języka emotywnego w różnych tekstach. Wskazano tu na potencjalne interpretacje, emocje oraz dalsze kognitywne i fizyczne zaangażowanie wynikłe z użycia języka emotywnego.

Artykuł dowodzi, iż język emotywny jest zjawiskiem powszechnym i złożonym. Reakcje emocjonalne powstałe w wyniku użycia języka emotywnego są w gruncie rzeczy korzystne pod względem adaptacyjnym. Niemniej reakcje te, z uwagi na zwykle towarzyszące im upośledzenie myślenia logicznego, mogą okazać się niekorzystne, zwłaszcza w sytuacjach, gdy język emotywny stosuje się celowo dla ułatwienia wpajania ludziom wybranych wartości. Stąd język emotywny należy poddać krytyce w każdym przypadku, gdy jego użycie w naszej ocenie oparte jest o wątpliwie cnotliwe przesłanki.

Katarzyna Stępień

The anthropocentric perspective in *Solaris* by Stanisław Lem

Artykuł ten zawiera analizę *Solaris* autorstwa Stanisława Lema. Celem owej analizy jest ukazanie w jaki sposób postaci postrzegają rzeczywistość jedynie w odniesieniu do dobrze im znanych schematów, w których mogą zastosować ograniczoną, antropocentryczną perspektywę. Analizuję *Solaris* jako tekst, który bada i kwestionuje ściśle i wcześniej określone granice ludzkości. Po zbadaniu poszczególnych imion, które Lem wybiera dla swoich bohaterów, aby wskazali związek ze światem poza *Solaris*, skupiam się na antropocentrycznej perspektywie i jej wpływie na możliwe odczytanie książki.

Jacek Stopa

Almost Hollywood: The English and American Influences on Australian Cinema and its Renaissance in the 1970s

W artykule omawiam wpływ, jaki kino hollywoodzkie i brytyjskie wywarło na filmy australijskie, w szczególności w okresie odrodzenia produkcji filmowej w Australii w latach siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych. Renesans ten miał miejsce po okresie braku aktywności wywołanym w znacznym stopniu brakiem zainteresowania ze strony rządu australijskiego wspieraniem i rozwojem lokalnej kultury. To nastawienie uległo zmianie po okresie niepokoїв społecznych i politycznych w późnych latach sześćdziesiątych i wczesnych siedemdziesiątych. Instytucje takie jak Australijska Komisja Filmowa wsparły produkcję prestiżowych filmów artystycznych, często opartych na wzorcach brytyjskich. W tym samym czasie prywatni inwestorzy zaczęli finansować rozwój kina gatunkowego i eksploatacji wzorowanego na popularnych filmach amerykańskich. Powodzenie z jakim australijski przemysł filmowy korzystał z tych źródeł inspiracji uczynił go istotnym graczem w kinie światowym, wywierającym własny wpływ na filmy amerykańskie i europejskie.

Dorota Watkowska

The conceptual system of non-native speakers: an attempt to determine the influence of translingual experience on mental representations

Jednym z głównych problemów badawczych podejmowanych w kognitywistyce jest pytanie o sposoby definiowania reprezentacji mentalnych. Dotyczy ono sporu na temat charakteru reprezentacji mentalnych, które mogą być postrzegane jako niezależne od ludzkiego doświadczenia lub z nim związane. Przyjmując jednak, iż badania poświęcone reprezentacjom mentalnym nie powinny odbywać się bez uwzględnienia roli różnego typu doświadczenia ze światem, kluczowym zagadnieniem staje się określenie, w jaki sposób doświadczenie językowe wśród osób nieposługujących się tym samym językiem natywnym może wpływać na reprezentacje mentalne. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu omówienie obecnych teorii i wskazanie, jakie typy reprezentacji można wyodrębnić, jeśli rola wyżej wspomnianego doświadczenia zostanie wzięta pod uwagę.

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Jacek Stopa holds a Master of Arts degree in English Studies, from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The title of his MA thesis was *Oblivious heavens: Evolution of cosmic horror in literature*. Currently, he is working

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