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## Teaching Performing, Performing Teaching: CT and ELT

### “Introduction”

In lieu of an introduction to the entire volume, the present article functions threefold: firstly, so as to outline the project of performance and pedagogy as well as the actual volume; secondly to navigate through the state-of-the-art knowledge embedded in its theoretical field in order to, thirdly, suggest and design an easy-to-practical applicational exercise.

With the advent of digital reality, fake news, artificial intelligence, performative nothing, creative procrastinations, etc. the demand for critical thinking skills should be justified. One of the ways to achieve this is via performative tools, e.g. simulation, analyses, or primarily, pedagogy. At the outset of our project (“we” and “our” pronouns refer to the team behind this paper, i.e. namely Andrea Černíková, Michaela Kašparová and Jan Suk), the initial idea was to map the complex relationship between phenomena of performance and pedagogy. In order to pin down the plethora of various, trajectorial arrays, we came up with the following journal volume proposal:

Both performance and pedagogy operate as two-way communication between the agent and the recipient – the performer and the audience, or the teacher and the student. Both performance and pedagogy have the significant potential to transform as well as to fail. This very weakness of theatre as well as pedagogy is also its greatest strength: its authentic possibility to fail. The vulnerability, fragility of both performance and teaching/learning highlights its human nature creating thereby a sympathetic bond with the Other. Therefore, performance/theatre and pedagogy can both be transformative, life illuminating experiences.

We invite contributions from all possible areas of English language discourse revolving around ideas connected with performance, theatre, pedagogy and its possible interconnections.

Papers are invited from all possible fields, including (but not restricted to):

Performance as teaching, teaching as performance

Performance and teaching, teaching and performance

Performance and research, research and performance

Performance as research, research as performance

Performance art, its history and application

Performance and pedagogy, performance as pedagogy

Pedagogy as performance, pedagogy and performance

New trends in pedagogy to enhance performance

New trends in performance to enrich pedagogy

Didactics, methodology and new performance-boosting trends

Linguistics and performance

Performative linguistics

Literatures and performance

Literatures and performances

Failure as a creative agent

...

12| The scope of the articles accepted and published in the present volume indeed underpins the amoebic quality of these phenomena.

The volume opens with two papers written in collaboration with students – an element which the editorial board would like to pursue further in practice. Besides this introductory essay, the following article called “Canadian Experience: a Different Perspective” provides a fresh, hands-on take on what is understood as Canadian identity. Considering the great amount of students’ contribution within these two papers, they have not been the subject of a peer review process. A second novelty regarding the journal is a slightly altered graphic design language which results in greater reader friendliness. Yet, undoubtedly, the first two opening contributions constitute sufficiently thought-provoking and indeed timely material.

The first cluster of scholarly articles present opens with an adjusted keynote address delivered by Prof. Ondřej Pilný at the international Hradec Králové Anglophone Conference in 2019. The article titled “Ulster Says No” – Again? David Ireland’s Cyprus Avenue, Cliché, and Brexit” tackles the topical issue of Brexit via performative reading of contemporary theatre. Similarly, Hana Pavelková’s “Brexit: Cultural Reflections” suggests various popular cultural reverberations of the Brexit frenzy.

The next set of articles dealing with performativity and academia, plagiarism, time or mind combines various approaches and analyses to highlight the need for being critical. In particular, Christopher E. Koy in his “Performing the Scholar, Performing the Sleuth; Plagiarism in Three American Short Stories” examines the issue of creative plagiarism; Karolína Plicková sees durationality as a crucial element in understanding devised projects of British experimental theatremakers Forced Entertainment in her “Temporality and Changes of Perception in the Work of Forced Entertainment (Durational Performances).” Finally, “Theatres of Mind: Staging Psychological Science in Modernist American Theatre” by Tomáš Kačer critically locates the transformative moment in US drama and theatre history.

Two more papers deal with the stage per se: Ivona Mišterová’s “The Strange Case of Shylock: From a Figure of Tragic Dimensions into an Ordinary Jewish Bargainer” and “Romeo and Juliet in the Midst of Early 18th-Century English Party Politics” by Filip Krajník. While the former addresses a politically covert performativity of translation reception, the latter deals with the politically overt performativity of adaptation.

Politics and its performativity are at the crux of another paper, ““Prurient little Victorian ratbag”? An English Jewish Man’s Dealing with the Shadow of Thomas Hardy in Howard Jacobson’s Peeping Tom” by Petr Anténe, who studies the issue of Jewishness in its multifacetedness. Another take on multiplicity, yet from a different perspective, is seen in two pedagogically aimed papers, firstly by Monika Hřebačková in her “Multidisciplinary Approaches to Foreign Language Teaching,” to be followed by Eva Skopečková’s contribution “Lifelong Learning, Lifelong Translating: a Development Course for EFL Teachers.”

The volume closes with two seemingly different, yet highly interconnected papers. The first study is a collective team research-based essay by Jan Beneš, Robert Helán, and Jiří Kubálek called “Introducing the STANAG 6001: Strategic and High-stakes Language Testing for NATO in the Czech Republic” which discusses both performative and pedagogical aspects and pitfalls of language testing. The last contribution by a renowned duo of scholars, Libor Práger, Václav Řeřicha, titled “The Loneliness of the Teacher in Digital Environment: Changing Education in Contemporary School” symbolically closes the volume by challenging the role of a teacher, teaching and school in the nowness of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an issue indeed resonating closely with the state-of-the art situation in the academia.

As the overview concerning the present volume has shown, there has been a heightened pedagogical

awareness leading to greater students' and teachers' performance. Besides this very project, our faculty has recently produced several seminal works mapping this territory. To name just a few examples to start with, a study dealing with authenticity, performance and readership has been conducted by Olga Vraštilová (2018), and another trail-blazing study has been devised by Daniela Vrabcová and Martin Menšík, dedicated to performing intercultural sensitivity (2016).

Indeed, one of the words of 2020 could possibly be intercultural performance. This notion, alongside the border-crossing approach is at the crux of so-called radical performance pedagogy as advocated by the Guillermo Gómez-Peña (2011). A completely opposite take on the issue of "kill your master" can be seen in *Perform Every Day* by Joshua Sofaer (2008), whose playful, intimate approach incorporates performativity in everyday life. One of the recent trends is to transverse fields of e.g. pedagogy or performance by employing the inclusive methodology of Gilles Deleuze, e.g. collaborations by Inna Semetsky with Diana Masny called *Deleuze and Education* (2013) or *A Deleuzian Approach to Curriculum: Essays on a Pedagogical Life* by Jason Wallin (2010). In a similar Deleuzian fashion, one of the co-authors of the present paper, Jan Suk, advocated a trend of so-called immanent pedagogy, be used (2017), accentuating "A LIFE, and nothing else" (Deleuze, 27).

As is apparently visible, there are a plethora of trends in education. The most progressive education systems in the worlds lead the charge in implementing formative assessment, cancelling structured timetables in favour of subjects and activities blending, or engaging their students in school management. While each of those issues would benefit from targeted research, the value of teachers' ability to transform students' experience of the education system seems undervalued in articles covering the most recent trends. The previously mentioned focus on the structural change may overshadow the notion that students thrive when engaged with their immediate surrounding, peers and subject-teachers; furthermore, the willingness to streamline these large-scale innovations into a few changes in the day-to-day operations can make students' experience of school better. The focus of this paper is on building a classroom culture that engages EFL students better in order to create room for improvement not only in subject-specific metrics; but to engage students in relation to the 4Cs (communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking) within the larger framework of 21st century skills.

### **Critical thinking as a part of our daily lives**

Developing critical thinkers does not merely produce more independent students in the classes of today; but the ability to think critically has a lasting effect on students' everyday lives as well as the lives of their families and/or communities. STEM subjects typically lead the way in integrating CT-based activities into students' work, but social sciences and languages have equally matching stimuli. Because foreign language lessons are ultimately lessons in human communication, there is room to enhance such lessons with CT-based activities. STEM subjects may have a clearer path in integrating activities centred around logical thinking and reasoning, but because English is the *lingua franca* of the present time the quickest search will provide plenty of prompts, ideas, frameworks, and projects to adapt and use likewise. Research on creating ELT lessons to include the 4Cs (communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking), noticed a significant improvement of students skills in the English language and their abilities to generate original thinking, to communicate their ideas smartly and to defend their thinking when these three objectives have been strengthened and improved upon (Gibson, 2012, Barnawi, 2011, Lin, 2018). Therefore, our present project, drawing upon our previous research, articulated three objectives.

**Objective 1: To build a positive classroom culture**

The positive impact of learning can be enhanced when the classroom works not as a random assortment of individuals. When students treat language lessons as a channel with only two participatory forces - themselves (the recipient) and their teacher (the provider), they will assume that after they have memorized the information coming through the channel, they will be able to effectively communicate with their peers and with people outside the classroom in a foreign language. This approach effectively disregards the classroom as a collective group with emotional ties. The classroom is a group of students who spend a large part of their waking hours together in one setting, which is an excellent gateway to bringing real life conversations and ties to the forefront. Language teachers can benefit from building multilevel ties with their students and motivating them to strengthen their performance in the foreign language.

A culture of error is one of the recent trends sweeping classrooms around the globe partly thanks to the work of Doug Lemov. To put it very simply, Lemov and other proponents aim to encourage students to actively participate and engage with the topic from the very beginning and not wait until they feel like masters of the subject and to push teachers to highlight errors in a positive manner and use them for further teaching. The fear of making an error, giving a wrong or embarrassing answer or being dismissed by an adult for voicing an opinion should be minimized in order to build more engaged and confident individuals (Waring, 2008). The Cambridge whitepaper *Creating a Safe Speaking Environment* states that students who are led to prioritize engagement will benefit from knowing that the classroom is a safe environment to make mistakes in, and that what they put on the table is appreciated and valued. It may be inaccurate or clumsily put together, yet their input is crucial and important. The culture of error respects the individualities of children through its focus on teamwork, co-operation and constructive criticism. The focus of strengthening students' confidence and developing more immersive tasks shall in turn lead to improvements in students' overall performance.

When students are confident in knowing that their input and engagement matters, they are more likely to internalize learning goals themselves. Many teachers settle for cold calling as a form of in-class, which is both quick and easy. While cold calling (the technique where teacher interrupts lecturing to solicit an answer from a specific student without previously suggesting that they are about to ask a question) may be a quick way to test students on their vocabulary knowledge, it often leads to engagement termination among those students who are being called upon mainly with the intention of showing the whole class that they obviously do not know the answer. When used as a tool to embarrass a student who is not paying attention, this practice will inevitably result in a more sensitive student hesitating to communicate further because of their fear and previous bad experience of getting something wrong. While this scenario may not have devastating consequences in every classroom environment or subject, it can be a fiasco for a foreign language classroom.

**Objective 2: To simplify the foreign (English) language used for communication during the lessons**

Stripping the language to its bare bones may seem counter-productive when the ultimate goal should be to make students into fluent and versatile speakers. How can one help students become effective critical thinkers when their manner of expressing their thoughts and opinions in a foreign language is often so imperfect? Most teachers will probably agree that the most effective foreign language speaker is the erring yet confident one, and not the one who is grammatically precise yet utterly unconfident. Teachers then fragment lessons into exercise-sized pieces in an attempt to force students into

performing on the levels they are not confident with. It is vital to consider whether one serves the ultimate goal of EFL speakers well by preferring academic mastery over engagement and real-life practicality.

Many adults, who were attending English lessons during the entirety of their primary and secondary education, cannot speak English now. According to the EF English Proficiency Index, the Czech Republic is behind countries like Belgium or Poland. While the reasons for the Czech Republic having a comparatively low percentage of active English speakers are plentiful, one of the reasons may be because the educators were unable to build their confidence in using English language in a safe environment and now the real-world feels too frightening or the stakes too high. According to Hendra and Jones, the EFL learners will benefit more substantially from experiencing a success earned by their active participation. A truly immersive task should be level appropriate, culturally relevant and scaffolded in a manner easily comprehensible. Most students measure their language proficiency by their ability to speak the language, regardless of their grades in tests and exams. (Hendra, L.A. & Jones, C. 2018)

The English language classroom which uses level-appropriate vocabulary, does not shy away from repetition as a proven neuroscientific tool to strengthen neural connections can, though scaffolded can raise the students' engagement with the material, and develop a more lasting connection with the target foreign language. Removing the barrier of shyness and fear when attempting to use a foreign language in a school setting may free the teacher's hands to accomplish more ambitious goals such as introducing classroom debate formats or motivating a class to write a part of the school newspaper in a foreign language.

While it is very important to nurture an environment of positivity and non-judgmental encouragement, to change the character of a class may be a highly time-consuming task, sometimes more suited to the role of the class teacher and not a language teacher. To circumnavigate the need to build the classroom climate from the ground up, the most workable solution for foreign language teachers has been to simplify the language used for communication with students and among student themselves. As teachers, we ultimately aspire to teach precise grammar, complex sentences comprised of sophisticated words. But the students often need the language and the language teachers to meet them more than halfway. In order to spark enthusiasm and interest in the language itself, it is crucial to overcome the learner's anxiety to speak the target language and to shake the stress of using a non-familiar language as a tool for voicing internal thoughts. Level-appropriate tasks and scaffolded instructions were proven to be an effective tool to help lessen the EFL learner's stress. (Li, H., & Lui, Y., 2011, Horwitz, E. K, Horwitz, M.B., & Cope, J.A.,1986)

A lesson titled "Can Czechs speak English?" used a worksheet and a simple set of thinking prompts such as "Try to write 3 European countries where you can find best users of English" and open questions such as "Do you meet English in everyday life? Where?" to spark a multi-level discussion about the level of English among the general public. A 2012 European Council's Eurobarometer 386 survey *Europeans and their Languages* showed that only 27% of Czech adults are able to hold a conversation in English. These data can serve as an interesting prompt to a more detailed discussion about the countries that were perceived by the students to be the leaders in EFL fluency and the actual results. A general discussion about methods, importance and good vs. bad motivations for learning a foreign language can then follow. To be able to manage a lesson such as this, the teacher had to build the student's confidence overtime, create and support a culture of error by their actions and also be able and willing to accept simple statements and often incorrect use of grammatical structures in order to support the natural flow of the conversation.



16| Primary students are often overwhelmed by complex grammar and as a result get discouraged from trying when they feel that English is impossible for them to master. Understanding half of the rules of elementary algebra will ultimately result in zero practical ability to solve an equation, but remembering only half of the new vocabulary will not completely hinder student's ability to communicate in English. Creativity and flexibility may efficiently manage gaps in concrete knowledge if they are encouraged to view the language as a different medium.

The glorification of grammatical and syntactical precision in young learners at primary and secondary levels in the Czech Republic may be a topic that does not come often during conferences on language and teaching but is one that virtually every single student in the Czech Republic has experienced.

### **Objective 3: Use creative tools to engage students minds and bodies**

A second part of the research aims to explore the link between the teacher as an educator and the teacher as a performing artist. When standing in front of dozens of students every day, the role of a teacher is not dissimilar to that of an actor on stage. Any ultimately successful teacher needs to have the ability to change the atmosphere and engage the curious nature hiding behind the façades of the students watching. To illustrate, what follows is a project outline devised by Michaela Kašparová, so all the "I" references are attributed to herself.

All the lesson plans are dedicated to speaking and were used during conversation lessons. These lessons were additionally added to a timetable to improve the speaking skills of the students. The conversation lessons took place in the language lab, we all sat on the floor in a circle. There were twelve students at the age of fifteen. I always worked with the same group of students which allowed me to work constantly. At the beginning of the lesson we always started with some small-talk to get the students talking and release the nervousness in their speaking. We always started with a short discussion about current topics such as events and news in the school (e.g.: tests, quality of school lunches, the Day of Languages, theatre performances...).

Afterwards students were given the worksheets. The names of the worksheets are: Housing, Happiness, The First Impression, Holidays, Can the Czech Speak English, Birthday Party. All the worksheets have certain principles in common. Firstly, they are designed to support a responsible attitude to learning; worksheets are student-oriented materials. Students use information they already know, and their further development is in their hands. Secondly, the worksheets develop critical thinking motivating students to set goals, find information, make assumptions and sort information. Thirdly, the worksheets are affected by my teaching experience (the most common expectation of my students is to improve their communicative skills), and finally a communicative approach in the teaching of English.

The aim of these worksheets was to boost the confidence of the students in using English, so that they would not be afraid of speaking. In the following part I will concentrate on the general structure of the sheets, students' responsibilities, the role of the teacher, and characteristics of the topics.

All the speaking worksheets can be basically divided into two groups: opinion based and task-based worksheets. They both have specific repeated structures which turned to be very useful, not just for me making the worksheets easier to prepare, but also for the students who got used to the regular structure and found it helpful. Knowing what to expect, they get to work quickly, and they keep the pace easily. The general structure of the worksheets is: Introductory part, Voluntary research, Students' activity, Discussion, Assessment, Feedback.



However, each of the group of topics deals with the topics differently and develops various skills, therefore each group needs to be characterised more precisely. There is one example chosen for each group, so that they can be described more effectively. Opinion-based topics are explored first.

The opinion-based tasks are created to develop both speaking skills in English and the ability to gather information, choose the most important facts, make an opinion, share their ideas, give a presentation and prepare arguments. Some of the opinion-based topics are even controversial to stir discussions. The topic I have chosen as an example is *Happiness*.

The first part of the lesson is the *Introductory part*. It always consists of a lead-in activity, often reading or brainstorming. This part aimed at getting more information for the topic, so it is easier for students to create and later express their opinions. The lead-in activities should also motivate the students to participate in the lesson. In the *Happiness* worksheet the *Introductory part* consists of brainstorming and some survey results. At the beginning, students are to come up with three things that make young people worried. Later, they are confronted with the results from the survey. The crucial aspect influencing the choice of the lead-in listening or reading is its length. The lead-in activities need to be short.

Voluntary research should follow as the next step. Its aim is to get more information about a topic, find new interesting facts and at the same enable students to work with English sources. This part is not compulsory. If there is not a need to get more information, this part can be skipped. I had to skip this part in the lessons because of the lack of time.

The following part is called "students' activity." Students work alone or in pairs. These activities develop critical thinking: structuring of information, using previous knowledge, predicting, judging, forming an opinion and preparing arguments. In the *Happiness* worksheet they had a short list of four countries; they should put them in the right order, from the happiest to the least happy ones. Later, they were confronted with the right answers. As I expected, most of the students thought the wealthy countries to be the happiest ones. They were surprised with the opposite results. A discussion developed focusing on the relationship between happiness and wealth.

The second discussed part is task-oriented worksheets. Topics in this group of worksheets are focused on skills such as description, planning and organising which prepare them for speaking or entrance exams. The introductory part also consists mostly of reading or brainstorming. Its aim is to stir imagination, inspire and motivate students for further work. The introductory part is often connected with instructions for the following activity – *the group work*. Instructions show students the direction to go. Being allowed to say anything they want often leads students to confusion; consequently, their decision making is too long. However, if the instructions are too strict, then they might not be followed by students. To illustrate, I will use an example from the *Birthday party* worksheet, which provides a clear direction to avoid long decision making or misunderstanding. It is specifically stated in the introductory reading what the girl likes, so that the students know what path they should take.

The following step is voluntary research. It serves mainly to ones without any ideas in the task-orientated worksheets. However, the most time-consuming part of the lesson is the group work. The ideal number of students for one group is three or four. Finally, each group will prepare and share presentation with the classmates. Every student in the group should share a point.

The last two parts of the worksheets, *discussion* and *assessment*, can be described for both groups of worksheets together. Questions in the *discussion* parts are focused on students' opinions and experience. Assessment is feedback from either the teacher or other students. Seeing them being too afraid of making mistakes and therefore their unwillingness to speak, I provided a brief general

18| teacher's assessment at the end of presentations as the best option. As soon as the students become more fluent in their speaking, I would pay more attention to reducing mistakes in their speech.

The role of the teacher is to guide the students through the lessons. They help students with difficult vocabulary or translating. However, the main source of ideas and information are the students themselves. It is also important to be a teacher observer who monitors the *students' activity* part. Going through the classroom and being at students' disposal helps to watch the progress of students and enables the teacher to see how much effort students make.

The activities aim at supporting students' self-efficacy and self-learning. Students are assigned a task and it is up to them how carefully they will do it. Sharing opinions in front of the class is based on volunteering, however, every one of the students should have a space and chance to practice speaking. If some students do not participate at all, I will ask them directly. I also find it important to enhance responsibilities in group work because such a form of education is not popular among students. It is mainly because group work is basically the result of one or two members of the group. While they are working hard, the rest have free time. To support students' responsibility in group work, it is important to define partial responsibilities such as one for vocabulary, grammar or graphics. Their distribution may be done within the group by students themselves.

This part of this paper is dedicated to further comments on the organisation of lessons. They focus on the amount of English and Czech used in the lessons, level of vocabulary used in worksheets and use of written support during presentations. I find it crucial to support students as much as possible to use English in communication with both me, and other classmates.

The simple vocabulary the worksheets contain is chosen on purpose. The reason is not to demotivate students with unknown vocabulary and at the same time not to spend too much time translating it. Students are encouraged to rely on the vocabulary they know. If they want to look up words they do not know they are free to use a school computer. However, the number of new words cannot be too high because they need to remember them for the presentation.

Students usually ask whether they can have notes on them while they are giving their speeches in front of the class. Unfortunately, some students tended to look to them too much, therefore, I did not allow them to have a full text there, only a certain outline. To be sure that students can structure logically their speeches and presentations we tried to make an outline for one topic, *the first impression* worksheet. I also encouraged discussion and questions from the class, so that speakers were freed from long monologues that usually make them even more nervous about forgetting all they had prepared.

In the final part I would like to describe the factors influencing students' performances and feedback of the used lesson plans. I was surprised how much the class is influenced by "unimportant" factors such as changes to timetables, time of lunch, organising school excursions or just the atmosphere in the class. Even though I had thought of them as marginal issues, they were of great importance, therefore, the quality of performance varied from one week to another immensely. Yet, for the purpose of the present article, these outside influences cannot be further examined. Still in practice, they need to be considered with great significance.

There is one more aspect or rather a danger for a teacher that decides to prepare a lesson dedicated to speaking. It is the expectation of the teacher versus the actual reaction to the topic. For example, I found the topic based on designing a room an interesting one, and I expected that students would get motivated, and that they would carefully prepare their presentations. However, the topic was not successful at all. In a few minutes after assigning the task, the groups were all finished. My attempts to stir a discussion were useless, so I had to react and improvise immediately.

Such unexpected turns were also positive ones. I was surprised that rather serious topics such as effective language learning or the relationship between poverty and happiness provoked the pupils to discussion and sharing their opinions. I believe that the success of such topics that are based on opinions rather than knowledge comes from their need, which is typical for their age, to say what they think, make comments and judge things around them. Also, the informal environment of the language lab and sitting in a circle helped as well. Generally, two thirds of the students worked hard. The most important aspect was always the first comment from the class, then others smoothly followed.

The written feedback of the students was a real motivation for me. At the end of the project lessons I asked them to write any comments about these speaking worksheets. They were generally positive about them finding the worksheets effective. They wrote that during these conversational lessons they were less afraid to speak. Levels of grammar and vocabulary appeared to be adequate. Students' so far gained knowledge was sufficient. At the same time, they found both the topics and worksheets interesting.

Also, some difficulties came up during the lessons. The problem usually occurred when the topic was based on factual knowledge. Originally, I counted with time during which they can do research in my preparations. This idea was utopian, firstly, there was not enough time for it. To manage research within the worksheet would require an extra lesson. Secondly, such researches require computers, or at last wi-fi, so that the pupils can have access to information. This was not the case, so the students had to rely on their knowledge.

The weakest part of the lessons was the feedback from the class. There were almost no volunteers, so I always had to ask someone for it. Most of the students did not want to criticise other views, so the feedback was not effective. It proves that students are not used to giving one another oral feedback.

Despite these difficulties noticeable progress was made. Even though grammatical correctness did not improve, they made the same mistakes as they did at the beginning, they were noticeably less afraid of speaking. It can be assumed that the speaking worksheets improved fluency rather than correctness. If an ESL teacher aims at getting their students talking, it is useful to dedicate the whole lesson to one topic and also provide them with information for the topic (the introductory part of the worksheets). It gives students enough time to get deep into the topic and have time to form their own opinions. Therefore, speaking and expressing themselves become easier and more fluent.

## **Conclusion**

The average student in the Czech Republic receives around 900 lessons of English as a foreign language. That amount should be enough to move the learners from complete beginners to at least A2 category which assures the speaker's ability to communicate in simple situations. In order to facilitate changes leading to a more confident command of language communication, the present article, although in provoking form, challenges the *status quo* embedded in brick and mortar education by implementing critical thinking and the so-called 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The article has presented three aims which enable easier implementations of the 4Cs: creating positive milieu during the teaching process, adjusting the language level used in class, and finally fostering creativity to engage students. Arguably, when meeting the objective trinity, critical thinking can be introduced to students more easily, the project also confirmed.

More generally, the paper has shown how vast and topical the territory of performance and pedagogy embraces: from radical pedagogy where students kill their master, as Gómez-Peña advocates

20 | (227–228) to the intimate micro-performances of Joshua Sofaer, from Brexit as highlighted by Pilný and Pavelková, to AI, as Práger and Řeřicha posit. Yet, more than anything else, both the articles the entire volume hold to agree, we hope, that the phenomena of performance and pedagogy are to be tackled as an open deterritorializing system, in a creative, engaging dialectic, and most importantly immanent fashion. Let us, on behalf of all the authors, wish you inspiring reading.

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### **Canadian Experience: a Different Perspective**

*Abstract: The text presents the research project called "Canadian Experience" which was carried out at the Faculty of Education of the University of Hradec Králové. The method of oral history was applied by the researchers with the aim to broaden our knowledge about Canada. The project also focused on under-graduate students and their abilities to carry out research and analyse and evaluate its results.*

#### **Motto**

"That's Czechoslovak?" I hear behind me. I turn around, startled. It's Irene Svensson, in an elegant coat, with an inner lining of sealskin, bought no doubt in an expensive Yorkville boutique. She has materialized like a spirit. "No, it's Czech," I say, and add, irritated after almost two years of instruction from me even the most dull-witted Canadian girl should know it. "There is no such thing as the Czechoslovak language." (Škvorecký, 1977, p. 21)

Reading the beginning of Josef Škvorecký's novel *The Engineer of Human Souls*, we can smile a little at the question "That's Czechoslovak?" asked by a Canadian lady. The answer "There is no such thing as the Czechoslovak language." deepens our smile at the ignorance of something that goes without saying. However, a similar misconception can appear if Czech people are asked about "Canadian experience" – a lot of them just think of a trip to the Niagara Falls and a maple syrup tasting. But "Canadian experience" is something else. Those who have encountered the Canadian reality as emigrants seeking a new homeland will be glad to explain this term.

#### **Introduction**

As we can read in The Canadian Encyclopedia, "oral history is an account of the past transmitted by word of mouth. Since the beginnings of its modern form, oral history has made important contributions to the ways in which we understand and interpret the past".

When the method of oral history is applied, a presentation of historical events acquires certain human dimension. "It can be said that oral history has made the illiterate literate and has given the silent masses a voice." (The Canadian Encyclopedia). Vaněk et al. (2007) emphasise the importance of personal experiences – they are unique and unrepeatable historical sources.

The method of oral history puts human beings into the centre of attention. That is why we decided to apply this method when revealing what "Canadian experience" is.

As we can read in the publication called "Kanadská zkušenost. Češi v Kanadě: Emigrace a návrat" (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 37): "People who are looking for a job in Canada are usually asked the question 'Do you already have Canadian experience?'. This question actually asks whether the person has already adopted a positive and helpful approach to both the colleagues and the clients, and a positive approach to work. That is considered to be the essential necessity for all the Canadian society; Canadians learn about this necessity already at primary school." This explanation of the term "Canadian experience" was given to us by one of the respondents participating in the oral history project which focused on the experience of Czech-Canadians who returned to their homeland after 1989. The aim of this research project, symbolically called "Canadian Experience", which was carried out within



the framework of the specific research at the Faculty of Education of the University of Hradec Králové was to broaden horizons and gain a perspective from the other side and gain another view of Canada and also of the Czech Republic, which the respondents had decided to come back to.

Those persons who had agreed to answer our questions expressed their opinions quite openly. They considered their decisions to leave for Canada as correct and useful. Their emigration had resulted in their adaptation to a new country and a new culture, and that is why they considered this life phase as fruitful and bringing them a feeling of living a double life.

### **Oral history and Canadian experience**

We asked our respondents the following four basic questions which focused on their "Canadian experience" and which also focused on their opinions concerning their return to their homeland:

Why did you return to your homeland?

How do you evaluate your stay in Canada?

What was your personal benefit from the emigration?

How could you use your Canadian experience after returning to the Czech Republic?

Answering these four questions, the respondents gradually revealed more details and more episodes from their life in Canada. During the process of the interviews we decided to include into our project not only returning emigrants but also those emigrants who decided to stay in Canada and who just come back to their homeland as visitors. Their feeling and opinions are worth including into our project since these people are still closely linked with their homeland.

The interviews were conducted in the face to face mode in Czech or English (whichever was more convenient for the respondents). The interviewer's personality and his / her personal approach to the issue and his / her relationship with the respondent are obviously reflected in the varied forms of the interviews. In the final output of the project, which was the publication "Kanadská zkušenost. Češi v Kanadě: Emigrace a návrat", these interviews were arranged alphabetically according to the interviewers' names. This way, individual coherent communication units were presented.

### **Canada through Czech emigrants' eyes**

All the respondents appreciated and emphasised tolerance and helpfulness offered by Canadians to newcomers to Canada:

"I could not anticipate the reception we got from the people. Our stuff came in a container and the container was parked in front of our house and people came from the various houses and some came with some tea or some cakes and they all had children the same age as our children and they said: Ok, we have a pool! They took the children away. From day one to this day, that is twenty-five, twenty-six years, these neighbours, they are not all there anymore, but basically it has been a wonderful community. I cannot imagine anywhere in the world I had such a feeling of neighbours. In Scotland it is a little bit like that but they are all Scottish. But here, you have Japanese there, you have Chinese there, you have French, English, Germans, and they were all holding together and helping each other and that was amazing." (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 95)

24| 'Never complain and take life optimistically' – that is what most of Czechs consider as a positive feature of Canadian mentality:

"The pioneers who settled here had a very hard life, especially in winter, and when they met, they greeted each other, How are you? Fine. Just fine. Thank you. And so it is still. When a barn burned out, the surrounding farmers came to help because it was a matter of life or death. No complaint anywhere." (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 41)

However, there were also opposite opinions. The 'Never complain' approach was considered by some respondents as too conventional:

"I'm taking an elevator. Five people are going down from the tenth floor, and everyone is asking "How are you?" And everybody is saying: "Fine, fine." And so on ... He was sacked in the morning, his wife ran away at noon and he came home to find that his house had burnt down, but he mustn't say and he is afraid to say that it isn't good." (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 48)

Otherness does not matter in Canada:

"Canadians are so much used to people coming from all over the world, you could be blue, you could have a name like Tararinga Badam-Badam, they will never tell you: 'That is an interesting name!' They do not care. Yes, they know, if they know you, like my friends, they know about me. They want to know, I tell them. But you do not get this questioning round the corner every day." (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 97)

The differences in life in Anglophone Canada and in Quebec were not considered as significant by emigrants from Czechoslovakia:

"Did you feel that you were in Canada or in Quebec? - That is an interesting question, I have sort of wondered about that because I was at an age where you have to work, I was still young. We could not travel or go round and getting to see what English Canada really looked like. So yeah, I asked myself that question too. I now know it was Canada, now I know it, but I was posing myself the same question. Is this Canada? You know. This is not what everybody was talking about." (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 94)

We wondered about the issue of the loss of identity. We asked the respondents who had decided to stay in Canada the following question: "Have you ever thought you'd want to come back?" The question was answered in the following way:

"No, there's no reason. My husband has a very good position here, and he runs a laboratory at a local university that is internationally recognized. It's also a different environment, we see the difference between European and American culture. Of course, it's not just positive, it's the whole packet. I think the most important thing for people who leave their country and live somewhere else is the job. If the job is good, then one is satisfied. We have a lot of friends from the Czech community. One person, one story. Some are happy here, they have made



friends, they have a job here and they live here. Then there are people who are half here, half still there, they come back and forth, they have certain background in both places, but they are not quite home here. In the end there are people who came here doing something, but basically they were not very happy and satisfied, many people have even returned.” (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 142)

### **Emigration and languages**

Students doing research within the framework of the project are enrolled as students of the Faculty of Education of the University of Hradec Králové; they major in teaching French and English or French and Czech. The connection between the research carried out in the sphere of oral history and studying language disciplines is not coincidental. It is obvious that linguistic issues are burning issues in each case of emigration. That is why the respondents were asked about their experience with acquisition of English (or French), about retaining / losing the ability to speak Czech and about possibilities or desires to teach Czech to their children or grandchildren. Here are their opinions:

“The problem, of course, is with schools. One Czech school is, I guess, in Toronto, but otherwise adults have to teach Czech to their children by themselves. It is a pity that there is nobody in the Czech Republic offering a kind of distant teaching. An interactive way would be certainly interesting. And it would be really fruitful because it’s not easy to keep a good level of the language. My wife and I have no problem with that because we speak Czech at home.” (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 147)

“Emigration not only compels to study foreign languages; you are also forced to keep your mother tongue. It also transforms the identity of each individual since I am no longer a Czech, neither am I a Canadian. I am rather a European. Everything is sort of international, which is convenient for me. I do not forget my Czech roots.” (Kunešová, Tauchmanová at al., 2018, p. 152)

### **Oral history from the researching students’ perspective**

The aim of our research project was not only to broaden our knowledge about Canada through the application of the method of oral history. The project also focused on under-graduate students and their abilities to carry out research within the sphere of their studies and their abilities to evaluate such a kind of research. That is why the students participating in the research were asked to evaluate the project from their perspective. The students’ opinions are presented below.

#### **Eliška Havelková:**

When I was offered this great opportunity to participate in the project called “Canadian Experience”, not in the slightest did I expect how much new experience I will gain. I connected the work on this project with my stay in Montreal. Surely, everyone who has ever visited such an exotic and interesting country as Canada definitely is comes back overwhelmed with new delights, memories and experiences. I was even luckier since I could come back enriched a lot more since I had explored Canada from another point of view - I had a chance to look into lives of several Czech emigrants who live in Montreal. The interviews with them were really very enriching for me.

I heard fascinating and nearly incredible stories. I realized how important the freedom (which we really have these days) is for people. I also realized how much we, Czech people, miss the sense of

26| patriotism. That we are not really proud of what we have. All these emigrants miss their Czech homeland, in spite of what they have been through. All the interviewed people feel homesick, they try to be patriotic in certain way: someone goes to Toronto for Czech beer, someone else teaches the grandchildren Czech or keeps Czech customs and traditions.

It was quite interesting to compare the opinions expressed by Czech emigrants living in Montreal with those expressed by the re-emigrants who had returned to the Czech Republic and who were interviewed by my colleagues. A very interesting opinion was presented, for example, by Tomáš Jedlík, who mentioned the difference in thinking resulting from different systems of education - in the Czech Republic we tend to criticize, whereas in Canada people tend to use critical thinking, they are used to comparing, thinking about pros and cons, etc. I also found very interesting what Mrs. Alena Foustková said. She pointed out that we, Czechs, are much more influenced by media and afraid of other cultures (she mentioned this in relation to Lebanon).

Having been involved in the research project, I gradually broadened my opinion concerning French-speaking culture beyond France. I believe that also in my future teaching career I will be given a chance to tell students not only about Canada itself, but also about people who have found their new home there.

The work on the project really enriched me. I gained new information about Canada and its historical and cultural background, and I also got at least partially aware of what emigration means and includes.

**Věra Tauchmanová, jr.:**

I really appreciate the fact that I was given the opportunity to participate in the project in which the method of oral history was applied. Talking personally to people who had left our country and then came back, I gained a lot of new and interesting information enriching my knowledge of the history and culture of both Canada and the Czech Republic. Hearing about the reasons for emigration and the later return, I learnt more about problematic social issues of the second half of the twentieth century. It was interesting for me to get to know the authentic feelings of people who had had to leave their home country and start their new life in the country whose language and whose cultural values were new to them. I really admired all the personalities who agreed with being interviewed. They had succeeded in establishing their successful professional career in a foreign country in spite of the fact that their starting position was definitely complicated.

The participation in the project was motivating for my future professional career of a teacher of foreign languages as well as a teacher of the Czech language. The respondents' ability to successfully communicate in a foreign language environment both at the level of every day communication and at the level of the professional career was really fascinating. Their ability to successfully acquire and learn a foreign language and not to forget their mother tongue will be definitely mentioned to my learners. I will also make my learners aware of reasons for which some Czech people left their country in the second half of the twentieth century. I deeply believe that tolerance and helpfulness offered by Canadians to people coming to Canada from other countries will be appreciated by and will be motivating for Czech secondary school students.

**Radka Vojkovská:**

When I was given the offer to participate in the Canadian Experience project, I did not hesitate and I accepted this offer immediately. The reason was quite simple – to learn more about the history of both the countries, to listen to the stories of human fates and, last but not least, to learn about the research process.

For us, the students who joined the project, everything started in spring 2017. The first step was to address the respondents. However, this was not as simple as it seemed in the beginning. We were looking for email addresses, sending letters, addressing the relatives living abroad. I tried to get in contact with more than ten people. However, only two of those who emigrated to Canada during the previous regime replied.

The interviews were carried out in different ways. But in all the cases we had an opportunity to meet the interviewees personally, to look at photos taken during emigration or to read some letters, to simply perceive all the context of their emigration more intensively.

The highlight of our work was the opportunity to participate in the preparation of the symposium called "Canadian Experience" held in November 2017. The two-day symposium was personally attended by those who in the past emigrated to Canada and then returned to the Czech Republic and who could thus share their often unbelievable and emotional stories. Moreover, in 2017, Canada celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a dominion, and therefore the history of the country and the history of immigration was presented from a broader perspective at our symposium.

For me, the whole project was a beautiful reminder of what should definitely not be forgotten. I learnt a lot of interesting information about life paths and fates that were not always easy and that should be forwarded to our future generations. Not only for this reason, I would like to thank the project coordinators, who have widened and enriched our awareness of this topic, and who have acquainted us with the secrets of oral research and related studies.

## **Conclusion**

The research project "Canadian Experience" finished in 2018. The benefits of the method of oral history applied in our research into emigration and return can be found at several levels:

The cognitive level. The interviews brought issues and information that authentically portray life in Canada. Many of the mentioned phenomena, customs and habits to which the respondents had to adapt and which surprised them have broadened our knowledge about the country and all the American continent concerning the nature, geography and history, the political and administrative order, and also concerning current nation-wide events and issue as well as local ones.

The ethical level. All the respondents appreciated Canadian tolerance, friendly approach and helpfulness. Czech people will probably get surprised when hearing about Canadians' custom not to complain and when hearing about their patriotism based on the principle of pride and commitment. The state administration then guarantees the highest possible freedom to every individual in the sphere of the professional career. Your success is based on your qualities and hard work; it is not based on corruption and help offered by your friends.

The language level. Emigration requires communication and understanding. That is why all our respondents mentioned this sphere. It is interesting to observe and to try to evaluate how a person can succeed in a foreign country thanks to his or her language skills. At the same time, the mother tongue remains to be a safe background. The ability to still speak the mother tongue and to pass its knowledge on to younger generations is worth mentioning. The future of the Czech language will certainly depend also on its status among people who will decide to live elsewhere than in the Czech Republic.

The identity level. Last but not least, also the issue of identity is reflected in the language: How do people who have lived at least half of their lives outside their home country feel? All the interviewees have a feeling that their own selves exist in a kind of the Third Space which came into existence thanks to certain interconnection of the cultures.

28| Our project has come to its end. But our knowledge about Canadian experience which arose from emigration is permanent and will never lose its importance. The key words are: understanding between different nations and tolerance.

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### **“Ulster Says No” – Again? David Ireland’s *Cyprus Avenue*, Cliché, and Brexit**

*Abstract: The article engages with the award-winning black comedy *Cyprus Avenue* by Northern Irish playwright David Ireland in the context of Northern Irish drama, the aesthetics of the grotesque, and the current political situation in the UK and beyond. While it has been pointed out by numerous commentators that the greatest danger of writing about the conflict in Northern Ireland and its aftermath is that of the cliché, the present essay argues that rather than recycling stock characters and scenarios, *Cyprus Avenue* highlights the persistence of toxic views in contemporary reality, and does so in an extremely deft and disturbing manner. Furthermore, viewing *Cyprus Avenue* through the prism of the grotesque may help to assess its effects on the audience. The article goes on to discuss the relevance of *Cyprus Avenue* to the present moment in detail, as highlighted by reviewers at the time of its premiere in 2016, and its uncanny underscoring during the Brexit negotiations. Finally, it suggests that the way in which Ireland’s provocative drama blurs the borderline between nationalism and mental illness is of relevance far beyond the local context of Northern Ireland.*

Commentators generally agree that the forms and themes customarily associated with so-called “Troubles drama” have become exhausted (see Phelan, “From Troubles” 372–373); yet, theatre in contemporary Northern Ireland continues to revolve around politics. This is hardly surprising, given the widespread frustration at the malfunctioning system of government. After the Good Friday Agreement had been signed in 1998, it took eighteen months for the Northern Ireland Assembly to start operating with full powers, only for it to grind to a standstill within a mere three months. Its operation has been suspended a further four times since, with the latest suspension lasting from January 2017 until the present. The same is true of the local government, the Northern Ireland Executive, which collapsed for the fifth time in January 2017 as well, as of which Northern Ireland has had no government. It may be argued that the stalling of the power-sharing political mechanisms in Northern Ireland stems largely from the disillusionment of moderate voters, which has brought about an ebb in support for the moderate political parties – the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) – instrumental as they had been for the termination of open conflict. Ever since the early 2000s, elections have been won by the extremist Protestant and Catholic parties, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin, who each disseminate its own form of militant, populist nationalism and whose prominent members include former terrorists. It is apparent that a good share of moderate citizens of the province have been failing to cast their vote. Moreover, although acts of terrorist violence have thankfully become a rarity, the current level of segregation between the Protestants and the Catholics is regarded by many as unparalleled, involving residential areas, schools, and even public spaces such as shops in central Belfast. Describing the atmosphere in post-Agreement Northern Ireland in 2008, literary historian John Brannigan spoke about the province as suspended “between the ‘bad’, dark notoriety of the past, and the precarious and tentative visions of an infinitely abortive future” (142), which still sadly makes for an apt comment.

It is quite natural then that satire, which has been a powerful strand in Northern Irish playwriting and theatre since the first productions of the Ulster Literary Theatre in the first two decades of the twentieth century (see Foley), continues to be rife.<sup>(1)</sup> One of the most remarkable satirical playwrights

30| to have achieved prominence in the 2010s is David Ireland, whose central theme has been the deep existential angst experienced by Northern Irish Unionists. This essay will focus on his most remarkable work to date, *Cyprus Avenue*, aiming to discuss its effects on the audience in broader aesthetic and political contexts.

David Ireland may be seen to follow his near-contemporary Gary Mitchell in his thematic concern with the Unionists, as Mitchell's forceful naturalist tragedies such as *In a Little World of Our Own* (1997) or *As the Beast Sleeps* (1998), in the words of Imelda Foley, also "systematically dissolve[e] tenuous links with normality to create a world apart, whose inhabitants have constructed their own ethical canon, complete with the resources for its implementation." (Foley). However, Ireland's work has been cast mostly in the comic mould, and his most recent plays, including *Cyprus Avenue*, have been much closer to the satirical comedies of Tim Loane, whose diptych *Caught Red Handed* (Tinderbox, 2002) and *To Be Sure* (Lyric Theatre, 2007) has become one of the pinnacles of contemporary Northern Irish theatre. Utilising the standard facets of a wild farce, including frequent comic gags, the first of these plays has representatives of the DUP deal with the sudden demise of their leader in a toilet by replacing him with a double in order to prevent a referendum on united Ireland. The second play of the diptych satirises bigoted Catholics in a similar way, focusing on a family which intends to celebrate the anniversary of the Easter Rising by crucifying one of its members, and as the preparations are derailed, an IRA member is clobbered to death with a frying pan, his head finds itself in a microwave oven but continues to speak, and so on and so forth. Importantly, Loane's work does not ridicule militant radicals only but also all those who enable their dominance in the province by their silence, with the implication that this group includes many an audience member. The uncomfortable manner of engaging the audience – described by Mark Phelan as a combination of "a good night out" with a "kick in the arse" (Phelan, "When Hope" 18) – is, I would argue, again somewhat akin to the strategies employed by David Ireland in his current work.

*Cyprus Avenue* was commissioned by the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, where it opened in February 2016 in a Royal Court Theatre co-production directed by Vicky Featherstone, continuing for a run at the Royal Court in London. Ireland won the James Tait Black Award for 2017 for the play, and Featherstone's production was subsequently revived in 2018, appearing at the Abbey Theatre again, travelling to The MAC in Belfast and The Public Theater in New York, and finally returning to the Royal Court in February – March 2019. The play examines the destructive anxieties and sense of disenfranchisement of Northern Irish Loyalists in the framework of a black, violent comedy. The main protagonist, Eric, is an ordinary middle-class Protestant from Belfast who arrives at the conclusion that his new-born granddaughter is the leader of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams; he even purchases a pair of toy glasses and draws a beard on the face of the baby, in order "To extinguish reasonable doubt" (19). His conviction may be patently absurd but the cold logic and rigour with which he proceeds to dispose of the icon of Republicanism certainly are not.

The play's considerable potential to shock and disturb its audience was powerfully enhanced by the casting of Stephen Rea in the role of Eric. Rea stood out as an embodiment of decency and melancholy (Billington, Crawley), bringing in his brilliant performance "depth and sympathy to a man who is terrified of losing his identity, who must defend himself against weakness" (Meany). Indeed, it may be argued that the casting of Stephen Rea became an instrumental element in the emotional manipulation of the spectators, whose empathy for the bigoted, chauvinistic and racist protagonist is essential for the desired effect of the work. Rather than being alienated from Eric as an evil person, audience members are invited to consider him in relation to their own situation right from the start, as his therapist, Bridget, gently explains:



In our lives, things become tangled up. [...] Emotions, I'm talking about. Our past. The things that happened to us in the past to make us what we are. Our family of origin. Our conditioning. Our cultural background. Inside it's a mess. Every single one of us is a diabolical mess. We walk around being normal but all of us inside are unfathomable and messy. (6)

Even when Eric, like Teeni in Ireland's arresting, naturalist two-hander *Everything between Us* (2010; see Pilný, "Anxieties" 12), shockingly refers to the black therapist as a "nigger" shortly after (7), his ignorance of the unacceptability of the word is just credible, being ascribed to his cultural background: having grown up in Belfast, Eric "never met a black person until [he] was forty-seven" (8) and the term seems to have been common in the discourse that he was raised in.

The social status of the protagonist is likewise of crucial importance. Unlike the fanatical Loyalists (or, for that matter, Republicans) of most of Troubles drama, Eric is firmly middle-class, living in a leafy street in an affluent part of East Belfast. This is Cyprus Avenue, from which the play takes its name. The same street has been immortalised by Van Morrison in the eponymous 1968 song, which is also of relevance to Ireland's drama. Morrison's classic hit is heard in a Muzak version during the Prologue (5), and like so much else in the play, bears a distinctly ambivalent undertone, as its nostalgic reminiscence of an idyllic urban landscape involves a male gaze at underage women (see Morrison).

Despite its chilling outcome, *Cyprus Avenue* abounds with moments of exuberant hilarity. These occur mostly during Eric's meetings with Slim, a UDA terrorist depicted as a Tarantinoesque psychopath who attends, in vain, regular anger management sessions. What is fundamental, however, is that unlike Slim, Eric is not depicted as a laughable psychopathic character at all. His views, which he painstakingly elucidates throughout the action, are those traditionally upheld by the Democratic Unionist Party, the radical party established by the Reverend Ian Paisley in 1971 during the early years of the Troubles and as noted above, currently still a principal player in Northern Ireland politics. Eric's murderous deeds may appear to be committed by a lunatic but they in fact 'merely' follow a militant nationalist ideology up to its ultimate conclusions. As Jane Hardy has poignantly observed in her review of the play, "it's not the guy in the balaclava who is the problem, but our late middle-aged, suited sociopath" (Hardy).

Ireland has the brutal violence committed by Eric on his family members performed with unflinching vigour on stage, leaving the spectators profoundly shaken and terrified. Michael Billington has consequently called *Cyprus Avenue* "the most shocking, subversive and violent play" currently on in London, and one that "has never been more relevant" (Billington) at that. While most reviewers have praised the play in similar terms both for its originality and topicality, a number of commentators have described it as "problematic". They have included Mic Moroney, who thoroughly dismissed *Cyprus Avenue* because of its "shock tactics and dubious depiction of psychosis" and regarded it as "sadly incoherent", all in a single paragraph (Moroney). In a much more measured and elaborate response, Clare Wallace has argued in a recent conference paper that despite its efficiency in rousing the spectators and making them feel intensely uncomfortable, the play offers, at heart, only a recycling of images that are locked in, static and profoundly patriarchal (Wallace). In her paper, Wallace has joined a whole line of critics to have pointed out that the greatest danger of writing about the Troubles and their aftermath is that of the cliché. Of those that are referred to in this essay alone, Mark Phelan has elaborated on the issue in his contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* extensively, noting that as early as 1972, poet Frank Ormsby published his "Write-an-Ulster-Play-Kit", "signalling just how swiftly drama dealing with the conflict had ossified into stock characters and scenarios" (Phelan, "From Troubles" 372). Making a similar point, Imelda Foley has tellingly titled her survey of

32| Northern Irish theatre "Not Another Troubles Play". Last but not least, Tom Maguire in his groundbreaking study *Making Theatre in Northern Ireland* has noted that apart from a certain kind of Troubles play becoming stagnant, "theatre has played its part in generating and repeating" clichéd images in the general discourse about Northern Ireland (2).

These comments are most apposite of course. Moreover, it is true that Eric in *Cyprus Avenue* displays a stereotypical sectarian mindset, spouting the customary prejudices associated with Ulster Loyalism, including an alarmingly sexist attitude to women. However, I would argue that rather than regurgitating clichés, Ireland's play highlights the persistence of toxic views in contemporary reality, and does so in an extremely deft and disturbing manner. For one, *Cyprus Avenue* actually explicitly foregrounds the problematic relationship between the present and the past. When Eric is expelled from home due to his persistent absurd remarks about the baby/Gerry Adams, we find him seated on a park bench, facing the audience. He proceeds to deliver a monologue about being considered Irish when on a business trip to London. He is ostensibly talking to his therapist in the present, while the theatrical situation has him deliver his lines to the spectators, as he is facing the auditorium and Bridget is absent. However, the scene is at the same time set in the park, where he is shortly to meet Slim for the first time and plot the killing of the baby, which means firmly in the past. Eric's conversation with Slim conceptualises this as follows:

Eric        I was in her office and I was talking about the past. This is the past.  
Slim        No this is the now.  
Eric        No it's the past. In my mind it's the past.  
Slim        How can it be the past? How can this be the past? This is the now!  
Eric        But this happened in the past!  
Slim        Stop talking about the past! This is the now! It can't be the past! It's the now! Now it's the now now! The NOW! (43–44)

The clever metatheatrical moment, as well as being comic, points out that while the sinister figure of a militant bigot may appear to be stuck in the past, it is in fact very much still here in the present. This constitutes another point of affinity with Tim Loane's satirical dramas which like Ireland's *Cyprus Avenue*, in the words of Birte Heidemann, "suspend (and thus subvert) the Agreement's call for a 'clean break' with the past" (193).

The dialogue continues, however:

Slim        Why were you talking about Irish identity?  
Eric        Because I'm struggling.  
Slim        Why are you struggling?  
Eric        I'm worried about the future.  
Slim        Now you're talking about the future?  
Eric        I'm worried about it.  
Slim        First you're talking about the past, now you're talking about the future!  
Eric        I'm sorry for talking about the future but it's the future that worries me.  
Slim        All the time drawing your attention away from the now! THE NOW! You keep thinking like that, Eric, and life's gonna pass you by. [...] (44)



Ironically, it is the caricatured figure of a terrorist who points out the importance of focusing on the present moment, as opposed to dwelling on the past or spending one's time in worries about the future without taking the present into account. The seemingly straightforward message concerning the need to resolve the issues of the past in order to move forward is thus complicated, particularly as Slim's chief intention in the present seems to be to "shoot a Fenian" (as much as this is voiced in a context that is rife with ludicrous comedy; 46).

As Wolfgang Kayser has argued already in the late 1950s, the use of metatheatricality with the intention of putting the nature of reality in question for the audience has long been a staple feature of the grotesque in drama (137). And indeed, viewing *Cyprus Avenue* through the prism of the aesthetic category of the grotesque may help contextualise its apparent stylistic incongruity, and its effects as well. The blending of radically incompatible elements that is typical of the grotesque (see Pilný, *The Grotesque* 3ff) is manifest in the way in which Ireland – somewhat like Edward Albee in his *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* (2002) – has a play with a realistic setting and peopled mostly with true-to-life characters pivot around a bizarre conviction which, rather than functioning as an indication of insanity, is treated with utmost seriousness (and which proceeds, inexorably, to deliver tragic results). Ireland's use of humour in the play is also typical of the grotesque, in that the audience are to realise at some point that their laughter is in fact inappropriate (see Remshardt 85); if not earlier, the moment will ultimately arrive for everyone when Eric attacks his daughter, who becomes the first of his victims. The mixture of fascination and repulsion documented in the reviews of *Cyprus Avenue* is again characteristic of the beholder's reaction to the grotesque (Pilný, *The Grotesque* 2-3 and ff), as is the divisive effect evident in the responses to the play, since the grotesque is mostly "aggressive, unbending, anarchic, disruptive, and unregulated", in Ralf Remshardt's phrase (75). And finally, as I have argued elsewhere at length in relation to the work of a number of contemporary playwrights, the grotesque harbours a strong emancipatory potential for the spectators in Jacques Rancière's sense, having them reframe their perceptions and affects pertaining to reality (Pilný, *The Grotesque* 5-6). This is also why grotesque elements frequently appear in satirical works; and if we are to stay in the present context, Tim Loane's comedies provide a perfect example, depicting as they do, in Tom Maguire's words, the "grotesque attempts to maintain and exercise power" on the part of their protagonists (152). However, while the grotesque appears in the framework of satire in *Cyprus Avenue* as well, it is not so much individual greed and corruption that it serves to foreground, but rather the threatening collapse of individual identity due to the erosion of ideology.

Eric is really a badly frightened man, for whom the ideology of militant Ulster Loyalism forms the very basis of who he is. Without the ideological framework, "Everything is upside down" (7) for him, and as the changing world after the Agreement forces Eric to question its relevance, the result is a deep trauma that makes him violently lash out against the world. Considerable pessimism is manifest in the fact that Eric's therapist is unable to make him shed his toxic beliefs, despite her best efforts: although they have led Eric to exterminate his entire family, they still constitute the foundations of his identity. Ireland here again voices his scepticism towards the use of therapy and conflict resolution techniques in Northern Ireland, which he has already hinted at in *Everything between Us* (see Pilný, "Anxieties" 12-13): in many cases, there seems to be no way out of the consequences of sectarian violence. Moreover, Eric's reiteration of "No", the mantra of Ulster Loyalism, at the end of the play is quite chilling.<sup>(2)</sup> These are the closing lines of *Cyprus Avenue*:

34|       Bridget    How are you feeling?  
           Eric        Fine. For the first time in a long time, I feel at peace.  
           Bridget    You feel at peace?  
           Eric        Yes very much so.  
           Bridget    Is there anything else you need to say?  
           Eric        No. No. No.  
           Eric releases a short giddy laugh. He suppresses it.  
           Bridget    Why do you laugh?  
           Eric        I'd forgotten how much I enjoy saying no.  
           *He laughs, briefly.*  
           *Blackout.*  
           *END*  
           (82-83)

As Clare Wallace has noted, the finale of the play is all the more disturbing because Eric clearly experiences catharsis through his murderous acts – but the audience are denied it, leaving the theatre in a state of shock (Wallace). Commenting on post-Agreement drama from Northern Ireland, Birte Heidemann has argued that the violent past serves the playwrights “as a mere reference point for transforming the stage into an almost ‘utopian space’ where future political scenarios can be both played out and practised.” (192) Heidemann’s view may chime with the influential theory of “utopian performatives” elaborated by Jill Dolan (see, e.g., Dolan 455-479), but it is certainly amiss as regards *Cyprus Avenue* (and possibly all of David Ireland’s work): Ireland’s vision is virtually dystopian, and in this it in fact resembles the work of both Gary Mitchell and Tim Loane, regardless of their obvious generic difference (see Phelan, “From Troubles” 379).

When highlighting the relevance of *Cyprus Avenue* to the present moment, Michael Billington was writing at a time when the campaign before the Brexit referendum was in full swing (Billington’s review is dated 11 April 2016; the date of the vote was 23 June 2016). As it is well known, the result of the referendum came as a real shock to the majority of the UK citizens, including many of those who voted “Leave”. The emotional reaction of liberal-minded voters has been well captured in a recent article by Dan Rebellato: “From the moment, early in the morning on Friday 24 June 2016, when it became clear that Britain had narrowly voted in favour of leaving the European Union, I have been horrified by the depths of my own rage – at my fellow citizens, at the cravenness of our political class, at the impenitent stupidity of the media, at the poverty of our public conversation.” (16) However, Northern Ireland, “despite being the poorest region of the UK, returned one of the highest Remain votes at 55.8%” (Rebellato 18). As Rebellato observes, “It is likely that this reflects the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland with its land border with the Republic, the intimate connection between the Good Friday Agreement and EU membership and significant EU regional funding per capita.” (18)

As a matter of fact, Rebellato’s statement deserves to be phrased in less tentative terms. In an opinion piece published on 4 September 2018 in *The Guardian*, Roy Greenslade has pointed out that the Good Friday Agreement “committed the UK government to enshrine the European Convention of Human Rights in law, and therefore enabled Northern Ireland’s residents to benefit from the European court of human rights”, and that this aspect of human rights protection has become “the cornerstone of the peace process”. The current Conservative government intends to repeal the Human Rights Act and wishes to “introduce a bill of rights, which will relieve British judges of the requirement to follow

decisions by the European Court of Human Rights" (Greenslade). As Greenslade explains, this constitutes not merely a technical breach of the Good Friday Agreement but a fundamental threat to the functioning of Northern Irish society. Elaborating on the issue further, Patrick Cockburn has observed in a similarly informative analysis that for those Northern Irish Catholics who perceive themselves as victims of discrimination, "a decisive role from European courts [i]s an essential guarantee of equal citizenship under the law." (Cockburn) To make matters worse, Theresa May decided after the June 2017 election to have her government upheld by the DUP; as Cockburn asserts, this meant that "At one stroke, she ended the British government's neutrality between nationalists and unionists declared in 1991." (Cockburn)

The DUP was the only major political party in Northern Ireland who supported, and actively campaigned for, Brexit; and as it is apparent from my opening summary, it has been particularly the unwillingness of the DUP and Sinn Féin to work together that has made the Northern Ireland Assembly defunct since January 2017. It is small wonder that Theresa May's proposal of 24 September 2018 to have the final decision on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic ratified by the Northern Ireland Assembly has enraged many, including the EU envoys in the Brexit negotiations: the Conservatives were in fact delegating the decision to "an empty shell" (Boffey), while the negative stance of the DUP on any close relations with the Irish republic is of course well known. Needless to say, what is at issue as regards the border are not only the technicalities of physically crossing it or trading across it: the dismantling of checkpoints and the heavily guarded hard border in the wake of the Agreement has had tremendous symbolic significance, and the fact that particularly to the younger generations, the border is now largely "a meaningless entity" (Greenslade) has been one of the important measures of progress towards a more harmonious future for the province.

Rebellato's comment concerning "significant EU regional funding per capita" provided to Northern Ireland also merits development. A glance at the statistics shows that Northern Ireland has been the recipient of EU funding in areas that include not only regional development and competitiveness but also agriculture and fishing, social relief, and – importantly – conflict resolution. The total funding allocation from the EU in 2007-2013 was approximately EUR 3.5 billion, with a similar figure projected for the period 2014–2020 ("European..."); most of the funded projects have pivoted around cross-border cooperation with the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the EU. The total amount of funding provided to Northern Ireland by the EU within specially devised PEACE programmes (i.e., PEACE I–III) between 1996 and 2013 was EUR 1.334 billion (Bush and Houston 78), and the current PEACE IV programme, scheduled to run between 2014 and 2020, has been allocated EUR 229 million ("PEACE IV..."). It would be simply idealistic to assume that a Tory government will be inclined to look for an equivalent compensation for these resources in the UK budget, and the resulting rise in unemployment and the curbing of the processes of reconciliation are easy to predict. Moreover, one way of interpreting the recent alarming re-emergence of punitive beatings, and even shootings (see, e.g., Press Association), by the paramilitaries on both sides is that these are intended to point out a readiness to rekindle the conflict should the current level of relative prosperity be jeopardised. This of course besides the fact that, as an extensive expert report published in September 2018 has summarised, Brexit is already "widely regarded as having been [...] 'manna from heaven' for republican dissidents opposed to the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement", since "From their perspective, particularly if Brexit results in some form of 'hard border', Brexit will bring home 'the reality of partition' previously obscured by a largely invisible border and the constitutional settlement of the Good Friday Agreement" (BrexitLawNI). At the same time, there are significant worries that "the increased focus upon Irish reunification may

36| have an unsettling effect on loyalist paramilitaries" (BrexitLawNI).

Commentators widely agree that the current situation in Northern Ireland has been profoundly aggravated by the startling ignorance of these issues on the part of most of the British public. In this context, it is perhaps not so far-fetched to suggest that David Ireland's play *Cyprus Avenue* may be considered powerfully instructive, particularly as regards the hard-line Ulster nationalism espoused by the DUP. However, the inexorable exposure of nationalism in its inherently oppositional nature, together with the way in which the drama provocatively blurs the borderline between nationalism and mental illness, are definitely of relevance far beyond the local context of Northern Ireland. What I have in mind is the steady rise of populist nationalism across Europe, stirred and then utilised by extremist parties to increase their power, but also influencing the overall public discourse to such an extent that a primitive nationalist note has entered into the argumentation of traditional parties across the political spectrum in the vast majority of European countries. Interestingly enough, as much as some of the US reviewers of *Cyprus Avenue* failed to penetrate the Northern Irish references and have regarded the play as somewhat self-indulgent or even boring in consequence, Ben Brantley has been a remarkable exception, arguing the case for the play's topicality in relation to the contemporary United States. To him, Eric is "the frightening and frightened archetype commonly labelled the angry white male" who "has been identified with the nationalist surge that put Donald J. Trump in the White House." (Brantley)

By way of a conclusion, let me return to what I have argued about the emancipatory potential of the grotesque. In the case of David Ireland's *Cyprus Avenue*, this potential may appear to be extinguished by the overwhelming pessimism of the play, as the spectators are left shaken and are not allowed emotional release through catharsis. Nevertheless, is it not possible perhaps to perceive this state of emotional disturbance as a necessary stage on the way towards addressing the problems that the drama lays out?

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### **Notes**

[1] For a detailed summary of the contemporary scene, see Phelan, "From Troubles": 372-88.

[2] The slogan "Ulster Says No" was used with vigour in the 1985 campaign against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which became the second major attempt at introducing power-sharing government to Northern Ireland during the Troubles, while the roots of the vocal Unionist "No" lie in the time of the negotiations of Home Rule for Ireland.

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**Brexit: Cultural Reflections**

*Abstract: There can be no doubt that there has not been a more shattering event in the UK since the Second World War. Contrary to expectations, on 23 June 2016 the British voters chose to leave the EU. The world gasped in shock, and the UK entered a phase of chaos, dismay, and deep division. Originally, Great Britain was to leave the EU on 29 March 2019, yet no definite solution has been agreed on so far. Hundreds of newspaper articles and academic studies have been published, Brexit has never left the TV news both in the UK and the world, meetings of experts and politicians take place every day. Yet, the human aspect of Brexit gets seldom discussed in more detail in the media or by the politicians who predominantly focus on economic and political issues. Cartoonists, musicians, comedians, theatremakers, and other artists, on the other hand, started to share their responses almost immediately after the referendum in an effort to capture the unique moment in everybody's lives. The aim of this paper is to discuss some of the immediate artistic responses to Brexit in order to highlight the role various art forms can play in such turbulent times.*

When the UK voters cast their votes in the Brexit referendum in June 2016, there was hardly anyone who was not emotionally affected by the results. The immediate reaction in both camps was very intense: there were loud cheers and quiet tears. The level of excitement or despair was such that many people went to the streets either to join the celebrations or protests. Yet, as with any political event, after some time, people inevitably lose interest and their attention and emotional engagement turns back to everyday business. As the deadline is being postponed and the dark reality of the UK leaving the EU dawns on people, one would expect even more heated public reaction, yet, in actual fact, most people seem to be bored and exhausted. *The Guardian's* journalist John Harris in his illuminating opinion piece from January 2019 describes how people feel and behave: "[...] most of my interviewees confirmed polling that has suggested a majority of both leavers and remainers now find Brexit boring, greeting any mention of it with grimaces and eye-rolling" (Harris). He warns that such disengagement will have dire consequences: "we find ourselves in the worst of all worlds: carrying out an act of self-harm we are told is the people's will, when millions of the same people seem to have all but switched off" (Harris). There are many reasons for this current malaise, such as the speed at which information pours at us every day or general distrust of anything that has to do with politics or the media. However, not everybody has joined in this "bizarre collective decadence", to use Harris's words again. For many artists, Brexit has been a goldmine of inspiration. Cartoonists, musicians, comedians, theatremakers, and other artists started to share their responses almost immediately after the referendum in an effort to capture the unique moment in everybody's lives and explore many troubling questions related to Brexit. The aim of this paper is to discuss some of the cultural reflections of Brexit in order to highlight the role various art forms can play in such turbulent times.

Aleks Sierz in his recent article "Dark Times: British Theatre After Brexit" summarized the feelings of the British theatre community in the following way: "The first spasms of response felt like bereavement. [...] A poll by the Creative Industries Federation [...] found that 97 percent of its members wanted to Remain in the EU" (Sierz). More than 250 artists even signed a petition warning about the dire consequences of Brexit and were active during the campaign (Sierz). One of the most

40| notable pre-referendum appeals to British voters, however, came from the United States. British comedian John Oliver, who has been living in the US for the last couple of years, in his Emmy winning HBO talk show *Last Week Tonight*, included a hilariously obscene version of the European anthem, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, called "F-k you European Union", which got millions of views on YouTube. The reviews were unanimously praising Oliver for "perfectly summing up how loads of people feel about the EU" (Smith). Oliver admitted that he understands why so many Brits are frustrated with the EU. Everyone would probably agree that the EU can be rightfully viewed as "large, confounding and relentlessly bureaucratic" (Oliver). In addition, Oliver also points out that British citizens have always disliked Europe: "There is an innate British desire to tell Europe to go fuck itself" (Oliver). Yet, in the new lyrics to *Ode to Joy*, after delightfully offensive descriptions of several EU countries sung by a choirboy dressed in a Union Jack waistcoat and accompanied by a similarly attired choir, the final line includes an admission and a warning: "We would all be batshit crazy if we vote for leaving it" (Oliver). The subsequent political events have only proved how right Oliver was. With retrospect, the whole idea of a referendum on such a complex issue as remaining in the EU might seem "batshit crazy" indeed. It was not the only song that appealed to the voters: a parodic beatbox version of the classic Clash hit *Should I Stay or Should I Go* by the Gobsmack company also captured the pre-referendum atmosphere of uncertainty in the UK really well: "If I go, there will be trouble, and if I stay, it will be double"(Gobsmack).

However, once the results became known and the reality of the decision hit, the tone changed: artists reacted still with biting humour, but with significantly darker tones. The laughter of the audience at the Edinburgh Theatre Festival in August 2016 was genuine, but the moments of silence were arguably even more expressive. Fascinating Aida's *Post-Brexit Song: So Sorry Scotland* shows the shift from a self-deprecating satire to a possible tragedy. Being English, the three elegantly dressed ladies apologize to the Edinburgh audience for "the way people voted" and "the madness of Brexit" and sing in classically trained voices a plea for forgiveness from the Scots and beg Scottish Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon to rescue them by invoking "some parliamentary rules" (Fascinating Aida). With all their heart they implore Scotland not to leave the UK, "let's not rebuild Hadrian's Wall" (Fascinating Aida). They sing the final line of the refrain "United we stand, divided we fall" with such insistence and heartbreak that the audience stop laughing and listen to them in solemn silence. All jokes aside, the possibility of the end of the United Kingdom is actually not that unimaginable. And even though they sing tongue-in-cheek and with ironic detachment, they are touching on a very serious issue. As Adele Anderson says in the introduction to the performance, "When something monumental happens in the world which is going to have far reaching implications, sometimes really the only way you can express your feelings about it is through the medium of song" (Fascinating Aida).

More and more Brexit inspired songs appear on YouTube, ranging from pro "Leave" punk songs with clear racist overtones to "Remain" syrupy pop songs or cabaret numbers. Given the overwhelmingly pro-EU stance of most of the performers, the song *Oh! What a Lovely Brexit* by Becca and Michael Hemway (September 2018) stands out as they take on the opposite point of view: they give voice to "no deal, hard Brexiteers." In their classic cabaret number, the two performers dressed in tuxedos sing about Britain's upcoming independence. The Brexiteers do not mind the possible economic decline, as it is in the moments of hardship the Brits have always excelled: "Britain has always flourished, when its lands were turned into Marshal laws and people are malnourished" (Hemway). Being isolated, forced to stockpiling and rationing, not having enough insulin or other hardships do not make them regret their decision to leave the EU, but it reminds them of the good old days: "I am terribly pleased about



Brexit, it is going to be just like the war!" (Hemway). They also share their disdain for the younger voters: the "snowflake generation" is spoilt and lacking a backbone, and, in their view, it is them, "the middle-aged kippers who dream of Ypres to whom all should listen" (Hemway). To the melody of Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory*, they sing in unison: "We are starting a new era, pulling together as one! [...] We won't take commands from a Frog or a Hun, England, our England has won!" (Hemway). It is the final close up, which shows their brave, proud façade crumble and their faces change from forced optimistic smiles into sad grotesque grins that reveal their real attitude. As with the previous example of Fascinating Aida's *So Sorry Scotland*, the satire and mockery includes a very bitter flavour of despair the artists undoubtedly feel. Under the video, there is a link to a petition demanding a second referendum: "If rationing and stockpiling don't float your sinking ship, it's not too late to jump back up the cliff" (Hamway).

Dutch filmmaker and producer Julia Veldman went even a step further than the previously mentioned performers: being shocked by the referendum results, she decided to appeal to the Brits in an unprecedented manner: she paid \$ 13, 000 out of her pocket and founded a pop boyband The Breunion Boys. This project has gone viral and rightly so, as their goal is nothing less than persuading people to stop Brexit altogether. As stated on their website: "The Breunion Boys is the European boyband on a mission to win Britain back! Our fellow Europeans are about to leave the Union, and we are not ready to give up on them. Where politics and populism failed, we bring music to shape up the conversation and bring Britain back again" (The Breunion Boys). In their two singles, *Britain Come Back!* And *The Real Deal*, they sing, dance, rap, show off their perfect bodies on a dusky Dunkirk beach and gaze seductively into the camera in order to woo the Brits with their pro-EU love song. When invited to *Good Morning Britain* talk show, the host asked them who they are trying to appeal to given the fact that their fans would probably be 14 or 15-year-old girls who cannot even vote. The boys flirtily answered that "It's more like 25 to 35-year-old women" (The Breunion Boys, *Good Morning Britain*) they have in mind. The reason why this went viral is that it is not exactly clear whether they are serious or whether it is just a joke. The song is so kitschy and the lyrics so cheesy that it really sparked heated reactions and not only from the Brits. The Breunion Boys have been ridiculed online ferociously: "If you don't come back Britain, there will be more songs by the Breunion Boys and we really don't want that to happen" or "Screw leaving the EU. After watching this Britain needs to leave Earth!" (The Breunion Boys, *Britain Come Back*, online discussion). The Breunion Boys managed to get the media attention and their power ballad and video were mentioned not only in the opening episode of John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight* 2019, which focused on the latest Brexit development, but also on British TV: comedian Russel Howard commented on the song with the following words: "Forget Brexit, that makes you wanna join ISIS" (Howard). Their mission to win back Britain probably will not get accomplished, but The Breunion Boys have definitely achieved commercial success and it is a comedy gold. In addition, they make us think about the power of music to stir our emotions. The song undoubtedly affects people. Even though the emotional response to the Breunion Boys does not always have the originally intended direction, it might still work: as one Dutch contributor to the online discussion wrote: "On behalf of the Dutch, we are sorry for that 'boyband'. And if you stay, you can still beat them up" (The Breunion Boys, *Britain Come Back*, online discussion).

Satirical songs about Brexit, however, are not the only artistic responses to Brexit. One of the first, more serious, projects was *The Guardian's* series of short films called "Brexit Shorts" from June 2017. The newspaper partnered with theatre company Headlong to create a series of original dramas to be streamed online. They commissioned short monologues to be written by leading British playwrights

42| such as David Hare, Abi Morgan, Gary Owen and others to capture how people feel about the referendum result in different regions of the UK. In the words of Headlong's artistic director, Jeremy Herrin, "the company aims to reflect the diversity of opinion and feeling across Britain and the nuances and contradictions of conversation" (Herrin in Wiegand). The monologue format emphasises the communication between the protagonists and their audience. They were filmed outside, giving the viewers glimpses of various regional landscapes, but at the same time, the actors talk directly to the camera, as if the characters were chatting to a friend. As Jess Gromley, the producer of the project, explains: "We wanted to convey the inner thoughts of the characters while also getting a feel for their environment. [...] As the majority of the *Guardian's* video content is now watched on mobile phones, that direct communication is vital" (Gromley in Wiegand). Be it a Welsh dairy farmer, Northern Irish mother, an immigration lawyer, or a posh English lady, they all feel disappointed, frustrated, confused, and left behind, regardless of the way they voted. The overall message these short plays convey is quite bleak: people in Britain "simply stopped listening to each other" (Hotch in Wiegand) and the country is therefore irreparably divided. Since the time these monologues were written, the situation has not changed for the better.

The first full-length picture *Brexit: The Uncivil War* (Channel 4, January 2019) starring Benedict Cumberbatch is a dramatic reconstruction of the pre-referendum campaign, based on a real story of Dominic Cummings, the mastermind behind the Leave campaign. Written by James Graham and directed by Toby Hynes, this film offers not only a look behind the scenes, but also a more general commentary on the current political climate dominated by fake news and social media. This film does not lecture, but it makes people recall details that many may have already forgotten given the avalanche of events that have happened since the referendum. On the other hand, when the film premiered in January 2019, it was quite controversial and it "whipped up a Twitter storm measuring 12 on the Beaufort Scale" (Rampton). Many were complaining that it is too soon for treating Brexit as 'drama' when "the impact for many of us is still waiting in the wings" (Rampton). In addition, returning to the observation made by John Harris on the so-called Bobs ("bored of Brexit"), this film is the last thing the audiences want to see. The authors defend themselves and argue that it is their duty as artists to be in the middle of the debate: "For thousands of years, it's been the job of dramatists to insert themselves into the epicentre of difficult national moments and help people interrogate them. When has drama not engaged with the politics of the day? Do they need to be quarantined? Dramatists should always be right in the middle of events" (Graham in Rampton).

As the last example of cultural reflections of Brexit, Andy Serkis's short video will be mentioned as an outstanding example of the way artists can engage in the debate on Brexit. In the short clip, created in December 2018 to be shared by social media just before the first vote on Theresa May's Brexit deal, Serkis reprises his role of Gollum from *Lord of the Rings*, but this time he is dressed as the British Prime Minister. With May's iconic hairstyle, blue jacket, and makeup, the split of character of Gollum/Sméagol is seen debating with itself the effect of the withdrawal agreement on the people. Its grotesqueness sends chills down the spine as Serkis's performance is outstanding, but that is not the only reason why this video is worth watching. When Theresa May was presenting her second version of the Brexit Deal to the British Parliament almost three months later, just before the original Brexit deadline on 29 March 2019, she lost her voice in the fiery debates. With her hoarse and screechy voice, her similarity to the character portrayed by Serkis became even more uncanny. In addition, as more and more rebels from her own party started to call for her resignation and after losing yet another vote, Theresa May ended up completely alone as Serkis predicted in his video: she "has no friends", only her "precious Brexit" (Serkis).

To conclude, I would argue that this performance is a proof that not only it is not too soon to treat Brexit as “drama”, a song, or a film, but that sometimes the artists even manage to anticipate future developments – in Serkis’s video “Life imitates art”. Even the projects such as the Breunion Boys have their role in current turbulent times, to quote from the ferocious online discussion trashing the band again: “Still, those 6 bimbos on love island managed to reflect the pros & cons of Brexit in 40 seconds better than Boris Johnson in 2 years” (The Breunion Boys, *Britain Come Back*, online discussion). In other words, it is the responsibility of the artists to be “in the epicentre of difficult national moments” and we, as academics, should try at least to keep track not only by watching the news on the latest political or economic development of Brexit, but we should also explore its artistic reflections as art, in its various forms, offers a valuable insight into a unique moment in our history.

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### Performing the Scholar, Performing the Sleuth; Plagiarism in Three American Short Stories

*Abstract: A new kind of detective has appeared in the last half century in American fiction: the academic sleuth. The target of this detective is the plagiarist. The rampant increase in the cases of plagiarism in the academy has been well documented and American fiction echoes this development. By selecting short American fiction written by major, award-winning authors I.B. Singer (1902-1991), Richard Russo (1949- ) and Michael Chabon (1963- ), the recurrent performance of reproducing "authorship" for the purpose of career advancement reveals an ambivalent, softer response to academic malfeasance in the form of altering codes of ethics, lower academic expectations as well as mild institutionalized social reform for crooked scholars by their increasingly lax teachers.*

#### Introduction

Plagiarism occurs through a variety of methods and at every school grade: middle and secondary schools, and of course at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. It is usually not detected. Some teachers do not bother to seek out original source texts of suspect essays, while other teachers document plagiarism but do not properly report the deviant scholars. Hence, students may get away with the deception even when found out. Unfortunately, the trend of intentional violation of the codes of honesty in scholarship is increasing worldwide. Accordingly, this phenomenon is reflected in recent literary works, usually in fiction with an academic setting. Plots (or subplots) with accusations of plagiarism bring together challenges to the integrity of scholarship along with ethical issues at hand when a perpetrator is caught and what the appropriate punishment might entail.

A few years ago in the United States, a Republican 2016 presidential hopeful named Rand Paul (1963- ), a populist senator from Kentucky with strong libertarian leanings, was shown to have plagiarized in many of his writings such as his polemical book entitled *Government Bullies* (2012), his op-ed series of articles in the right-leaning newspaper *The Washington Times* as well as in numerous speeches for which he was paid. It has been shown how he lifted lengthy sentences or paragraphs *verbatim* from Wikipedia or selected publications from conservative "think tanks" without any acknowledgement of key sources. Consequently, *The Washington Times* ended his regular column (McElhatton 2013). Like a multitude of critics in the academy, Senator Rand Paul may possibly have his special ideological excuse for plagiarizing: some libertarian theorists such as Stephan Kinsella do not believe in "intellectual property" or in copyright laws (Kinsella 2008), so that plagiarizing to classic libertarians is completely acceptable behavior.

The academic Kenneth Goldberg reached similar conclusions regarding the lifting from artistic texts *verbatim* but has entirely different justifications. In a course Goldsmith has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, he assigns students "to retype five pages of their choice." The result is, Goldsmith observes, that "students become more aware that the act of typing or writing is actually an act of performance...students become intensely aware of the text's formal properties..." (Goldberg 2007, n.p.). Students were to defend their choice of the text they retyped/rewrote with "airtight accountability" in this "Uncreative Writing" class Goldsmith designed, advocating "extreme process writing/recording" (Goldberg 2007, n.p.).

However, the academic world does not theorize in this manner across the board, and at times penalties may be significant. A recent case of academic cheating in the United States resulted in nationwide arrests by the FBI and indictments in March 2019 by the Justice Department of scores of Americans facilitating scams in university admissions. Charges include racketeering, conspiracy, money laundering, conspiracy to defraud the United States and obstruction of justice. This ongoing case revolves around wealthy parents trying to get their children accepted into prestigious private universities such as Yale, Stanford and Georgetown universities, as well as the public University of California at Berkeley and the University of Texas at Austin (Lelling 2019). While the manipulation of the ACT and SAT admissions exams did not specifically involve plagiarism, the United States federal prosecution of the cheating gives formidable credence to the theory propounded by Draper *et al* (2017) that acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism is a criminal offence. Students have their studies subsidized at both private and state universities with tax-payer dollars so when they cheat, they are defrauding the state and tax-payers. Yet most nations up to now have not yet come to Draper's conclusion and have failed to create the legislation or laws which would position academic fraud in the criminal code.<sup>1</sup>

Legal aspects are made difficult at times by more reasons than the issue of what constitutes plagiarism and what literary critics designate intertextual responses. In particular, cheating comes into play in the theory expounded by Henry Jenkins. Exploiting Internet tools is a common occurrence when accessing most open access projects. Jenkins, formally a professor at M.I.T. and currently employed as a professor at the University of Southern California, had popularized the term "textual poaching" back in 1992 which he generically defines as picking up elements from [nowadays Internet] sources found to be pleasurable or useful for the needs of the user or "fan." Jenkins later distinguished "poachers" from "culture jammers" who use the sources, most often these days from the Internet, in unexpected ways, beyond an ordinary narrative, in order to gain control from mass corporate media, thereby becoming avant-garde creations much like the pop-artist Andy Warhol (1928-1987) copied advertising for experimental artistic expression. A more recent study by Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2008) takes on the overwhelming effect technology has taken on mass media and accordingly on mass culture. The valorizing of recycling texts has obviously enormous implications, and would be regarded as heterodoxy to most university administrators in pursuit of academic honesty and original contributions to field of humanities and science.

In the main, however, the academy worldwide more than frowns on lifting texts from artists and scholars, and increasingly colleges and universities publish warnings against plagiarism, informing the public how administrators take it seriously when students turn in work they simply copied and pasted from various site on the Internet, although the actual attention paid to this matter varies radically from institution to institution: no uniform punitive policy exists when students get caught red-handed. In addition to students, prominent academics have been punished for plagiarism, while others have gotten away with it in the Czech Republic. Czech media recently reported about a professor of world history and university vice president (or *prorektor*), Martin Kovář (1965- ), who had lifted extensive passages as well as the structure of *The Stuart Age: A History of England 1603-1714* (1994) by the late British professor Barry Coward (1941-2011) in three separate scholarly works that Kovář published in Czech between 1998 and 2018, most particularly the two books which served as the scholarly basis for his promotion, *Anglie posledních Stuartovců 1658-1714* (1998) and *Stuartovská Anglie* (2001). The international *ad hoc* ethics commission set up at Charles University concluded that Professor Martin Kovář was improperly awarded his associate professor and professor rankings. In addition to serving



46| as university vice president, Kovář had served for over a decade and a half as chair of the Department of World History at Charles University, but thankfully he resigned when the plagiarism was revealed publicly (Procházková 2019). The case is remarkable because the tables were turned in a mighty way: it was postgraduate students who discovered the academic malfeasance of the powerful professor rather than the other way around.

This is a relatively recent case. It did not end similarly some twelve years earlier when yet another university vice president at the University of West Bohemia, Ivo T. Budil (1965- ) was accused of plagiarizing. The source article was co-written by a professor named David Z. Scheffel who teaches at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia (Canada), and he discovered and addressed the plagiarism directly, in a German publication. Budil had, according to Scheffel, fully preserved sections of an article I had written jointly with a Czech colleague some ten years earlier (Scheffel, Kandert 1994). We find here entire sections of our article, including English translations of direct quotations from Czech ethnographic literature. Here and there a word has been changed or the sentence order modified, but any impartial reader would have to recognize that a significant part of this text is only a slightly altered version of our earlier publication. (35)

Scheffel further specified that seven of the eighteen paragraphs in Budil's article were lifted from his co-authored publication. After this revelation concerning one article was published, skepticism regarding other publications by Budil started to surface. Scholars performed the duty of sleuths and discovered more acts of lifting by the university vice president, whose publishing record was unusually prolific in spite of administratively functioning as both head of a large department and simultaneously as a dean of a new college for more than half a decade, all coinciding with his "production" of writings with dubious standards of ethics. Numerous monographs and studies served as uncited sources for Budil's official post-doctoral monograph or "*habilitace*" which was later revised into a scholarly book entitled *Za obzor Západu. Proměny antropologického myšlení od Isidora ze Sevilly po Franze Boase* (Praha, Triton, 2001, 2007), as the sleuth/academic Professor Tomáš Kaiser compellingly documents, using side-by-side English originals (written by Adam Kuper, George W. Stocking and Thomas R. Trautmann) with Budil's improperly unsourced Czech text.

In spite of the combined cases of the article lifting over 30 percent of the text which was really co-authored by Scheffel/Kandert and the book entitled *Za obzor Západu* with so many uncited sources, the university ethics panel nevertheless found Prof. Budil not guilty of plagiarism, but merely negligent because of sloppy referencing. As the former president of Masaryk University Jiří Zlatuška wrote with contempt about this verdict, "one hand washes the other, and Professor Budil is clean," and recommended that the systemic problems within the academy regarding opprobrious research misconduct be finally taken seriously (Zlatuška 2007). Obviously, the manual performance of detection by a diligent whistle-blower like Professor Kaiser matters little when a perpetrator has friends in high places. Kaiser's team of sleuths worked scrupulously on this case at a time before the technical mediation of plagiarism detection software was widely put into practice for the detection of original sources. Following up on all the media attention, a Czech student at Charles University's College of Social Science successfully wrote and defended a bachelor thesis in the Department of Sociology dedicated to the media coverage and response to the plagiarism of Professor Ivo Budil a few years later.<sup>2</sup>

American novelists have long focused on the issue of plagiarism. In the novel *Quicksand* (1928) by the African American author Nella Larsen (1891-1964), a character named Helga accuses her mentor, a Mrs. Hayes-Rore, of plagiarism and reveals how terrible the African American protagonist feels with

being exploited in this way. Interestingly, Larson was herself later accused of plagiarism of a British writer though it seems to most scholars today to be a case of literary intertextuality. Larson's accusers seemingly returned to the Jeffersonian notion (in Thomas Jefferson's infamous criticism of an enslaved black woman's published and celebrated poetry) that blacks are incapable of original literary artistry (Gates 2003). A subplot of *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), the final novel by John Steinbeck (1902-1968), comes closer to our theme of academic plagiarism: in an essay contest Ethan Allan Hawley's son deliberately lifts *verbatim* from old politicians' speeches and submits "his" essay to win the "I Love America" national essay contest, leading his humiliated father, the protagonist, to contemplate suicide. Steinbeck's fictionalized plagiarism was inspired by the national scandal of Charles Van Doren (1926-2019), the son of literary critic and Pulitzer Prize winning poet Mark Van Doren (1894-1972). Charles was caught cheating with the aid of the producers in the popular "whiz quiz" television shows he performed in during the 1950s. Other novels dealt with this fraud as well,<sup>3</sup> but this article will focus on shorter works of fiction on plagiarism spanning four decades starting with the 1970s.

### **I.B. Singer's "The Plagiarist": Religious Fraudster Dies**

In the short story by the 1978 Nobel laureate for literature, Isaac Bashevis Singer, aptly entitled "The Plagiarist" (1974), a Rabbi catches a Polish Yeshiva student plagiarizing from his unpublished manuscript.<sup>4</sup> When Getsel publishes the brilliant exegesis under his own name, the Jewish communities not only in the *shtetl* but in distant localities regard him as a particularly talented man. Accordingly, he makes a huge leap forward in his career as a young rabbi. Strangely, his teacher Rabbi Kinsker appears too weak at first to confront his unethically ambitious student, deeming it unholy to confront a criminal and perhaps even more unholy to brazenly claim authorship of Talmudic commentary. The rabbi seems to have moments of doubt and confusion to regard it as act of vanity to confront Getsel and thereby protect "his" ideas, as if it were an act of common avarice to do so.

Suddenly the rabbi saw it all. He was being tempted. Heaven was testing him to see how much he could stand. One false move and he would fall into the trap laid for him by satan. He would sink into hatred, sorrow, fury, and who knows what other transgressions. There was only one thing to do: keep his lips sealed and his brain pure [...] It was not for him to pass judgment on a fellow man (91).

As a consequence of Rabbi Kinsker's pusillanimous inaction, Getsel climbs up, replacing the Hassidic scholar's own son as assistant rabbi while Mrs. Kinsker, also aware of the theft, rages against her weak husband for the sake of their son's career. Subsequently, Getsel is appointed head rabbi of a temple at one of the most coveted Jewish communities in Poland. Singer's narrative pays little attention to the intrepid Getsel. Instead, all the focus in the story is on the astonished reaction and sensitive feelings of the victim of the theft: the saintly rabbi. The violated Rabbi Kinsker may well have been modeled after Singer's father, Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Singer, a minor Hasidic rabbi who had lived the life of a Talmud scholar, and whose impractical life stances regularly irritated Singer's mother and brother.

Near the end of the story, the plagiarist dies of a sudden illness apparently because of a choice imprecation bellowed on him by the rabbi who then comes to feel so utterly guilty that he foresakes family and home for a distant pilgrimage to perform penance. A somewhat different subplot may be found in one of Singer's novels, *Enemies, A Love Story*. A poorly educated but very well-situated New York-born Rabbi Lambert hires the impoverished immigrant Holocaust-survivor protagonist, Herman Broder, to ghost-write his religious essays which he published in renowned Yeshiva journals to boost his rabbinical career in New York City. Adding to the hypocrisy, Herman Broder is an avowed atheist.

48| Just as in the short story, this true author of Talmud articles remains poor while the fake scholar scores the good life in wealth, admiration and fame as a leader of New York City's Jewish community. While the short story ends fatally for Getsel *deus ex machina* to contrive a morally just ending, in the subplot of Singer's elaborate novel, the fraudulent activity by the imperious Rabbi Lambert actually bears some resemblance to the modern paper mills advertised on the Internet whereby students purchase essays or term papers to satisfy college course requirements while not being detected so easily as a fraud.

### **Chabon's "A Model World": An Undetected Plagiarized Dissertation**

With a traditional university setting, the short story "A Model World" (1991), the title story of the 2001 Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Chabon's first collection of short stories, includes an academic marriage in the process of breaking up and the university hierarchy with social positioning of professors according to their rank and tenure status at a traditional state-supported research university: California State University, Long Beach. For Levine, the Ph.D. program in atmospheric science, culminating in a doctoral dissertation, was regarded as nothing short of a spiritual prison sentence. Levine knows his subject well, but he has been wholly unsuccessful in either putting his basic theory and research down as coherent words or arguing or composing his thesis with empirical data. Instead, in a local used book store he discovers an old scientific book with only a few printed copies. He types in all in, binds it, and successfully defends it.

Levine fears someone will discover that he has plagiarized the monograph of the late Prof. Frank Kemp, a forgotten "meteorological engineer." The monograph was published by "Satis House – an academic vanity press in Ann Arbor" twenty years earlier (54). Chabon's red-haired Ph.D. student has a distinct advantage over Singer's plagiarist Getsel in that Levine's source was an obscure book written by a long-dead and forgotten professor. Levine lets one of his friends – the narrator – know. Levine states that he was not only selfishly rescuing himself but also the scientific approach to the meteorological issues argued in the Kemp's book: "And no one would ever know of his deception, he felt certain of that. He was the only person in the world, besides the author, to have read the book" on the subject: "Antarctic models of induced nephokinesis" (56). The monograph he deftly copied presents a model of the world from the perspective of atmospheric science. Levine's ethical justification of plagiarizing the study by Dr. Frank J. Kemp "was a horror of death, of the doom that awaited all his efforts, and it was this horror, more than anything else – he really was only a few months from finishing – that determined him to commit the mortal sin of Academe" (54).

Before he had discovered the study in a used book store, Levine "had been irritable, paranoiac, and unwashed for the past several months" (Chabon 1991: 55). Suddenly with his great find, he instantly becomes socially active, inviting friends over to his apartment to watch the local NBA team, the Los Angeles Lakers play exciting basketball games. Levine also confidently goes to a dinner with his Ph.D. supervisor. Levine's advisor, Professor Baldwin, an expert on the greenhouse effect, was a distracted man whose wife was having an affair with a younger and more attractive faculty member who happens to be both the story's narrator and friend of the plagiarist. The assessment of Levine's learning was, among others, Baldwin's important task as a university professor. Although he reads and evaluates Levine's plagiarized work without a trace of suspicion, the professor should also offer feedback during the writing process of the dissertation. However, this process under the guidance of a professional supervisor never happens. On Baldwin's bookshelf was a small monograph with the same binding as Frank Kemp's book, which temporarily struck fear into the heart of Levine: "Even if it were not Dr.



Kemp's book on this particular bookshelf, it might as well have been – the book was out there somewhere, waiting; he was going to be found out" (67).

Nevertheless, the plagiarist gets away with it scot-free and the Ph.D. dissertation is accepted and defended. Dr. Levine makes a magnificent career, obtaining a highly coveted position at California Institute of Technology, popularly called Caltech: "He dropped right into the tenure track at Caltech, with access to a huge laboratory and a twelve-million-dollar Cray computer [...]" (73). Still, "[h]is plagiarism had been only an act of self-deception" (67) and the Delphic notion of *nosce te ipsum* or "knowing thyself" is entirely missing from the mind of this fraudster as he performs a scientist at Caltech.

### **Russo's "Horseman": Documented Plagiarist Goes Unpunished**

In the Pulitzer Prize winning novelist Richard Russo's short story, "Horseman" (2007), the protagonist is a delicate female professor at a New England liberal arts college who discovers the plagiarism of an undergraduate student. Janet Moore appears to take it personally, as yet another example of how she is discriminated against as a woman:

She was angry, and rightly so, that students cheated more often in her classes than in those of her male colleagues, just as they were more often tardy, more openly questioning of her authority, and more often gave her a mediocre evaluation at the end of each term [...] Had anyone asked them if they were prejudiced against their female professors, not one would have answered yes. Hooked up to a lie detector, every one of them would pass (342).

Professor Janet Moore agonizes over it more than anyone else might imagine after the student comes in to her office. She had performed the sleuth for half a day, hunting down the original texts from which he lifted and thereby documenting his crime. His reaction is to playfully gesture to her his punishment: "He made a pistol of his thumb and forefinger, put the barrel to his temple, and pulled the trigger, his head jerking, as if struck by a single bullet" (344). Asking why he cheated, James Cox calmly reveals how his frat house maintains files of old tests and previously submitted term papers, a form of "cooperative plagiarism."<sup>5</sup> Ever so arrogant, he remains unflappable during the unfriendly give-and-take after getting caught red-handed: "How brash males are, she thought. How controlled, even in defeat [...] What he said then surprised her. 'My advice? Don't hold back.' And then he walked out" (344).

After this very upsetting experience, the professor's mind flashes back to her life as a Ph.D. candidate a decade earlier when the very top English professor in the doctoral program proclaimed, while returning a seminar paper, that she was not original – specifically she failed to be putting herself into her work as she should. She responded defensively and felt that the idea was confusing and even psychologically punishing to her: "*It's as if you don't exist*" (346). After dithering on how she was criticized, she reflects on the here and now: "James Cox, the little prick, was a plagiarist, a cheat" (348). Cox may be interpreted as a cunning student who can read his sensitive teacher: he presciently assumes she will do the opposite of what he suggests in their meeting. Ergo, he suggests the harshest punishment to which she is permitted to sentence him. Cox figured correctly, for she neither fails nor expels him.

In the "Contributors' Notes" at the back of the volume *The Best American Short Stories 2007*, Russo eloquently describes the woman who inspired him to write this story. As a former English professor at Southern Illinois University, Russo experienced academic life up close. One colleague

50| there is described as smart and attractive, but also guarded in the extreme, the way academics can be. In the language of *Star Trek*, she'd diverted all power to her shields, which was probably why I was so startled – one night when I happened to catch her with her defenses down [...] I saw the woman in question dancing with great joy and such unexpected abandon that I found myself smiling and actually liking her for the first time. [...] Later I came upon her in the kitchen where she sat with her head in her hands, her shoulders quaking uncontrollably, the party's hostess trying desperately to console her. "All I ever wanted," she sobbed, "was to play a little rock-and-roll" (409).

The story was written in a way so that the woman, Russo writes, could explain, if not warn, to him, something about life which we may miss while relentlessly pursuing the ambition we only think we need to attain. Like Singer's Rabbi Kinsker, Professor Janet Moore nearly loses her mind as she reflects on her own shortcomings. After reconsidering over this clear case of plagiarism for days, Janet Moore reaches a horrible conclusion regarding his conduct:

Just cheating once didn't make you a cheater, not if you stopped. He could begin his new life by writing a new essay. Something by James Cox, not some long-forgotten fraternity brother. Maybe in the writing he'd locate a James Cox who wasn't lazy or incompetent, sullen or belligerent. Maybe he could find a better self. 'Don't hold back' he'd advised her, and she didn't plan to. She would make him understand (361).

The professor in Russo's story does not formulate any kind of punishment using a bifurcated logic that intentional plagiarism is bad and actually performing the original imaginary task is good. Janet Moore even states that Cox will be able to write a "new essay" when he had never really written the old one in the first place. Instead, she desires to concoct a pedantic moral lesson out of his plagiarism. As Janet Moore rather graciously figures, the arrogant fraternity brother James Cox may manage to transform himself. In other words, she distinctively develops an intricate conception of reform, thereby transcending the standard notion of punishment (failure of class, suspension, or even expulsion) so that getting caught plagiarizing may end up edifying a student. Janet Moore decides on a softer course of action because of her own personal history and her self-abnegating interpretation of her own achievements. Russo's sleuth is depicted as performing multiple roles (wife, mother of a Down's Syndrome child, breadwinner, professor, Ph.D. student) whereby her performance as sleuth/enforcer is challenged. As she contemplates how she had failed in her performance of various roles, she acquires a greater awareness of herself, an epiphany that she had always been given a second chance, thereby realizing how inappropriate some of her presuppositions regarding her "victimhood" were. Hence, her lax attitude when she meets with the documented intentional and admitted plagiarist who showed no remorse.

## Conclusion

These fictional stories about plagiarism focus thematically on a real contemporary issue: corrupt academic performances. There is no doubt in the minds of all of the attentive parties in each of the three stories that intentional plagiarism had been perpetrated. Furthermore, in none of the three stories do the perpetrators make any denials or excuses, which is highly unusual according to literature regarding consequences of detected plagiarism (Moore 2015). In Singer's "The Plagiarist," the theft is easily and immediately detected but Getsel knows how weak Rabbi Kinster is. He knows he will never be publicly revealed by the weak rabbi as a fraud or a hack. In Chabon's story "The Model World," Levine is confident that he will likely be free of suspicion because of the severe narrowness of the focus within his specialty and the extremely limited copies of the monograph of the deceased scientist he copied from for "his" dissertation. Furthermore, his supervisor is not very clever regarding dishonesty.

In Russo's aesthetically sophisticated story "Horseman," an arrogant plagiarist named Cox suggests to his sleuth-professor not to let him off easy, but she does the exact opposite because she personally had been given second chances when her performances in the past had been less than successful. While she conflates her weaker performances of incompetence with the student's intentional, unethical behavior, Professor Moore has no bounded definition of "punishment" for plagiarism, replicating a lack of policy in her department and at her university. Her response to the deception reflects the fact that inconsistency reigns in academia regarding how plagiarism is pursued, managed, and prosecuted. If a uniform policy towards plagiarism is not forthcoming, or if different decisions and unequal sanctions are applied, "many students may perceive the environment as unfairly weighted towards those who do not play by the rules and respond by either refusing to participate or joining the rule breakers" (Crown and Spiller, 127).

In all three stories, students gain undue advantage over their peers, advancing their academic careers or credentials which they do not deserve. In two stories their teachers are actually aware of the academic misconduct but in essence kept quiet about their students' cheating. The fields of study varied widely in focus: religious studies, atmospheric physics and English. None of the three stories under study show the modern technical means of copying from the Internet, the use of scanners or the flourishing industry of Internet paper mills (for example [midnightpapers.com](http://midnightpapers.com), [boomessays.com](http://boomessays.com), [essayshark.com](http://essayshark.com), [domywriting.com](http://domywriting.com), [pimpmypaper.com](http://pimpmypaper.com) and [essaymama.com](http://essaymama.com)) in USA and [ukessay.com](http://ukessay.com) in the United Kingdom which are among the best-known essay writing services, though the aforementioned subplot of Isaac Bashevis Singer's novel *Enemies, A Love Story* replicates the essence of these fraudulent academic transactions. These essay mills are contract cheating services which enable university students to deceitfully and fraudulently "perform" university studies. It bears reminding that in the United States and the other English-speaking countries, essay writing is most often preferred over tests and exams in the humanities and social sciences since rote memorizing and the regurgitating of answers on exams have long been regarded as rather poor and outdated ways of developing young students' analytical skills and creative or interpretive minds.

In the three short works of fiction, there is no evidence of any development of creativity or interpretive skills among the cheaters. Yet as two English scholars point out, "A longitudinal investigation of contract cheating services suggests that the student body is becoming increasingly savvy when making requests to have their work completed" (Lancaster and Clarke 2017: 216) while using paper mills. Hence the only skills being developed are creative thievery. With the possible exception of Singer's story, these plagiarism stories cannot be regarded as moral tales. Rather, they indicate realistically that there is no coherent moral order. In all three stories, teachers suffer more than the culprits. Nevertheless, teachers need to recognize the nature and extent of plagiarism and accept responsibility for deterring it by being vigilant and performing the sleuth. How plagiarism takes place and how it can be detected is evolving with the constant advancements in technology, and a thoroughgoing response to this behavior remains inchoate. Deterrence occurs only through enforcement which requires imposing certain punitive practices consistently. Properly confronting plagiarism also helps to advance the quality of science and scholarship.

## Notes

- [1] One exception can be found in the laws of the People's Republic of China: any Chinese who cheats on the Civil Service Examination faces up to seven years imprisonment (Wei 2015). However, ordinary university cheating has not yet been classified as criminal acts in China.

- 52] [2] See Tůmová, Markéta. "Akademické plagiátorství v dramaturgické perspektivě" – Katedra sociologie – FSV (2011); unpublished thesis. For more details and a downloadable copy, see Web. 23 March 2019. <<https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/98137/?lang=cs>> Ivo T. Budil was employed for a while longer at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen before resettling at the Metropolitan University in Prague (established as a private university in 2007), but he still holds all his academic titles. Budil no longer sits on the scientific boards (or *vědecká rada*) at University of West Bohemia or Charles University, and no article by him has been published in any high-impact journal (listed in the Web of Science database) since 2007.
- [3] Besides Steinbeck's final novel, Philip Roth's novel *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981), the second novel in his "Zuckerman Trilogy," is the most famous work of fiction centering on the infamous quiz show scandal.
- [4] While it might seem implausible that Singer's religious scholar would violate basic codes of ethics, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported of "an assistant professor at a small Christian college, teaching classes on the Bible and theology" who was an admitted plagiarist (Hoisington 2017). As a student, the unnamed perpetrator plagiarized from a paper written by a student who had taken the same class two years earlier, and many religious seminaries post information against plagiarism, indicating that religious institutes are really no different from secular universities when it comes to academic fraud.
- [5] Like the plagiarist in Russo's "Horseman," students are often found to have copied from other students who had written the same paper in a previous semester or year, "confirming that it would be useful to keep electronic copies of students' work from semester to semester" (Heckler *et al*, 2013: 101).

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### Temporality and Changes of Perception in the Work of Forced Entertainment (Durational Performances)

*Abstract: Headed by art director Tim Etchells, British experimental theatre collective Forced Entertainment have been a staple on the international fringe theatre scene for over thirty years. Using as an example their several-hour long durational performances, this article shows how the collective works with temporality, ie. the quantity of time, which is emphasised both within the durationals' inner structure and through their unconventional timespan. Temporality is also approached here with special regard to spectatorship, focusing on how perception of time is structured, the idea of deliberate slowing-down and topicalization, and the ways in which narrative structure is informed by time manipulation. The show format oscillates between a theatre play and a visual art performance: audience members are free to leave and return to the auditorium at any time. The performances are streamed online and interlinked with social media, which in itself greatly influences the perception of the work. The submitted text is one of the first studies, if not the first one, on Forced Entertainment's contemporary durational pieces.*

In this article I am concerned with the use of temporality in the work of leading British experimental theatre company Forced Entertainment. The scope of their artistic interest is very broad, ranging from theatre and performance, site-specific projects, video art and photography, to experiments with film and digital media. In the present article, I focus on Forced Entertainment's deliberate structuring of the perception of time in their projects, especially its deliberate slowing-down and thematization. Although it can be found in all of their work, it is useful to zoom in on their *durational performances* (*durationals* for short) as they accentuate the quantity of time both within their structure and through their unconventional timespan. At the same time, I look at temporality with regard to spectatorship, which is intrinsically connected to the perception of time. Of interest here is not only the temporal structuration of the pieces in question, but especially the ways in which these pieces (and temporal strategies) are perceived by the audience. The article is part of my doctoral research, which focuses on contemporary *devised theatre*.<sup>[1]</sup>

Forced Entertainment was founded in 1984 in Sheffield. They have been active on the international scene for over thirty years, during which time they have established themselves as a leading formation in the fringe category, and have received numerous awards. Most recently, the prestigious International Ibsen Award 2016, past recipients of which include Peter Brook, Heiner Goebbels, Ariane Mnouchkine, Jon Fosse, and Peter Handke (who all constitute a relevant context to Forced Entertainment). There are six core members led by art and film director, writer, visual artist, author and performer Tim Etchells. Their names are Claire Marshall, Cathy Naden, Terry O'Connor, Robin Arthur, and Richard Lowdon (who also does the stage design). Some projects, including durationals, also invite guest performers. In his book titled *Certain Fragments*, which is a (fragmentary) collection of essays, text materials from performances, selected opinion journalism and programme notes, Etchells writes about the group's sources of inspiration (19–20). He mentions The Wooster Group, Station House Opera, Robert Wilson, Joseph Beuys, Neil Bartlett, Bobby Baker, Pina Bausch, Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker, and Andrei Tarkovsky. They naturally draw inspiration not just from theatre and performance, but also reach out to conceptual art, contemporary dance, and film. In another text,

Etchells adds that the group was inspired by Tarkovsky's films as well as his collection of essays, and its very title: "Sculpting in Time is what Andrei Tarkovsky called his book about cinema – a definition we were drawn to because, to us, performance also means working with the speeding, slowing and shaping of time as a material" ("Speak Bitterness"). Forced Entertainment members regard traditional theatre with ambivalence, even antagonism. The phrase "Forced Entertainment" is their minimalist manifesto: theatre is jokingly understood as a space of torture, awkward entertainment, and tyranny inflicted on actors and spectators alike. Both sides voluntarily let themselves be locked up in a kind of prison from which there is no escape (for a given period of time). Unable to escape from the stage, actors are tyrannized by the spectators' desire to be entertained; meanwhile, the seat-bound spectators are tyrannized by the actorial desire to show off.

In one of their first larger projects, eloquently titled *First Night* (2001), and described in their own words as a destructive vaudeville, Forced Entertainment had the audience endure the performers' unnatural, two-hour long stare, their faces becoming more and more grotesque, nearly horrific, as time went on. The non-verbal introduction was followed by a row of situational gags, evoking the atmosphere of slapstick, which implicitly includes elements of dark comedy, anarchy, and aggression. Without a warning, the performers then moved on to verbally attacking the audience, not unlike Handke's *Offending the Audience* (Publikumsbeschimpfung, 1966). Pointing to specific seats in the auditorium, they brazenly predicted how people in the audience would die. It was as if the performers and the audience were settling an age-old grudge. It was theatre about theatre, employing a very grotesque and confrontational method of asking questions about its own purpose. In later projects, the group moved on to theatre and performance formats that would spare the audience and themselves the torture. An awareness of the absurdity of theatre nonetheless remains a signature element of their dramaturgy. Ambivalent as it may be, Forced Entertainment's attitude towards theatre is not rejectful – far from it. Etchells has commented on the relationship with theatre (straightforwardly, albeit laconically) listing the collective's artistic tendencies:

A slow expansion to projects outside of the theatre – from black-box spaces and studios to durational performances, interventions in unusual sites, guided tours, installations, works in photography, film and digital media [...]. The kind of drifting across borders (national, artistic, intellectual) that is at the heart of so much art practice in the late twentieth century. But always, in the centre, theatre (*Certain Fragments* 20).

Slowing down the perception of the present or rather, accentuating the perception of the passage of time, which then seems slower, is a common tool in Western theatre and performance. Samuel Beckett rejects the traditional elements of dramatic structure, and makes them the very subject of the play – an approach also favoured by Forced Entertainment. Martin Esslin has likened the structure of Beckett's dramas to that of music pieces:

Instead of a linear development, [Beckett's plays] present their author's intuition of the human condition by a method that is essentially polyphonic; they confront their audience with an organised structure of statements and images that interpenetrate each other and that must be apprehended in their totality, rather like the different themes in a symphony, which gain meaning by their simultaneous interaction (45–46).



56| The emphasis on the passage of time is also crucial in John Cage's composition 4'33" (1952), which thematized the tension between sound and silence, movement and tranquility. As observed by Erika Fischer-Lichte, Robert Wilson likewise uses rhythm to structure textual, visual, and musical components. It then works "as a tool to prevent a fixed hierarchical relationship between elements. They all appear equally important. Their specific materiality and their individual appearance in space move into the foreground" (Fischer-Lichte 135). All these pieces incorporate a conscious materialization of time, which is achieved through the use of musical processes: rhythmization, phrasing, and changes of tempo.

Hans-Thies Lehmann in an essay titled "Die Gegenwart des Theaters" (1999) observes that the characteristic temporal aspect of art understandably "becomes more and more the focal point of cultural and scientific research, since all temporal organization of life and experience – including artistic experience – is subject to radical transformation by media, computerization and information technology" (56). When applied to Forced Entertainment's work, the implications appear contradictory at first. Media, computerization, and information technology are an explicit part of their work; however, they are actually used to fragment and then reconfigure reality (especially in durational) into a very compact shape. If watched attentively for a long period of time, the scattered, obfuscated, and chaotic nature of the event is remoulded into a special order. Forced Entertainment's work cannot be described without an awareness of a number of paradoxes, and the mutual coexistence of chaos and order is definitely one. Etchells often says that their work is "understandable by anybody brought up in a house with the television on" (*Certain Fragments* 95). Nonetheless, Forced Entertainment's several-hour long performances are often much closer to poor theatre than full of video projectors and flashy multimedia effects. They use the mechanisms of the technologies, rather than the technologies themselves. These mechanisms – editing, re-winding, cyclic structuring of reality – are largely based on temporality. Watching such a performance eventually eases the spectator into a state of surprising serenity. Theatre can become a very explicit spatial and temporal oasis, where we are allowed to concentrate without being interrupted, and to tune in to the present.

Adrian Heathfield, who has written extensively on theatre time, argues that performance generally resists the accelerationist culture of late capitalism, which glorifies speed and condemns the "waste" of time. Performance goes directly against this temporal logic by deliberately "wasting" time, with the aim "to slow things down, to examine gesture, relation, meaning production not only as a process, but at a significantly slower speed" ("Alive" 10). In "Impress of Time", Heathfield concludes that the temporal dynamics of durational performances can, in certain extreme cases, defy traditional terminological categories to such an extent that it pushes durational "beyond art-as-process or art-as-event, and renders art as simultaneous to life" (Heathfield and Hsieh 13). Therefore, by definition, long-lasting performances explore "art as being-in-duration" (Heathfield and Hsieh 13). Here, Heathfield is discussing lengthy, year-long performances, which are not part of Forced Entertainment's repertoire – but the intertwining of art and life as simultaneous processes is reflected in their work as well.

Durational performances can be categorized as performance art, and fall into the broader field of live art. Long-term practitioners include New-York based Taiwanese conceptual artist Tehching Hsieh and the better-known Marina Abramović, who has recently gathered attention with her over seven hundred hour-long performance *The Artist is Present*, which she introduced six years ago at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Projects of this kind are also often described as endurance art because they require, on the performers' part, extreme levels of endurance, patience, and self-control. The performances are usually based on a simple concept, such as a game with a set of rules that are given beforehand. The concept is further developed in a generous time framework of several hours, days,

weeks, or even months. Naturally, this format is very demanding for the performers, and inevitably subjects them to physical and mental exhaustion. Throughout the performance (or at least specific parts thereof) the performers are unable to leave the room – unlike the spectators, who are free to leave at any time and then come back.

One of Forced Entertainment's durational performances, titled *And on the Thousandth Night...*, employs a similar frontal performer-to-spectator setup to Abramović's *The Artist is Present*. The audience face an empty stage with nothing but a row of plain wooden chairs on the proscenium line, lit by a common floor light lamp. It bears more than a passing resemblance to the New York performance, as there are deeper connections, once again addressing spectatorship in durationals. The theatre event is presented as an encounter. "We come closer to them. We want them closer to us!" says Etchells of the audience (Heathfield, "As if Things" 83). It has to be pointed out, however, that unlike Abramović, Forced Entertainment's performers keep their distance from their audience. One way or another, their performance space always has a clear stage design (proscenium, light circle, long table). Neither have I found any mentions of their audience trying to breach this barrier. The oscillation between a conventional theatre play and a visual arts performance adds an interdisciplinary dimension. It also has a major impact on spectatorship. It gives the audience unprecedented freedom, but at the same time it inevitably fragments the experience.

A similar concept, which oscillates between a music concert and a visual art performance, is described as early as 1963 by Karlheinz Stockhausen in his *Moment Form*. Works of music are reproduced in long periods, listeners are free to come and go, the musicians play "regardless of whether there is someone listening or not" and the musical piece becomes more of a painting in a gallery (258-260). In the case of multi-hour performances it is simply not physically possible for the audience to stay put without any breaks throughout the performance. Unlike traditional theatre plays, there auditorium is also a more relaxed space, with people making noise as they shuffle to their seats, and the possibility of non-intentional sounds coming through from the halls, etc.

In "Doing Time," Etchells describes his dream of creating a performance that would be entirely composed of immaterial matter – that would, in other words, shape time (76). For Etchells, standard-length theatre plays require the load-bearing walls of temporal architecture, whereas long performances embrace temporal chaos, allowing spontaneous, illogical, non-linear reactions. The structure of such an open work is able to incorporate elements that would not be risked in set and linearly designed productions. According to Etchells,

[t]heatre forces one to deal with the ergonomic shape of an hour and a half – the pattern of "start", "middle" and "end" that produces a satisfactory feeling of closure. But in the longer works we're freed, to some extent, from the tyranny of this economy. Things can be what they are. Climaxes don't have to be produced, resolutions are not needed. It is what it is. The pushing to the limit frees one as a maker and also as a watcher (Heathfield, "As If Things" 80).

Defined by a clear set of rules, and carried out based on mutual agreement with the audience, the open play format does not put unwanted pressure on either side. In cases of temporary creative crisis while improvising, the performer can regain balance by following these rules; the spectator has permanent freedom of choice as to how she will spend the time – a certain level of freedom to "tailor" the experience to fit her needs.<sup>[2]</sup> Personally experiencing the *durational* where time is a material that anyone can use at their discretion, can lead the spectator to broader considerations of the possibilities of time perception, as Heathfield also notes:

58| Taking time itself as a subject and a malleable phenomenon, the experience of durational aesthetics often makes us aware that time is in part a product of structures of thought; moreover, that our perceptions and understandings of time are a cultural construct, and as such open to revision (Heathfield and Hsieh 22).

Forced Entertainment have so far created eight durational performances, six of which are still part of their repertoire. Each of them is based on a very simple concept which can be summarized in a single sentence. In their very first performance, titled *12am: Awake & Looking Down* (1993), the scenography includes a single old armchair in the centre of the stage, and two clothes racks with cheap clothes lining the walls. There were five silent performers who kept reinventing their identities through costumes and props, forming sculpture collages out of their on-stage presence. Their second performance, *Speak Bitterness* (1994), had its protagonists publicly confess both real and imaginary offences, based on partially scripted lists. In *Quizoola!*, their third performance, two tired Beckettian clowns sit in the middle of a light chain circle and ask each other questions, all of which must be answered. In their fourth performance, *And on the Thousandth Night...*, six kings in red cloaks and paper crowns sit on the proscenium, telling stories. In their fifth performance, *Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare* (2015), individual performers are tasked with retelling one Shakespeare play in the space of an hour (the project includes all of Shakespeare's thirty-six plays), using everyday objects as props (kitchen utensils, various spice or diluent containers, things one may buy at a chemist's, an old iron, or wall brushes). Lastly, in their most recent performance *From the Dark* (2016), performed from midnight to dawn, performers publicly confess their fears and try to make it through the night using all (theatrical) tools available.

The lowest common denominator of Forced Entertainment's durational performances is their timespan, which is a lot more modest than Abramović's or Hsieh's. They last between six and twenty-four hours, or they are composed of thirty-six single hour slots, lasting nine days in total. The collective still occasionally performs some of them in single-hour productions. Furthermore, the performers are not so hard on themselves, and unlike Abramović and Hsieh, they never hurt one another on purpose. They accentuate the element of near-Dadaistic playfulness rather than suffering. The spectator is not expected to interfere actively with the course of the performance and is more of a witness, yet based on available audience feedback, this creates an atmosphere of unusual solidarity.<sup>[3]</sup> As soon as spectators realize they can leave the auditorium at any point without disrupting the performance and becoming the centre of unwanted attention, they realize they do not want to leave.

My views on durationals come from personal experience: I have seen most of them thanks to the rare opportunity to stream them online.<sup>[4]</sup> However, is an audience scattered around the world and sharing their experiences on social media still a theatre audience? The basic theatre chronology of *here and now* does not apply to streaming – unless we are talking about virtual time and space. Watching a webcast on a computer screen allows the viewer to behave as they would in front of a TV screen, and hop between the stream, Twitter, and the critical blog, written as the performance carries on. They can also arrange the windows on their desktop so as to follow everything at once as a simultaneous, multi-sensory experience. All these platforms can provide parallel associations and interpretations. Created by a handful of authors from the online magazine *Exeunt*, the critical blog includes postmodern collages of personal commentary, associations, and connotations, posted in the form of annotations, short essays, citations, photographs, videos, or GIFs.<sup>[5]</sup>

The prevailing dramatic element of a long-lasting performance seems to be the presence itself.

The nowness, the very uniqueness of every single moment, the liveness. As Heathfield reflects, presence is a key concept in live art, including durationals: |59

The shocks of perception that are frequently deployed by contemporary Live artists, somewhat like those of other visual artists, take the spectator into conditions of immediacy where attention is heightened, the sensory relation charged, and the workings of thought agitated. The artwork is alive. Such conditions, it seems, bring us as spectators into a fresh relation: into the now of enactment, the moment by moment of the present ("Alive" 8).

It is an "encounter with and within time", where the creators "bring the spectator into the present moment of the making and unmaking of meaning". The actual presence of both creators and spectators and "the transient and elusive nature of this presence" eventually "becomes the subject of the work" ("Alive" 8). It is not a recording of theatre but an event which carries with it, as Heathfield emphasises, a certain temporal schizophrenia: "Eventhood allows spectators to live for a while in the paradox of the two impossible desires: to be *present* in the moment, to savour it, and to *save* the moment, to still and preserve its power long after it has gone" ("Alive" 9). One can exaggerate and say that an instant and permanent "save" can be made at any point by taking a screenshot (especially in *12am*, which is very visual-based, as opposed to narrative-based performances).

The table below includes a list of hashtags that can still be used to find some of the Twitter comments under the live streamings of Forced Entertainment's performances. The statistics from the first ever online streaming of *Speak Bitterness* show that the performance was watched in fifty-one countries; that out of the 3838 devices, over 2000 came from the UK; that over 5.1 million Tweets were written from a total of 320,341 Twitter accounts.<sup>[6]</sup> According to the reactions on Twitter, there were audience members who burnt dinner, stayed up all night, took the train from Bristol to London (and watched the performance on their smartphone), and developed an addiction that kept them from abandoning the screen despite their increasing fatigue.

<i>Durational performances</i>	Twitter @ForcedEnts
<i>12AM: Awake &amp; Looking Down</i>	#12amLIVE
<i>Speak Bitterness</i>	#FESpeakLIVE
<i>Quizoola!</i>	#Quizoola24
<i>And on the Thousandth Night...</i>	#1000thLIVE
<i>Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare</i>	#CompleteWorks
<i>From the Dark</i>	(not streamed yet)

Let me pause at two very different performances to demonstrate how the use of time reflects on the text (and vice versa). None of Forced Entertainment's durationals have a traditional script. Instead, they use what can be described as textual material. The text is treated as a found object, which is passionately collected, developed, and then rediscovered during the performance. The performers function as curators, screening the material and choosing what works best from the paper in front of them, or from their own memory and imagination. Forced Entertainment's first long performance, *12am: Awake & Looking Down*, has the features of visual or physical theatre, but still requires some kind of text. After all, the performers choose their characters from a heap of cardboard signs on the stage. The list can be found in *Certain Fragments* (143-146): it is part of the

60 | *Emanuelle Enchanted* project (1992), from which the *12am* performance was developed later. Some of the characters include: A Terrorist in Hiding, Lady Chatterley, Fantasy Fred, Girl In Lift #1, Mr Hungry, Somebody's Son, Girl In Lift #2, A Promiscuous Footballer, Valentina Tereshkova, Queen of Nothing, The Ex-Wife of the Ex-President of the USA, A Former Waitress & Communist Organiser or Sigmund Freud. Also, the performance can be read in light of an idea Etchells got from Wooster Group's Ron Vawter: "[T]he text is what happens in between the material – the friction, the sparks, the silences that happen when two objects pass by each other" (Etchells, "Doing Time" 75). Performers keep changing clothes and making up more and more new, fluid identities from endless combinations of costumes, names and minimalist physical action. In a single present moment, disparate characters meet on the stage in a postmodern collage, barely interacting, and are displayed to the audience like live objects in a gallery.

The logic of the performance is like a lab experiment: waiting to see how the individual elements will react when mixed. The spectator watches a slowly unravelling "narrative kaleidoscope" (Kalb). It is mostly psychedelic, or it can be simple, its pace changing considerably throughout the performance. There is extreme slowing-down that resembles frozen time, the characters merely existing and not moving on the stage; this is followed by accelerated parts that stand for phrasing. Costumes, signs, even physical action can all be recycled, but always in new combinations: remaining in the auditorium for a long, uninterrupted period of time, the spectator is bound to discover partial echoes of what she has already seen. The performance is characterized by the question of naming and identity, which is put into direct connection with the quantity of time: the actors strike transient poses, make passing connections, all "in an ever failing attempt to find a lasting duration of identity," to quote Heathfield's articulate description ("Alive" 9). For him, the construction and destruction of meaning in durationals is strictly a temporal issue (Heathfield and Hsieh 22). As such, it requires considerable audience participation, as, presumably, Etchells himself reflects: "The form was, so often, one of fragments that needed the watcher to link them, a thinking brain to join the dots. [...] We spoke very often about the agency of those watching – of their importance not in completing, but more fundamentally, in making the work" (Forced Entertainment 101).

The title of a more recent performance, *And on the Thousandth Night...* refers to the Arabian collection of tales and fables, *One Thousand and One Nights*. If *12am* is dominated by movement and the visual, this performance focuses on the narrative. Each story begins with "Once upon a time..." and stops whenever another performer says "Stop". This way, performers interrupt one another, take the floor, steal ideas, and return to previously interrupted storylines. The starting point remains the same for every narrator, runs through the performance and repeats in layer after layer of endless combinations, creating a distinct beat and potentially a feeling of Zen-like tranquility. Textual segments are put into rows and loops, and constantly mashed up: the work with text (as well as the temporal landscape of the performance) becomes DJing. Apparently, like DJs or VJs, the performers play the role of "TJs", that is text – or time – jockey. The performer beats time, stops time, "scratches" its flow and then restarts it. One of Etchells' solo performances, called *A Broadcast / Looping Pieces* (2014) in fact has the word "loop" in the title. It consists of live, improvised, and loud mixing of texts that Etchells would find and collect for over fifteen years in a large computer file. Once printed, it becomes the basis for his live, text-jockey set. Mixed, stopped and restarted speech mirrors real everyday speech, which is full of cuts, unfinished sentences, stutters and pauses. Andrew Houston praises Etchells' work with text for the inventive and stubborn ways of creating, destroying and reconstructing narratives.<sup>[7]</sup> The same applies to the other performers, who are allowed to take a catnap or have a



snack at a table upstage during the six-hour performance. The seemingly never-ending creation and destruction series is not about identity; it is about the construction of the story, which the narrator works to “keep in time” for as long as possible.

The audience are invited to experience a specific temporal mode of perception through the emphasis on time as a parameter, as well as the unusually generous timespan of the performances. It stimulates and alters their attention, like listening to long musical compositions does. “The perception of lengths [...] suddenly adapts to these incomparably long lengths and the attentiveness to changes in rhythm and differences in length becomes heightened attention to the structure of musical timbre,” Karlheinz Stockhausen notes in his study (253). Listening to musical compounds, the spectator (listener) has “enough time to follow the subtlest changes” and is able to “notice individual tremors” (253). Length perspectives are relative and context-dependent; the audience are conscious of perceiving “length sections with different degrees of density, sonic medleys, and movement” (252). This essentially applies to *12am* and *Thousandth Night* as well, though the former is about visual density and other parameters, while the latter engages acoustic perception.

The broad temporal scope of durational influences the acting, too, as well as the whole piece’s dramaturgy and directing, which is carried out by the performers in real time (including Etchells, who makes occasional appearances in some of the performances as a schoolmaster figure). “An alert and rested performer is usually controlling what they do, managing and controlling how they appear, but if they get tired, whether physically or intellectually, they become more ragged, less able to control, and as a spectator you start to see things that the performers might otherwise have edited out. The tiredness opens them up,” writes Etchells (Walser 22). The audience too feel tired after a while, as if they were “a bit punch drunk, defences down, and that creates a possibility that wasn’t there when you first sat down. In this way the audience ‘mirrors’ the state of the stage” (Walser 22).

Like in *First Night*, strong metatheatrical tendencies assert themselves in durationals, too – it is theatre which takes as subject its own creative process. It does so in a very grotesque manner: in response to the hectic pace of today, the rules of theatre are presented in an instant package, quick and easy. In *12am*, characters zoom past like in a silent grotesque film (as the performers get tired, the pace slows down considerably). In the same performance, the collective also reveal the backstage, the mechanism of theatre mimesis, and of creating characters. The performer enters the stage in character and costume (that is, with a sign and dressed up); there is no waiting for his identity to be gradually unfolded as it is given straight away. These are elements of stock-character comedy, which is developed ad absurdum and cited with typical postmodern licentiousness. In *Quizoola!*, whose title refers to the popularity of pub quizzes in Britain, there is no need for us to sink into misery with the main character over some complex Hamletian doubts. The performance constantly satisfies our impatience and Google-fuelled need for instant answers. It is a fairly cynical but liberating ridicule of theatre and its conventions, which can also reach a much deeper, existential level. Again I mean the aforementioned “existence in duration,” which connects art to life – and which takes the basic situation of the performers (into which they are thrust, equipped with rules), and makes it an existential one.

Crucial here is the temporal structuring of the performance and the overall diversity of temporal levels, which can also be understood as an original response to the much-discussed social acceleration phenomenon. Like Heathfield, Sarah Sharma argues that the acceleration we are currently experiencing is not so much an objective experience but rather a temporal construct, constantly foisted on us. The sense of “cultural fixation” (6). Sharma explains:

In all this [contemporary] attention to time, however, the complexity of lived time is absent. It has not been addressed in speed theory, nor is it taken up in any substantial way by those who have critiqued speed theory for providing the digital age its 'sacred canopy'. Recognition of differential lived time is also ignored in everyday discussions about life getting faster. But that is hardly surprising. Running out of time is largely felt and imagined to be an individual problem, even when the critique is aimed at society (6–7).

Sharma's understanding of time therefore highlights the "micropolitics of temporal coordination" (7), or (for the purposes of this article) the individual switching between temporal modes.

Forced Entertainment's durational performances and their temporal structures are vastly different from one another, so it is difficult to generalize without contradictions. Sometimes they resemble precisely outlined Beckettian frozen tableaux (*Quizoola!*), other times the tableau is in moving, blurry, and ephemeral (*12am*). Sometimes it is a type of visual and physical theatre where not a single word is uttered (*12am*), other times the audience face an avalanche of words that refuses to stop (*Thousandth Night*). Sometimes performers use as props densely written sheets of paper, which they mix and match (*Speak Bitterness*), other times the props are cherry-picked objects, used in a strict order (*Complete Works*). The heaps of words, situations, and materials can appear chaotic, but actually follow very strict rules to give the performances an acoustic, visual, and ultimately temporal punctuation. This includes the repetition of set phrases or the bottomless heap of name-signs. In the performances, all work with text, image, and situation is strongly enumerative. Etchells therefore explains that durationals can be read as catalogues: of names, confessions, questions, stories, fears, or Shakespeare plays ("A Text on 20 Years" 272).

In an interview with Heathfield, Etchells gave a very articulate description of the anthropological nature of durationals, where spectators are in fact watching a person in distress: "You get to see people. You get to watch people. You get to see them coping with difficult situations. You get to see all their tricks and strategies for coping, for inventing and reinventing themselves, for being" ("As if Things" 89-90). The feeling of intimacy between actors and audience is enhanced by the frontal setup of the stage (mentioned at the beginning of the article), as well as the very purpose of durationals, which is about being together in a shared existential situation. Forced Entertainment use these performances to explore the spectrum of possibilities in contemporary theatre. One of the main incentives for Etchells to switch to the long-duration format was the simple realization that he disliked having to interrupt rehearsals. He realized that he was much more intrigued by theatre as a consciously present and permanent search for expression than the milling of a form that is already given. "I trust discoveries and accidents and I distrust intentions", he writes in *Certain Fragments* (55).

From a temporal perspective, durational performances are syncopic, irregular and largely unpredictable, and yet they have an intrinsic rhythm and order, even if it is not recognizable from the start. Aberrant as it may be, the performances' situational, acoustic, and especially temporal pulsation creates the impression that linear and cyclic time are intertwined. Textual and visual fragments can be reconfigured ad infinitum by following a set of rules as if playing a game. There is an explicit attempt at a fully-fledged story with as many episodes as possible. Watching this kind of performance, the spectator is given unprecedented freedom in terms of dealing with the time shared together. Forced Entertainment allow room for unabashed fatigue and deliberate imperfection, and mistakes are welcome – as opposed to Robert Wilson's polished visual art compositions and meticulous slowing-down. Nonetheless, their chaotic and convoluted narrative for the 21st century – verbal or visual – always ends in well-earned silence.



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## Notes

- [1] Devised theatre can be defined using two main concepts: *collectivity* and *processuality*. Here, the creative process starts not with the dramatic text awaiting interpretation, but with an idea, theme, concept, a given material or a basic situation, which are then developed in a collective creative process, using specific theatrical means.
- [2] The musicians mentioned in the introduction second Etchell's opinion. For instance, John Cage writes that 'one may give up the desire to control sound, clear his mind of music, and set about discovering means to let sounds be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments.' See John Cage. *Silence: Lectures and Writings*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1973, p. 10.
- [3] These audience responses to durationals are included in the notes for the #FE365 project, created as part of Forced Entertainment's thirtieth anniversary celebrations. (Available at <http://www.forcedentertainment.com/notebook-category/fe365/>).
- [4] The streaming took place in 2014 as part of the group's thirty-year anniversary. It still takes place, though less often (dates can always be found on the group's website, together with generous video excerpts from the performances: <http://www.forcedentertainment.com/project-category/durational/>).
- [5] *Exeunt Magazine* is an online platform for discussing contemporary theatre and performance. It ran alongside the performance *And on the Thousandth Night...* (<http://1000th.exeuntmagazine.com/>), the Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare project (<http://exeuntmagazine.com/features/completeworks/>) as well as Quizoola! (<http://quizoola.exeuntmagazine.com/>).
- [6] The streaming statistics are from 18 October 2014 in the Berlin theatre Hebbel am Ufer (source: <http://www.forcedentertainment.com/notebook-entry/fespeaklive-speak-bitterness-round-up/>).
- [7] This is from a review of Etchells' *Certain Fragments*, and applies to his performing and directing work (which is reflected in the book). See Andrew Houston. "Tim Etchells: *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment: Review*". *Modern Drama*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2000, p. 519.

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<http://twitter.com/hashtag/FESpeakLIVE>  
<http://twitter.com/hashtag/Quizoola24>

### **Durational performances**

*12am: Awake & Looking Down.* Forced Entertainment, premiered 22 October 1993, created and directed by Tim Etchells et al.

*And on the Thousandth Night...* Forced Entertainment, premiered 3 September 2000, created and directed by Tim Etchells et al.

*Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare.* Forced Entertainment, premiered 25 June–4 July 2015, created and directed by Tim Etchells et al.

*From the Dark.* Forced Entertainment, premiered 16 July 2016, created and directed by Tim Etchells et al.  
*Quizoola!* Forced Entertainment, premiered 9 September 1996, created and directed by Tim Etchells et al.

*Speak Bitterness.* Forced Entertainment, premiered 23 October 1994, created and directed by Tim Etchells et al.

### Theatres of Mind: Staging Psychological Science in Modernist American Theatre

*Abstract: The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a transformation of American drama and theatre from a mere entertainment into a mature modern art form. This paper looks at a tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century wonder show presenting science as entertainment, and shows how Modernist American drama and theatre adopted aspects of this tradition and transformed them. It focuses mainly on sciences of the human mind that experienced a tumultuous development in the era. The Witching Hour by Augustus Thomas will serve as an example of a modern realist play that presents bogus science – telepathy. Then, the paper will identify introduction of psychoanalysis to the United States and Freud’s visit in 1909 as a turning point in approach to psychology. Plays such as *Overtones* by Alice Gerstenberg and *Suppressed Desires* by Susan Glaspell (in collaboration with George Cram Cook) mark the beginning of a more experimental approach to psychology in the theatre.*

A long tradition may be identified in American theater, one that may be traced back to the popular entertainments of the 19<sup>th</sup> century known as “wonder shows.” These shows appeared in a culture in which scientific lectures were entertainment, and entertainment sometimes claimed the authority of scientific lectures: “The mid–nineteenth century featured an explosion of public information about science” and the audiences at these lecture found there “an educational experience” (Nadis 23). American drama drew inspiration from scientific developments and staged them as parts of theatre productions. It capitalized on staging techniques of wonder shows, which frequently presented and dramatized hypnotism, mesmerism, etc. When psychoanalysis emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly after Freud’s visit to America in 1909, it offered a natural subject for drama, which connected the two traditions of staging recent scientific findings and the hands-on show experience of wonder shows.

There are two Modernist experimental plays that mark a breaking point in the trend briefly identified above: *Overtones* by Alice Gerstenberg (1913), and *Suppressed Desires* by Susan Glaspell (together with her husband George Cram Cook) in 1916. These two one-acts put on stage the topical psychological theory of the times, Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis. What makes them stand out is that both *Overtones* and *Suppressed Desires* give a knowledgeable treatment to a serious psychological theory. In this way they break away from another tradition which had been deeply rooted in American popular entertainment, the “wonder show” (Nadis). In order to present *Overtones* and *Suppressed Desires* in a proper context, it is therefore necessary to briefly introduce a history of the wonder show as a means of presenting audiences with the latest scientific findings as well as various bogus-scientific presentations. Next, a brief analysis of a popular period piece capitalizing on misconceptions about telepathy and spiritualism, *The Witching Hour* by Augustus Thomas (1907), will follow. The concluding analyses of *Overtones* and *Suppressed Desires* will be preceded by a summary of Freud’s visit to the United States in 1909.

The history of the wonder show is as old as the history of the United States itself. As a performing art, the wonder show was in many ways more acceptable to the public of the early republic than traditional theatre, which was marred by anti-theatrical prejudice, especially in New England (see Saxon 83). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was common to advertise theatre performances as

lectures on morality or social life (Saxon 104). Conversely, lectures assumed the form of public entertainment and were often advertised as shows. This trend developed even further during the 19<sup>th</sup> century: "Travelling lectures were common during the 1800s, and were often announced weeks in advance of their actual date, generating much buzz in America's removed cities and towns. [...] 19<sup>th</sup> century audiences across the United States were drawn to science lectures for both their educational and entertainment value" ("Showing Off").

Contents of the wonder show varied from serious scientific knowledge to latest inventions to pure bogus scientific and plain irrational nonsense. However, all these shows were characterized by a high entertainment value, which attracted large audiences, like other forms of popular performance entertainments. Wonder shows of various sorts became common inclusions in variety show programs, meeting a wide range of tastes in the new-born nation: "Magic lantern phantasmagoria shows that presented 'apparitions of the dead and absent' appeared in the very early 1800s along with displays of mechanical androids or automatons" (Nadis 9). These supernatural and pseudoscientific displays largely were transformed into "magic" shows, with sensational performers such as Howard Thurston, who was a star illusionist in New York and other urban areas at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Illusionist shows reached their peak in popularity with the development of the vaudeville show and especially with Harry Houdini, the most popular illusionist of all time.

While Nadis focuses on various types of shows involving science and mentions that various missionaries emerged in 1890s who began to preach science (especially electricity) as a new kind of gospel of the modern times (Nadis 179-210), Bennett stresses the performative nature of various religious and occultist movements in the United States in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Religious meetings and occultist séances began to gain a shape of an art form in itself. Spiritualists such as Emma Hardinge Britten organized public occultist meetings for fellow believers in the netherworld, which were scripted and rehearsed theatre shows (Bennett 83-84). She used theatrical devices such as lighting and musical effects to underscore the theatrical effects of her séances. A lot of these shows claimed scientific grounds to their presentations, but soon enough, a great number of them were proven to be mere trickery: "The public debunking of spiritualism has been associated with theatrical performers who include consummate entertainers of very different sorts and in varied periods such as Harry Houdini in the United States" (Bennett 87). Bogus science performances contributed to a development of a whole popular genre of a magician's show, which is ostentatiously based on playing tricks with the audience's mind.

However, not all shows were designed to trick the audience. Some aimed at spreading knowledge: "Travelling science demonstrations fed the appetite of the middle and upper classes for new scientific knowledge, showing audiences some of the latest advancements and discoveries in fields such as electricity and pneumatics" ("Showing Off"). Demonstrations were an inseparable element of the show. Besides lectures about scientific as well as rather pseudo-scientific theories, a practical example was always an essential crowd pleaser. A lot of these lectures with demonstrations were delivered by respectful researchers, such as "Mr. Charles, a ventriloquist and professor of mechanical sciences to his Majesty the King of Prussia," a performer who arrived in Boston to give a series of lectures in 1819 (Nadis 9). Shows with artificial lightning flashes were very popular, such as "displays of electrical wonders" installed at Charles Peale's Museum in Philadelphia in 1826 (ibid.). But, as Nadis points out, it was not "until the 1830s that the wonder show truly flourished in America" (ibid.). Electricity was the most productive scientific and technological field that propelled the show element of the popular science lecture. A series of shows to convince the public of advantages of alternating vs direct current,

68| which has come to be known as the War of the Currents, culminated in the 1890s. In several shows, Thomas Edison famously used Nikola Tesla's alternating current to electrocute animals such as elephants in an attempt to convince the public of its danger. While these shows proved effective (and sensational), they could do little to change the fact that alternating current proved more economical in the end.

Besides natural sciences such as physics (electricity), new advances in the knowledge of the human body and soul were extremely popular. Various medical theories and pseudo-scientific observations were presented to hungry audiences. Among the most popular "medical" theories, there was mesmerism, a therapeutic method developed by Franz Anton Mesmer, who called it "animal magnetism". It arrived in the United States in the 1830s and had its heyday in the 1870s, before "it expired in the 1880s and 1890s with the emergence of academic psychology" (Fuller 205). Practitioners of mesmerism sort of hypnotized their patients by touch (rather than speaking to them as in true hypnosis) in order to restore a balance of vital fluid in an act of healing. This method proved to be very effective despite its bogus-scientific background: its therapeutic processes had a healing effect. Also, "subjects spontaneously performed feats of telepathy, clairvoyance, and recognition" (Fuller 208). It is the latter effect of mesmerism that was very popular with audiences, as it facilitated various feats of wonders.

It was only natural for serious drama to take over this tradition of the wonder show, combine it with current scientific (and pseudo-scientific) developments and produce plays for the standard commercial theatre enterprise, which was growing tumultuously in the second half of the nineteenth century. A piece that appeared during the peak period of popularity of this type of play was *The Witching Hour* by Augustus Thomas. Written in 1907, it combines elements of melodrama, realist staging in the mainstream theater and the sensational effects of the wonder show. Jack Brookfield is a gambler with a streak of luck. Without a family of his own, he helps his friend Helen's son Clay, who is accused of murder. Jack is convinced that the district attorney Frank Hardmuth framed Clay using cat's-eyes jewels to hypnotize Clay. Jack exposes Hardmuth's illicit activities. Clay's retrial begins and Jack attempts to acquit Clay by hypnotizing one of the jury members. After Clay is freed, Hardmuth appears at Jack's house to get his revenge.

The play "excited public interest [...] because it made spiritualism and hypnotism integral to the unraveling of the plot. Theatre audiences traditionally have loved a good drama about the supernatural, and in *The Witching Hour* Thomas combined a murder trial with hypnotism and telepathy" (Miller, *Entertaining* 156–7). At the beginning of the play, Jack himself does not know about his gift to hypnotize and read minds. One day, Judge Prentice convinces him of it. Jack realizes that a great part of his life, both his gambling luck and unfulfilled love life, are caused by his supernatural abilities. He shares his newly acquired knowledge with his sister Alice:

JACK. Justice Prentice told me that he could sit alone in his room and make another man get up and walk to the telephone and call him by simply thinking steadily of that other man.

ALICE. Superstitious people imagine anything.

JACK. Imagine much – yes – but this isn't imagination.

ALICE. It's worse, Jack. I call it spiritualism.

JACK. Call it anything you like – spiritualism – or socialism – or rheumatism – it's there. I know nothing about it scientifically, but I've tried it on and it works, my dear Alice, it works. (*The Witching Hour*, Act 1).



The play lists a lot of –isms in a comical reflection of the variety of pseudo-scientific interpretations of supernatural phenomena such as mind-reading. It counts on the audience's familiarity with various conceptions of the human mind, some of which are plain bogus. It does not undermine the existence of this ability as such, though. Just as a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, telepathy would work as well no matter what explanation was provided for it.

Jack slowly gains confidence in his ability during the play. His friends and foes alike confirm to him that they have observed some kind of superpower in him. He realizes that his luck in poker may be an ability to know which cards other players are holding. The love of his youth, Helen, confirms that he has always had an ability to influence others from a distance:

HELEN. You had a way, Jack – when you were a boy at college, of making me write to you.

JACK. Had I?

HELEN. You know you had – at nights – about this hour – I'd find it impossible to sleep until I'd got up and written to you – [...] I don't believe the word "telepathy" had been coined then – but I guessed something of the force – and all these years, I've felt it. (Act 1)

When Jack realizes that Hardmuth mesmerized Helen's son Clay so that Clay committed a murder while in a trance, he decides to use his influence to destroy Hardmuth's reputation (after all, Jack is a gambling tycoon of the city). He also decides to try to force the jury to find Clay innocent.

Jack stays at home while a retrial takes place. Helen and Alice are shocked, because they expect Jack to go to the court and testify on behalf of Clay. Instead, Jack explains: "I can't help Helen by being at the court-house, but, as I'm alive and my name's Jack Brookfield, I do believe that my thought reaches that particular juryman" (Act 3). No matter how telepathy works scientifically, it is presented in the play as effective enough to save a person from a murder charge. Indeed, Jack is successful and the particular juryman's voice leads to a jury's verdict of "not guilty".

A sensational scene takes place at the end of Act 3 in Jack's parlor. The room is full of furniture such as comfortable armchairs and decorated tables. There is a hearth, and pictures hang on the walls. A variety of statuettes and busts are distributed around this turn-of-the-century, *Art Nouveau* room with a touch of the American nouveau-riche aesthetic. A chandelier hanging from the ceiling dominates the space in the middle of the stage. It becomes the central element of decoration in the scene. With a career destroyed and his rival acquitted, Hardmuth wants to take personal revenge on Jack: "You think you'll send me to the gallows, but, damn you, you go first yourself." He "*Thrusts a derringer against Jack's body*", but Jack is standing "*under the lamp with his hand on its button*". Jack screams: "Stop!" and the lamp flashes. The light from the lamp is the only light on stage now, illuminating the locked eyes of the two contestants. Suddenly, Judge Prentice appears from the dark background, so that "*there is a double battery of hypnotism*" on Hardmuth. The effect of hypnosis is materialized in front of the audiences by a focus on the eyes, which is provided by the chandelier lighting. Jack gives Hardmuth an order to drop the gun, and it is the sheer power of his mind which ensures that "*the derringer drops from Hardmuth's hand.*" Hardmuth is puzzled: "I'd like to know – how in hell you did that – to me" (Act 3). This scene is a variation on a wonder show, which shows effects of hypnotism within a framework of a dramatic work as something real. There is not enough convincing evidence to conclude whether Thomas, a playwriting star of his time, was seriously promoting telepathy as an actual phenomenon existing in the world, or whether his play was an attempt at demystifying it as a mere show-act. The success of the play



70| suggests that he was fully aware of the popularity of mystery themes and he willingly took this opportunity to cash in.

*The Witching Hour* was performed at a time when mesmerism was being forgotten and supernatural powers such as telepathy were by large seen for what they are – nonsense and impossibility. Medical science and modern psychology developed, and their findings in many aspects led to discoveries even more sensational than the various bogus-scientific claims of the past. Drama, naturally, reflected these changes. One of the most influential developments was the introduction of psychoanalysis to the United States. The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, “visited the United States, where he gave five lectures at Clark University between August 29 and September 21, 1909. That visit is still mentioned in college-level American history textbooks as a symbol of sociocultural changes that began early in the twentieth century and left the United States transformed for all of the decades afterward” (Burnham 1). His visit became a great spark for the development of psychotherapy and also inspired a lot of artists, especially “the intellectual avant-garde” (ibid. 3). This assistance from various scholars and avant-garde artists “began to make Freud and psychoanalysis stand out in the United States among other new types of ‘modern’ thinking” (ibid. 14–5).

As a matter of fact, Freud had an ambivalent relationship with America. He admired it before his visit and saw it as a place where people could develop without the mechanisms of repression he saw in Europe. His opinion of the country changed radically during this visit, though. On the one hand, he was surprised by Americans’ openness to his theory: “it was possible, in academic circles at least, to discuss freely and scientifically everything” (Freud, qtd. in Kaye 120). But on the other hand, he saw a different sort of prudishness there, which puzzled him. “Freud combined a stiff European sense of bourgeois propriety with distinctly anti-bourgeois attitudes toward sexual liberalization. The Americans he met during his travels, on the other hand, exhibited an equally unusual mix of materialistic egalitarianism and sexual prudery” (ibid.121). He also saw a lack of tradition and a tendency towards superficiality. Many years later, he famously “came to see the United States as ‘a gigantic mistake,’ a ‘miscarriage,’ a ‘bad experiment conducted by Providence.’ American were neurotic and hypocritical” (ibid. 120). As much as he came to hate it, America embraced his theory and has cherished the legacy of his short, but utterly transformative visit of 1909.

As in the past, new trends such as psychoanalysis found their way to the American public via scientific and popular lectures, as well as performances. Two female playwrights were among the first to answer the challenge of staging psychoanalytical theory. In 1913, Alice Gerstenberg wrote a one-act called *Overtones*, which was staged by the Washington Square Players in 1915. *Overtones* “provides a superb example of American experimentalism” (Toten Beard 55). The play is a dialogue between two women, each of them represented by two actors at the same time. One of the actors is her character’s *ego*, while the other stands for her *id*. “Gerstenberg creates a mechanism for externalizing psychological conflict. Psychology, specifically Freudian psychoanalysis, was popular in America during the period, a fact that contributed to the success of *Overtones*” (Toten Beard 56). The mechanism of repression was popularized and commonly known to the general public at the time. This was the first time when repression was dramatized as a conflict between the *ego* and the *id* on stage.

Harriet is married to Charles Goodrich, but she has never stopped longing for the lover of her youth, the painter John. Margaret is John’s wife and is paying a visit to Harriet. Both women try to convince the other of how happy and fulfilled are the lives they live now, but their subconscious minds articulate a lot of doubts they have about themselves. Margaret desperately hopes that the rich Harriet will order a portrait from John, but she acts as if she did not care, boosting John’s success and

keeping silent about their financial troubles. Harriet pretends she does not really need a portrait, while in fact she longs for it. In the end, the order is placed and that is the end of all three conflicts: that between Margaret and Harriet, as well as the two accompanying conflicts within each character's mind: Margaret's subconscious "Maggie" and Harriet's "Hetty".

Stage directions clearly set out how the play should be staged while all four actors are on stage simultaneously: "*The 'primitive' and 'cultured' selves never come into actual physical contact but try to sustain the impression of mental conflict. Harriet never sees Hetty [...] Hetty, however, looks at Harriet, talks intently and shadows her continually. The same is true of Margaret and Maggie*" (*Overtones*). While the cultured aspect of the character behaves as a standard dramatic persona (that is, as a stylized representation of a possible person embodied by an actor), and as such both these characters communicate, interact, and so on, the primitive selves are also portrayed as dramatic personas, but they do not represent possible persons; on the contrary, they are artistic expressions of originals that are not persons, but abstractions. In this way, *Overtones* goes one step further than Freud's psychoanalytical theory by showing the subconscious in a dynamic, real-time interaction with the consciousness, rather than studying its effects in the form of a neurosis as the aftermath of its operation.

The relationship between the two components of one psyche is explained to audiences in a dialogue between the cultured Harriet and the primitive Hetty:

HETTY. My passions are deeper than yours. I can't keep on the mask as you do. I'm crude and real, you are my appearance in the world.

HARRIET. I am what you wish the world to believe you are.

HETTY. You are the part of me that has been trained.

HARRIET. I am your educated self.

HETTY. I am the rushing river; you are the ice over the current.

HARRIET. I am your subtle overtones.

HETTY. But together we are one woman, the wife of Charles Goodrich.

Gerstenberg also focuses on the sound of the speech patterns, which is a typical sign of American modernist drama. While the "*voices of the cultured women are affected and lingering, the voices of the primitive [are] impulsive and more or less staccato*" (*Overtones*). The auditive component of the production thus adds another dimension to the externalization of psychology.

The most effective moments of the externalization of psychology are present in the conflicts between the cultured and primitive parts of the psyche. At one point, Margaret is trying to look happy and carefree in front of Harriet, but Maggie is reminding her of their troubles, thus convicting her of a conscious lie:

MARGARET (*to Harriet*). My life is complete, too.

MAGGIE. My heart is torn with sorrow; my husband cannot make a living. He will kill himself if he does not get an order for a painting.

MARGARET. You must come and see us in our studio. John has been doing some excellent portraits. He cannot begin to fill his orders.

What Margaret says to Harriet is contrary to facts and her *id*. Or, better said, what she says is contrary to facts as her *id* feels them to be. While Margaret tries not to lose face in front of a friend, there is doubt and self-loathing in her subconscious: a fruitful basis for a neurosis.

She may not be necessarily lying to herself, though. It is possible that through mechanisms of repression, she believes what she says on the conscious level. This conflict within herself is unconscious: she is not aware of it herself. Therefore, she may believe that what she says is the truth. Moreover, both aspects of the psyche may be exaggerating, and the truth is somewhere in the middle.

The audiences are witnessing a fascinating battle behind a character's psychological motivation to speak – which makes this play a modern follower of the wonder show, as it is an experiment in the study of the subconscious in the conflicting situation of an “emotionally charged” setting (Toten Beard 55). The play strictly follows the most up-to-date findings of modern psychology of its day. In this sense, it becomes a science lecture, which teaches its audiences about relations between various aspects of the mind, and studies the effects of these interactions. It is especially in the opening passages of the play where the audience learns how the mind works, that the play follows the tradition of the science lecture.

While Gerstenberg's *Overtones* focuses on Freud's theory of the mind and is serious in its tone, Susan Glaspell's *Suppressed Desires*, written in collaboration with her husband George Cram Cook in 1916, approaches a different aspect of psychoanalytic theory and is a comic one-act. The play deals with dreams and ridicules over-interpretation of dreams, which at the time tended to see suppressed desires in literally everything. *Suppressed Desires* is “an engaging response to the craze for psychoanalysis that was then sweeping through Greenwich Village” (Ozieblo 28). The play reacts to Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, which had just become available in English in its full length. A lot of commentaries and follow-up studies were available in the United States and the theory became extremely popular, as it was “arguing that dreams have meanings that can be understood and interpreted” (Gay xvi). Besides serious therapeutic endeavors, there was a wave of lay interpretations, which are satirized in Glaspell's one-act.

Henrietta and Stephen Brewster are a well-situated New York couple. Henrietta is an enthusiastic follower of psychoanalytical theory. She gives popular lectures and undergoes psychoanalytical sessions herself. Stephen is an architect who suffers from lack of inspiration, and Henrietta urges him to get psychoanalyzed too, which he refuses because he does not trust psychoanalysis. Henrietta's sister Mabel arrives in this situation and, on her first night, she has a strange dream:

MABEL. I dreamed I was a hen [...] and I was pushing along through a crowd as fast as I could, but being a hen I couldn't walk very fast [...]; and there was some sort of creature in a blue cap [...] and it kept shouting after me, “Step, Hen! Step, Hen!” until I got all excited and just couldn't move at all. (*Suppressed Desires*)

Despite Stephen's warnings, Mabel shares this dream with her sister, who starts analyzing it after explaining how the mind works according to psychoanalytic theory: “You want something. You think you can't have it. You think it's wrong. So you try to think you don't want it. [...] But it's there just the same. It stays there shut up in your unconscious mind, and it festers.” (ibid.). Henrietta remembers that Mabel used to be in love with a man named Lyman Eggleston, and concludes that a dream of being a hen expresses Mabel's secret desire to split with her husband and be with Lyman Eggleston (through an association of the “hen” in the dream and “egg” in Eggleston's name).

Stephen finds this ridiculous. Mabel cannot believe it, but she slowly becomes convinced. Then, Stephen also decides to be psychoanalyzed without telling Henrietta. When Stephen returns from his

session with Dr. Russell, he shocks Henrietta with the revelation that his dream of a house upside down expresses his suppressed desire to leave Henrietta: |73

STEVE: He said my dream of the walls receding and leaving me alone in a forest indicates a suppressed desire —

HENRIETTA: Yes — yes!

STEVE: To be freed from —

HENRIETTA: Yes — freed from — ?

STEVE: Marriage. [...]

HENRIETTA: Stephen, are you telling me that Dr. Russell — Dr. A. E. Russell — told you this? (*Steve nods.*) Told you you have a suppressed desire to separate from me?

STEVE: That's what he said. (*ibid.*)

Henrietta is shocked. She cannot believe that Stephen's dream of a badly built house is a code for his marriage rather than for work-related issues. Furthermore, Mabel adds that Dr. Russell also explained to her that her dream ("Step, Hen!") was a calling of Stephen, because this is how Mabel used to misread the name when she was a child. The dream also urges Henrietta to step away from Mabel's path (Henrietta's name also includes "hen"). Mabel's desire for Stephen is obvious from Stephen's last name, because it is possible to misread Brewster as "be rooster" – an invitation for Stephen to become Mabel's sexual partner.

Henrietta needs to decide: will she give way to her sister's and husband's suppressed desires in a way she advises her own subjects, or will she discard these interpretations as nonsense? She does the latter when she concludes a long discussion over whether Dr. Russell's interpretations should be taken seriously: "I'm sick of psychoanalysis!" (*ibid.*) She even decides to burn her collection of the *Journal on Morbid Psychology*, which has been displayed conspicuously on the coffee table throughout the whole performance.

With Stephen and Henrietta happily reunited, Mabel remains uncertain about her future. She wants to know if she should follow her suppressed desires towards Lyman Eggleston. Stephen gives her a piece of well-meant advice: "Mabel, you just keep right on suppressing it!" (*ibid.*). This comical ending of the amusing one-act does not call for a rejection of psychoanalysis as a whole, but it rather states that suppressed desires are a natural part of our lives and trying to resolve them may cause harm, especially when the interpretation is provided by incompetent persons, such as self-educated enthusiasts.

*Suppressed Desires* departs from the tradition of the wonder show and the science lecture. It does not contain any sensational scenes such as *The Witching Hour*, where an act of hypnotism takes place on stage, or an illustrative display of a complex phenomenon as in *Overtones*, which externalizes hidden processes within a mind for easy understanding by the general public. Yet, it follows the tradition of the popular science lecture, which was an important aspect of the whole array of various kinds of the wonder show, when it explains the main principles of psychoanalysis in general and the techniques of dream interpretation in particular.

It is way beyond the scope of this paper to draw the line of development much further, yet it should be said that one a radical expression of Freud's findings about the human mind is *Strange Interlude* by Eugene O'Neill, which is seen as one of "the most ambitious treatments of contemporary American culture" (Murphy 139). O'Neill takes Freud's theory of the subconscious and expresses it by

74| reviving the device of the stage monologue. It is in *Strange Interlude* where the tradition of presenting the most recent scientific findings about human psychology meets with an artistic expression in a reflection of the current society. Also, science has remained a popular topic for drama and theatre throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to the present. Playwrights and theatre practitioners present scientific discoveries, discuss moral implications of scientific progress and tell scientists' fascinating biographies to audiences who remain as intrigued as the ones a hundred years or more earlier.

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### The Strange Case of Shylock: From a Figure of Tragic Dimensions into an Ordinary Jewish Bargainer

*Abstract: This article attempts to trace the reception of productions of *The Merchant of Venice* directed by Jaroslav Kvapil (7 April 1916) and Antonín Fencl (8 April 1916), in newspaper theatre reviews in terms of critical response embedded in the broader social and political context of the Shakespeare Festival held in Prague in 1916 during the Great War. Kvapil's and Fencl's respective performances of *The Merchant of Venice* were divided by only a single day. However, the two renditions were very different. Fencl became the exclusive and multifunctional creator of the performance, in which he rose to the task of director, stage designer, translator and performer of the role of Shylock. In contrast to Kvapil's directing concept and Eduard Vojan's vindictive but distressed, human portrayal of Shylock, which dominated the National Theatre's stage, Fencl portrayed the Venetian Jew in a thoroughly comedic manner. Fencl's "Jewish bargainer, hunching and skulking whimsically, bargaining secretly and in a neighbourly manner, negotiating cunningly and insidiously," did not seem to win the favour of the theatre critics of the time.*

In its long stage history, *The Merchant of Venice* has served diverse political and ideological agendas. The play was subject to particular attention in the Czech Lands<sup>1</sup> in April 1916, when the world commemorated the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death. In Prague it was even performed in two theatres at the same time. The dates of the two subsequent productions are particularly important. The first revival by the National Theatre, with the famous Czech actor Eduard Vojan playing the role of Shylock, took place on 7 April and celebrated the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death.<sup>2</sup> The second stage revival was performed by the Smíchov Amphitheatre on 8 April. It was directed by the Czech actor and theatre manager Antonín Fencl, who also translated the play (1916). This paper aims to examine these two sequential productions of the play with respect to the resonances that Shakespeare's controversial play might have had for wartime audiences (Mišterová 110).

It is not possible to discuss the first performance without mentioning Jaroslav Kvapil and Eduard Vojan. Kvapil (1868–1950) was an outspoken actor, director, translator and playwright who was at the forefront of the secret Czech resistance movement called Maffie [sic]. His political activities undoubtedly made a contribution to the critical reception of the production and the way it was perceived by audiences. Nevertheless, the central figure of these Shakespearean performances was Eduard Vojan (1853–1920). Working in tandem, Kvapil and Vojan created almost canonical renderings of Shakespeare's plays. While Kvapil focused on a sophisticated stage composition, atmospheric lighting and sensitive atmosphere, Vojan placed emphasis on the methods of psychological realism (see also Burian 25). His immersion into the psyche of the characters, supported by eloquent mimicry and dramatic diction, placed him among the most prominent members of Czech theatre of the time. His artistic performance, however, was not limited to implying the results of mental processes; he also strove to acknowledge their causes and gradual development. Vojan's penchant for heroic and monumental pathos found expression in productions like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III* and *The Merchant of Venice*.<sup>3</sup>

It is thus not surprising that in the portrayal of Shylock, Vojan chose the psychological approach, supported by expressive body language. Although the details of his gestures, movements, body language and overall appearance evoked Shylock's Jewishness, Vojan's Shylock was primarily a "wholly vindictive being; full of hatred and devilishly vindictive, whose irreconcilable anger menaces and screams with voracious savagery" (Vodák 129, my translation). However, Vojan did not neglect to



76| portray Shylock's isolation and suffering, which he transformed into a reproach and condemnation of the surrounding world. The critic Otokar Fischer perceived him in a similar manner, as he accepted Vojan's authenticity, flexibility, diversity and tragic grandeur. In Fischer's eyes, Shylock was not a savage or vengeful being; nor was he a hero, but a deeply suffering human being:

... Vojan's performance jumps quickly from the pain of Shylock's fugitive daughter to his pain over lost money, from avarice to sadness, from desperation to flashes of vengefulness. What we always emphasise with in Vojan's performances is becoming clearer and clearer: his exceptional human understanding of happiness and tragedy, his humane empathy, his theatrical complements and his recreation of Czech humane philosophy. Not a grotesque Jew, not a despicable usurer, not a programmed speaker for philosemitic principles (as was the case with more recent portrayals of Shylock),<sup>4</sup> but a human being, as most closely depicted in his own interpretation: an unhappy father whose own daughter was snatched from him; an exile from society in which the decades-long woes of his tribe are gathered and vented. (Fischer 4, my translation).

Fischer's review seems to aptly describe Vojan's Shylock, who was neither a villain nor a hero, but a desperate and humiliated man. Vojan shifted the focus from Shylock's status as a villain to that of a suffering father and an ordinary man who succumbed to his weakness of material greed. His Shylock does not seem to have fallen prey to his vengefulness but rather to circumstances (and external causes). This change of focus from "villainy" to a flawed "humanity" was understood by wartime audiences who probably associated Shylock's suffering with any injustice, misery, and perhaps with the tragedy of war. The performance, no doubt, gained emotional force. According to Jindřich Vodák (123), a respected Czech theatre critic, the entire audience felt for Shylock at the moment of his humiliation at the trial and applauded appreciatively. Generally positive period reviews depicted Vojan's performance as unrivalled. It is not surprising, then, that not many of Vojan's contemporaries (Josef Šmaha, Antonín Fencel) or those that followed them could achieve the complexity of Vojan's rendition.<sup>5</sup> Vojan's eventual successor Jaroslav Hrušínský (1877–1956) was even reluctant to assume the role.

Kvapil's direction and Vojan's performance were probably influenced by a trend started by Edmund Kean, Charles Macklin and Henry Irving towards rendering Shylock as a tragic hero rather than a comic character. It is also conceivable that both Kvapil and Vojan were familiar with Max Reinhardt's production, which premiered in 1905 at the Deutsches Theater with Rudolph Schildkraut (1862–1930) as Shylock, which combined the elements of severity and comedy.<sup>6</sup> In 1913, however, Reinhardt's dramaturge and colleague Arthur Kahane put emphasis on Shylock's Jewish origin and perceived him as an "an intrusive and uncanny guest" (Ackermann and Schülting 21). In result, Shylock was overshadowed by the magnificent portrayal of Venice, which was put at the forefront of Reinhardt's production.

Kvapil's and Fencel's respective performances of *The Merchant of Venice* were divided by only a single day. However, Fencel's rendition differed significantly from Kvapil's version. Fencel (1881–1952) became the exclusive and multifunctional creator of the performance, in which he took on the task of director, stage designer, translator and performer of the role of Shylock. In contrast to Kvapil's directing concept and Vojan's artistic rendition, Fencel portrayed Shylock as a comic character and highlighted the figure's distinctness. In accordance with nineteenth-century practice, he also emphasised Shylock's Jewishness by giving him various stereotypical visual attributes, i.e. a turban, curly locks flowing down his temples and a beard. He was dressed in a decorative but rather simple

manner, which contrasted with the elegant and expensive clothing worn by Christians. Nevertheless, Fencl's actual age disrupted the traditionally perceived image of Shylock as an older man. Moreover, it challenged the heterogeneity of age in the play, and it challenged the vertical age stratification and brought the conflict between Antonio and Shylock closer to a quarrel of peers between two business rivals, which also represented their differing ethnicities (see Drábek 168–169). A similar perception can be found later in Martin Hilský's interpretation, which views Antonio as a member of the 'golden youth'. Although Shylock's calendar age is not explicitly mentioned in the play (aside from the fact that he has a daughter), Shylock's youthful appearance made a rather surprising impression, especially when considering the context of Vojan's previous portrayal of Shylock. Fencl was 34 years old at the time of the premiere, while Vojan was almost twice that age. Naturally, the use of a mask cannot be ruled out, although Vodák's list of Shylock's physical activities ("running, cringing, dodging, happily prancing, clapping, folding his body and wriggling like a hamster") implies more youthful and active behaviour.

A specific element of Fencl's rendition was his stage-centred translation, which, in contrast to previous interpretations, placed a greater emphasis on the speech and playability of the text. Seen from the perspective laid out in the programme accompanying the performance of *The Merchant of Venice* and in the preface to Fencl's translation (1916), in which Fencl evaluated the previous Academy and Museum translations of Shakespeare's work, Fencl's translation was meant primarily to be faithful to the original: coherent and poetic. Advertising his new translation, Fencl proved to be a skilful theatrical "manager" by claiming that it was required by the taste of the audience and the demands of the market.

Reviews from the time differed in their evaluation of the performance. Vodák commended the artistic performances and set design, which provided an appropriate framework for the director's interpretation (127–128). He mainly highlighted the practical organisation of the stage, with the Venetian street in the foreground and the changing spaces of the yellow coloured Belmont, the dark interior of Shylock's home, the courtroom, or the starry sky above Belmont in the background, which allowed for fluent changes in scenes without needless delays, omissions of text or changes in the sequence of scenes, as was the case, in Vodák's view, with versions of the play by Kvapil or Reinhardt. The whole performance took place over the course of two and a half hours. The set design strengthened the central theme of the duality of the two worlds, nations and cultures that resound throughout the play. Fencl's "little Jew, who not long before was still running about with 'a bag of skins'", was given a positive evaluation by Vodák, who did not attempt to hide the differences between Vojan and Fencl's concept of the character. Vodák compares both versions in the following:

Fencl's Shylock was very surprising. There is a significant gap between Fencl and Vojan's classical approach. Although Vojan does not neglect Shylock's Jewishness and shows this in his hair and other small details of his grimaces and posture (the peculiar way he supports his haunches, his elbows close to his body or the mimicry of his fingers), Vojan's Shylock is above all a wholly insidious being; full of hatred and devilishly vindictive, whose irreconcilable anger menaces and screams with voracious savagery. Through the power and dourness of his spite he towers over his surroundings; all those who cross his path seem to be weak and worthless dwarves, incapable of any great or heroic sentiment. Fencl has taken his Shylock down to the level of the everyday world and even below it; he is a swaggering Jew who not long ago was still running about with a bag of skins: in his mouth are left only incisors, his beard grows about his face as it pleases, and his face shines with the success of enterprise. The erratic way

78| he carries himself, his grimaces, speech – all of these are the signs of a Jewish merchant, who comically cringes and swaggers, who carries on private and neighbourly deals and does business cunningly and waggishly. Tubal tells him of Antonio's disaster and he prances about happily, clapping, folding his body. When Tubal reminds him of his daughter's thoughtlessness, he wriggles like a hamster trying to scratch itself. This is a wholly different Shylock than Vojan's, but is worth viewing for its independent and pleasant performance. (Vodák 129, my translation)

Vodák also commended Emma Švandová in the role of Portia, who gave the role of "Ruler of Belmont" energy and eloquence. Overall, Vodák's review of Fencel's work, which contained epithets such as "played out with love" and "suitably performed", is written in a positive and praiseful manner.

Otokar Fischer (4) commended the eloquence of Fencel's translation and the "neutral set design", which did not overly distract the viewer; however, he did criticise the simple concept of the production. He negatively perceived Fencel's attempt to recast Shylock from a character reaching tragic dimensions to a common sweet-talking Jewish businessman:

The actor performing the role of Shylock took on the task of acting out the role of the poet's original intentions, i.e. primarily in a comic fashion, but neither farcically nor heroically. This is a return to the obsolete standpoint that Shakespeare's comedies were all unambiguously merry; this was an expression of primitive naturalism, while the actual Shylock was not presented to us in a human context. Although this concept can be defended for historical reasons and the character was carefully studied in terms of his racial characteristics, I found all of this gesticulation and ornamentation after a time to be unbearable and the court scene, in its comic fashion, seemed brutal and repulsive. (Fischer 4, my translation)

In contrast to this dismissive stance towards the comedic concept of Shylock's character, Fencel's "fluent and natural" translation was met with positive reviews. Czech poet, essayist, theatre critic and playwright Hanuš Jelínek (237) positively commented on the spontaneity of Fencel's translation, its witty selection of vocabulary and the simplicity and cleverness of the set design, which allowed for a fluent sequence of scenes to be created without interruption. In Jelínek's opinion, Fencel's "little Jew" with his squeaky voice paled in comparison to Vojan's powerful and demonic Shylock.

Fencel's version of *The Merchant of Venice* was clearly non-traditional and, in many ways, controversial. This is reflected in theatre reviews of the time, which were split into two camps. Contrary to Vodák's positive summary, which does not deny the particularity and detail of Fencel's version, Otokar Fischer's review rejects the comic interpretation of Shylock's character, marked by racial features, and court scenes used as an expression of primitive naturalism. Critics, however, positively received Fencel's innovative and stage-centred translation (see Drábek 166–169).

From today's point of view, it is difficult to judge which of the critics most accurately reviewed the essence of Fencel's *The Merchant of Venice* and whether the performance was truly a misunderstood work of the director's inventiveness for which the audience, used to Vojan's monumental characters, was not prepared, or an unsuccessful and erroneous interpretation of Shakespeare's play. After eight performances, it was taken off the programme. This, however, was not necessarily done because the play was unsuccessful, although Fencel's translation never saw another performance.

## Notes

- [1] Prior to 1918, Czech lands were part of Austria-Hungary. Although military operations took place outside of Czech territory, they affected it to an unprecedented degree.
- [2] It was performed at the Shakespeare festival which ran at the National Theatre in Prague, with productions of *The Comedy of Errors* (27 March), *Richard III* (30 March), *Romeo and Juliet* (1 April), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (4 April), *The Merchant of Venice* (7 April), *The Taming of the Shrew* (9 April), *Much Ado about Nothing* (13 April), *As You Like It* (15 April), *Measure for Measure* (17 April), *Twelfth Night* (19 April), *Hamlet* (23 April), *King Lear* (25 April), *Macbeth* (28 April), *Othello* (30 April) and *The Winter's Tale* (4 May). The festival commenced on 27 March 1916 with Smetana's *Triumphal Overture* in C major, conducted by the famous Czech composer and conductor Karel Kovařovic, followed by an introductory lecture *Génius Shakespearův a jeho tvorba: Apostrofa kritická* [Shakespeare, the Genius, and His Oeuvre: The Critical Apostrophe], delivered by F. X. Šalda, the renowned Czech art critic.
- [3] The premiere took place on 6 October 1909. It was directed by Jaroslav Kvapil and performed in Josef Vaclav Sládek's translation.
- [4] As a German scholar, Fischer probably referred to Johann Friedrich Ferdinand Fleck, who offered a philosemitic portrayal of Shylock. Moreover, he might have been familiar with Jacob Adler's dignified and intellectual patriarch (see also Heschel 79).
- [5] Josef Šmaha (1848–1915) was a renowned Czech actor and director. Jaroslav Hurt (1877–1959) was a Czech actor and director.
- [6] Rudolph Schildkraut (1862–1930) was an Austrian actor of Jewish origin.

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### Romeo and Juliet in the Midst of Early 18th-Century English Party Politics<sup>[1]</sup>

*Abstract: In the early years of the so-called Whig Supremacy (1714–1760), London theatres became, once again, exceedingly political, responding to the general climate of rivalry between the ruling Whigs and the discredited Tories and the principles for which these parties stood. In the early 1720s, a wave of plays appeared setting the well-known story of unhappy lovers from opposing families within the framework of the then current political animosities. To an extent, each of these more or less openly referred to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which was then known to London audiences primarily through Thomas Otway's highly political adaptation *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1679). This paper will focus on three such works – Benjamin Griffin's *Whig and Tory* (1720), John Sturmy's *The Compromise* (1723), and Susanna Centlivre's *The Artifice* (1722) – observing how they reflect early 18<sup>th</sup>-century English party politics and how their respective authors worked with the conventions of the unhappy love story to express their own (or their theatres') political sympathies.*

#### **Introduction: *Romeo and Juliet* on the Restoration Stage (1660s–1680s)**

As Sandra Clark notes, although Shakespeare was in the Restoration period (the period following the restoration of the Stuarts on the English throne in 1660) “venerated, his reputation was not unblemished and his works were criticised in several respects”, namely for their “archaic” language, “clumsy” plotting, and “defective” morality (Clark 176). On 1st March 1662, after attending the first London staging of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* since the 1642 closure of the theatres, the politician and avid theatregoer Samuel Pepys wrote in his diary:

[S]aw “*Romeo and Juliet*,” the first time it was ever acted; but it is a play of itself the worst that I ever heard in my life, and the worst acted that I ever saw these people do, and I am resolved to go no more to see the first time of acting, for they were all of them out more or less. (Pepys I–III, 185)

Although Pepys was not particularly fond of Shakespeare's plays in general (perhaps with the exception of *Macbeth*, which he called “a most excellent play in all respects”, Pepys IV–VI, 118), and while his bad experience could, indeed, have been largely based on the fact that the actors did not know their rôles properly at the premiere (as the diary entry would suggest), it appears that he was not the only person to dislike the play as Shakespeare wrote it: As John Downes, prompter of the Duke's Company, noted, *Romeo and Juliet* was soon after its revival adapted by a Mr James Howard into a tragicomedy with the couple surviving at the end, with both versions “Play'd Alternatively, Tragical one Day, and Tragicomical another; for several Days together” (Downes 22). No other details about this early adaptation of Shakespeare's play, however, survive and it appears that it was not very successful either.

Just like several other Shakespeare works, *Romeo and Juliet* gained new currency during the Exclusion Crisis (1678–1683), when Shakespeare's “strong sense of order, loyalty, obedience, and the danger of Civil War” very much resonated in a country on the verge of another domestic conflict (Spencer 68). Thomas Otway's adaptation of the play, *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1679),



transposes the Shakespearian material to the last days of the Roman republic, with the Capulets and Montagues replaced by Metellus, a supporter of Sylla in the struggle for consulship, and his daughter Lavinia, and Caius Marius, Sylla's chief rival, and his son Marius junior. Like the majority of dramatists in the period,<sup>[2]</sup> Otway, too, offers a strongly pro-royalist, Tory argument against republicanism (associated with the parliamentary Whigs), portraying Rome of the first century BC as a dismal world, devoid of the justice and order represented by a monarch (Otway completely removed Prince Escalus from his version, leaving Rome and its people at the mercy of the struggling factions). The audience is also deprived of the most poetical and cheerful portion of Shakespeare's story, in which Romeo and Juliet meet and fall in love with each other: instead, they watch the misery of Marius junior and Lavinia caused by their fathers' political ambitions from the very beginning of the play.

In the world of *Caius Marius*, love is subordinate to politics. While Marius senior had once suggested a match between his son and Lavinia to form an alliance with Metellus, with this plan having failed he shows only hatred for his son's love, far exceeding any verbal expression of enmity in Shakespeare's play:

*Marius senior.* ... if thou art Man and Roman,  
 If thou hast Vertue in thee, or canst prize  
 Thy Father's Honour, scorn her like a Slave.  
 Hell! love her? Dam her: there's *Metellus* in her.  
 In every Line of her bewitching Face,  
 There's a Resemblance tells whose Brood she came of.  
 I'd rather see thee in a Brothel trapt,  
 And basely wedded to a Ruffian's Whore,  
 Then thou shouldst think to taint my generous Bloud  
 With the base Puddle of that o're-fed Gown-man.  
 (1. 1. 308–17)

Similarly, when Lavinia refuses to indulge her father and marry his political ally Sylla, confessing that she already has a lover, Metellus's curses aimed at her are significantly harsher than the parallel speech of the old Capulet to the disobedient Juliet. Indeed, Metellus's words sound like ones of a tyrannous politician rather than a father:

*Metellus.* Conceal his Name if thou'dst preserve his Life.  
 For if there be a Death in *Rome* that might  
 Be bought, it should not miss him. From this hour  
 Curst be thy Purposes, most curst thy Love.  
 And if thou marry'st, in thy Wedding-night  
 May all the Curses of an injur'd Parent  
 Fall thick, and blast the Blessings of thy Bed.  
 (2. 1. 163–69)

In the final tomb scene at the end of the play, Lavinia does not kill herself in the same manner as Juliet, with young Marius's dagger, but with the sword with which Marius senior previously slew her father, effectively making her suicide a political statement rather than a tragic sign of love. Unlike Shakespeare's version, Otway's play does not end with a reconciliation of the leaders of the factions, but with the



82| bleak prospect of yet another clash between Marius senior and the banished Sylla, whose forces are approaching Rome.

*Caius Marius*, which replaced Shakespeare's original on the London stages for almost 70 years,<sup>[3]</sup> was not the only play of the time which combined the well-known story about unfortunate lovers with contemporary political references. As Janská (née Hoblová) maintains, Nathaniel Lee's Roman tragedy *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1680) might be considered an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* as well, introducing a plot about Titus and Teraminta, whose love is thwarted by their fathers' political animosity (see Hoblová 62-75). Apart from the play being one of the finest Restoration dramatisations of the conflict between individual desires and political duties, it is also a rare example of an oppositional drama of the period, which was suppressed after a few days' performance for its strong republican sentiment. Another play of the period thematising the conflict between forbidden love and the well-being of the state is Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682), in which the main tragic hero Jaffeir joins the conspirators against the corrupt Venetian senate, including senator Priuli, father of his wife Belvidera, who disapproves of his daughter's marriage with Jaffeir. For most of the play, Jaffeir is torn between the personal loyalty to Belvidera (and, consequently, her family) and the political one to his co-conspirators. This occurrence of several plays around the same time with similar key themes and plot elements might be compared to fashionable waves in Elizabethan drama several decades earlier, as mentioned by Drábek (248).

### **London Theatres and Party Rivalries in the Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

While the relationship between the abovementioned plays and their political context has been thoroughly addressed and commented on,<sup>[4]</sup> an almost unnoticed phenomenon in Restoration and early 18<sup>th</sup>-century English theatre is a second revival of *Romeo and Juliet* of a sort in the early 1720s, just a few years into the so-called Whig Supremacy (1714-1760). As Loftis notes, with the ascendancy of the first Hanoverian king on the British throne and the Whig party taking over the government and all the main social and cultural institutions in the country, the two main London theatres (Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields) found themselves immersed in a rivalry concerning their loyalty to the new regime. While the managers of Drury Lane ostentatiously pledged their allegiance to the Whigs, the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre was repeatedly accused of association with the discredited Tories (see Loftis 63-93). This contentious atmosphere, which mirrored the party rivalries outside the sphere of theatre, naturally influenced both the shape of the plays produced at the time and the topics which they addressed. An example of excessive politicisation of theatre mentioned by Loftis is a comment on the then recent English plays and the general atmosphere in theatres given by Colonel Manly in Christopher Bullock's comedy *Woman is a Riddle*, staged in 1716 at Lincoln's Inn Fields:

*Manly.* The Rage of Party is so Predominant, that ev'n publick Diversion is interrupted, and 'tis impossible to sit out a Play with any Satisfaction, for the ridiculous Comments which a Man is oblig'd to hear from the Politicians in the Pit. ... [T]he old Plays are so curtail'd for fear of giving Offence to Parties, that if *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnson* were alive, they'd hardly believe their Productions legitimate; and for New Plays, there can be none worth seeing, since the Viciousness of the Age has beat out Satyr's triple row of Teeth by a kind of general Consent. (Bullock 13)

Ironically enough, Bullock's play criticising the politicisation of old dramas is itself an adaptation of an older piece by Calderon (Burling 64).

### The Tame Party Champions of Benjamin Griffin's *Whig and Tory* (1720)

Although the first play alluding to Shakespeare's story which appeared in the 1720s is not directly based on *Romeo and Juliet*, but rather on John Fletcher and William Rowley's Jacobean comedy *The Maid in the Mill* (1623), its premise and plot surely brought Shakespeare's tragedy to mind.<sup>[5]</sup> Benjamin Griffin's *Whig and Tory* replaces the unspecified source of enmity between the opposing houses both in Shakespeare's and in Fletcher and Rowley's plays with the family heads' allegiance to opposing political parties. Reynard, one of the play's young lovers (based on Fletcher and Rowley's Martine), criticises in the opening scene the toxic atmosphere of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century London (the play itself takes place in an unspecified village in Norfolk), riddled with meaningless political and religious controversies:

*Reynard.* The old Dispute of Parties is still kept alive, nor is't long since our very News Papers were so crouded with Orthodox and Heterodox Principles, that Religion, at length, was entirely lost in the Dispute. (Griffin 10)

When Reynard's friend Charles Heartfree (Fletcher and Rowley's Antonio) confides to his companion that he (Charles) cannot marry a woman of his choice because of the "opposite Interest of Parties" of his and his love's families, Reynard again laments the proliferation of political antagonisms in the lives of ordinary people:

*Reynard.* That ever Party Quarrels should extend to Love! Did we reflect how wretched this Spirit of Party made us, not one sure but would join to chase away that Fiend, that evil Genius of our Country. (Griffin 11)

Griffin's rhetoric throughout the play calls for impartiality and moderation, very much in the general vein of the plays staged at the time at Lincoln's Inn Fields (see Loftis 65-67). Even the Prologue stresses that, despite the contentious title, the dramatist ("*our sly Author*") "*Has made the Party-Champions of his Play, / Tame as our Buff-coats on a Training Day*", knowing that "*Plays should be form'd to entertain the Sense, / Promote your Pleasures, but not give Offence*" (Griffin [7]).<sup>[6]</sup> In the Epilogue, Griffin explicitly denies his affiliation with any of the parties, indicating that this issue might have been a subject of speculations and that the audiences would look for hidden messages or expressions of the playwright's political sympathies:

*Now you have seen the eager Parties worry  
Each other, in the Names of Whig and Tory;  
Guess what I am? Of Faction somewhat surer,  
Nor Whig, nor Tory, nor, I swear, Nonjuror.  
A Trimmer I – who seem to stand alone,  
At once am of all Parties – and of none.  
(Griffin [88])*

In *Whig and Tory*, partisanship becomes a subject not only of criticism, but also of open ridicule. While Griffin significantly reduced the original cast and simplified the structure of the Jacobean play, for the purposes of his political message he expanded the original minor rôle of Bellides into the much more prominent Sir John Indolent, who is depicted as "a strenuous *Tory*, [who] reads all the Pamphlets and Controversies of the Times; takes Tobacco and Snuff, when at home; and, when abroad, unless he goes

84| in his Chariot, he'll run against a Post, or up to the Middle in a Ditch, before he knows where he is" (Griffin 12).<sup>[7]</sup> It is the old Indolent's absent-mindedness and political zealotry that are the most straightforward source of both physical and verbal humour in the play. At the same time, however, his uncompromisingness and references to his family's "blood" and its possible "corruption" through the marriage of his child with his political opponent resemble the language of Otway's Caius Marius senior (see above), suggesting that, even in the world of comedy, political extremism can be dangerous:

*Sir John Indolent.* You are a *Whig*.

*Reynard.* I am an *Englishman*.

*Sir John Indolent.* Your father was a *Tory*.

*Reynard.* Every Generation grows wiser than the last.

*Sir John Indolent.* So you call me Fool to my Face.

*Reynard.* No Sir, pardon me.

*Sir John Indolent.* In short I'll not have the Blood of my Family corrupted[.]

(Griffin 16)

Unlike in Shakespeare or Otway, the families ultimately manage to overcome their differences for the sake of the children and "bury in Oblivion those Feuds and Party Heats" so that "our Countrymen may observe our happy Change, and follow our Example" (Griffin 86). In the final scene, the former enemies do not drink to the happiness of the young couples (there are ultimately three in the play) but rather to their country's prosperity, the greatness of the King, their religion, liberties and laws (thus covering, generally enough, both Tory and Whig principles). Just as the country's politics initially ruined the play's characters' lives, Griffin suggests that it is individual people's ability to unite that can redeem the country as a whole: "*Her [England's] Sons united should retrieve her Glory, / And all Distinction cease of Whig and Tory*" (Griffin 87).

### **John Sturmy's *The Compromise* (1723): Virtue in the Middle**

A similar call for tolerance, discernible even from the play's title, dominates John Sturmy's comedy *The Compromise, or, Faults on Both Sides*, staged at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1723.<sup>[8]</sup> Similarly to Griffin, Sturmy presents a situation when two patriarchs of opposing party allegiance, Sir Lewis Despotick and Sir Clement Harpye, prevent their children (or a niece in one case) from marrying the persons they love. While Griffin's story primarily draws on an older play and his discussion of politics does not go much beyond labelling some of the characters Whigs or Tories, Sturmy makes political animosities a central issue of his comedy. Like Griffin's play, *The Compromise*, too, takes place in the country, in the midst of local elections, in which the heads of both of the families are actively involved. Whether fictitious or not, Sturmy gives his audience an insight into the dirty practices of political campaigning, including lying and pandering to voters and even character assassination of opposing candidates:

*Sir Clement Harpy.* My heart misgives me. – *Freeborn* will find us Work. – Strong Opposition there. – I've try'd the Pulse of the People, and it goes ill of our Side. – We must have Recourse to our old Arts, defame, and blacken him all we can. – Paint him (tho' in Truth unblemish'd) like a very Devil, and that Way scare the Crowd from him. (Sturmy 12)

Although the terms "Whig" and "Tory" are rarely used in the play, Sturmy employs early 18<sup>th</sup>-century political tropes significantly more than Griffin in order to describe the two men of opposing

principles. When Harry Weighty laments that he will never be able to marry old Despotick's daughter, Harriet, he gives the following reason for Despotick's dislike of him: |85

*Mr Weighty.* Why, the only Objection he brings against me is (for in Point of Fortune I'm equal with his Daughter) that my great Uncle Sir *Gustavus Weighty*, in the Beginning of the Civil Wars, knock'd an honest Cavalier o'the Head, whom he surpriz'd doing Violence to his lovely Daughter (the only Support of a fond old Age) so whenever I apply to him for his Consent to my Marriage with your Sister, the poor unthinking Gentleman bids me change my Name, and the republican, rebellious Blood that runs in my Veins, and then possibly I might find a favourable Reception. (Sturmy 17)

Similarly, when young Charles Despotick applies for the hand of his love Isabella to her uncle, the Tory persuasion of his (Charles's) family meets with fierce disagreement with the Whig principles of Sir Clement, who even resorts to Biblical allusions to describe the inappropriateness of the possible match between Charles and Isabella:

*Charles Despotick.* Mr. *Charles Despotick*, says the Dreamer, before I enter upon the Matters you propos'd to me, pray give me Leave to catechize you a little – Come, young Man, deal plainly with me; do you close with the Interest of the Godly Party, or do you not? Pray what may your Principles be? – I'm at a Loss, Sir, said I, perfectly to understand you; but I frankly declare my self an hearty Well-wisher to the Establishment in Church and State. – Why, there's the Point, quoth Old Moderation; look you, Sir, if thus run your Thoughts, you're no Nephew for me; what! suffer the Tabernacle of the Maiden *Isabella* to be defil'd by *the Entrance* of a *Moabite*, the Son of the Whore of *Babylon*, that Scarlet Whore –  
*Mr Weighty.* Ha! ha! poor *Charles*, then his Moderation abounded I presume with abusive scurrilous Language, and ten to one whilst he was on the Pin, fell foul on the King of *France*, the Pope, and his Cardinals, imagining like an old Fool he all the while lash'd you –  
*Charles Despotick.* Exactly as you say[.] (Sturmy 18)

The political zealotry on the part of Sir Lewis and Sir Clement is contrasted with the common sense of the town's inhabitants, who show little interest in London political rivalry and the Whig and Tory candidates:

*Fourth townsman.* Well then, as I take it, 'tis agreed, that we show these *London* Politicians a little of our Country-Wit, by taking their Gold occasionally, and voting according to good Conscience.  
*First townsman.* Aye, by all means their Money – But our Voices for honest *Free-born* [a third candidate without a clear affiliation][.] (Sturmy 25)

With a clear political struggle on the stage, *The Compromise* is somewhat closer than *Whig and Tory* to *Caius Marius* in general tone, without, however, leaving the comedic framework. Similarly to Otway's play, love in *The Compromise* is degraded to a tool of political intrigues and a means of forming alliances. At one point, Sir Clement is willing to consent to young Despotick's wooing of Isabella, given that Isabella persuades her love to support the Whig candidate:

86| *Sir Clement Harpy*. Why your Eyes tell me, *Young Despotick* is the Favourite, exert your Power, and bring him off from the Part of *Freeborn*, to close with that of *Amphibious*, and he shall be allow'd free Ingress and Egress whensoever he pleases.  
*Isabella*. Thanks, dear Uncle, with all my Heart, I'll go take a Turn in the Lover's Walk, and see what may be done. (Sturmy 15)

Isabella's assent almost echoes Juliet's words "I'll look to like, if looking liking move, / But no more deep will I endart mine eye / Than your consent gives strength to make it fly" (*Romeo and Juliet* 1. 3. 98–100), given to Lady Capulet in agreement with Paris as the former's suitor. As we will see, the question of filial obligation to a parent's political wishes is central to Centlivre's play; however, even in Sturmy's work, this issue is raised several times and always conflated with the young generation's love-life – for instance in a conversation between Sir Lewis and his children, during which old Despotick expresses his disapproval of Charles's marriage to Sir Clement's niece (note Charles's words, which refer to Juliet's famous "What's in a name?" speech):

*Sir Lewis Despotick*. Who, *Harpy's* Niece at Church!  
*Harriet*. Indeed, Sir, she's always there, when she can steal out.  
*Charles Despotick*. O, Sir, she's perfectly averse to her Uncle's Principle.  
*Sir Lewis Despotick*. I much doubt that; *What's bred in the Bone*, you know the Proverb, Boy, Is she not a *Harpy*?  
*Charles Despotick*. You know, Sir, there's nothing in a Name, meer sound.  
*Sir Lewis Despotick*. A Name! Why dost thou think I'd suffer thee to marry a *Cromwel*, were she worth a Million. (Sturmy 9)

The enmity is overcome in a rather unexpected manner: After the failed campaigns, when the third candidate is voted in, old Despotick and Harpy get drunk together to appear on the scene "*Hand-in-Hand jovial and frolicksome*" (Sturmy 59) and, in a kind of travesty of the final reconciliation scene from *Romeo in Juliet*, they shake hands and decide to cement their new friendship with the wedding of their children:

*Sir Lewis Despotick*. Well, for the future, *Sir Clement*, you and I will never jangle or squabble any more: What is't to us who's in, or who's out? We'll enjoy our selves like wise old Men here in the Country in Mirth and Quiet.  
*Sir Clement Harpy*. Content from the Bottom of my Heart – come, let's buss in Token of perpetual Friendship from this Day forward (*they kiss*) here my good Friend Young *Charles's* Health to you, and do you see let the Boy marry my Niece as soon as he pleases, there's my Hand most willingly for the Consent –  
*Sir Lewis Despotick*. And adad I accept it most kindly – This Match shall unite our Families for ever after[.] (Sturmy 61–62)

Just like Griffin, Sturmy opposes radical partisanship, maintaining that "*Betwixt Extrems lies Vertue in the Middle*" (Sturmy, Prologue [page not given]). Similarly to *Whig and Tory*, *The Compromise* does not endorse any of the sides of the then current political animosities and instead argues that the real guide should not be "*Passions and Prejudice*", but rather apolitical "*Reason*" (Sturmy 78).



### A Whig Perspective in Susanna Centlivre's *The Artifice* (1722)

A different view of the issue of familial conflict against the background of the political animosities of the time is offered by one of the most prolific and successful English female authors of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Susanna Centlivre, in her lesser-known comedy *The Artifice* (1722). Although politics and "Party-Rage" do play a rôle in the play, they are just a comparatively minor element. The plot centres on Sir John Freeman, who was disinherited by his Jacobite father for breaking up a meeting of non-jurors (persons who refused to abjure the Stuarts), and his younger brother, Ned, who has inherited their deceased father's estate instead. The main complication, however, lies in the fact that Sir John's love, Olivia, is a daughter of Sir Philip Moneylove, who has withdrawn his initial consent to the match and now prefers Ned as a suitor of his daughter (despite the fact that the younger brother has a wife in Holland and keeps a married mistress). Sir John's political inclinations play no rôle in this decision, as Sir Philip does not care about politics and is only interested in the financial security of his daughter's future husband, regardless of Olivia's wishes:

*Sir Philip Moneylove.* But when I made that Promise [to John], he was Heir Apparent to Four Thousand Pounds a Year, and Nobody dreamt of his being disinherited. – Zounds, do you think I'll throw away my Money upon your Inclination, Mistress? No, mark me, Were thy Mother here all in her Bloom of Beauty; here, here, upon her Knees before me, I wou'd not break my Word to *Freeman*; that is to say, whilst he is Master of his Father's Estate; therefore urge me no more, but prepare to be his Wife to morrow. D'ye hear? (Cent-Livre 23)

Olivia, however, is still in love with Sir John, and although she proclaims that she would rather die than marry anyone else ("*If where I've fixed my Love, I must not Wed, / I'll choose a Coffin for my Bridal Bed*" [Cent-Livre 24; cf. Juliet's "*If he be married / My grave is like to be my wedding bed*", *Romeo and Juliet* 1. 5. 133-34]), she is no naïve girl and is capable of a realistic outlook on her and John's forbidden love:

*Olivia.* I could, methinks, run any Risque with thee; and thou perhaps, wouldst do the same with me. Now in the Summer of our Love, little Cares would not offend us; But when the Glowing of the Passion's over, and pinching Cold of Winter follows, will amorous Sighs supply the Want of Fire? Or kind Looks and Kisses keep off Hunger? (Cent-Livre 50)

It is Olivia's practical reasoning that ultimately overcomes the crisis: While Sir John sends for Ned's wife, Louisa, to Holland, Olivia devises a plan (involving fake poison) to trick Ned into marrying Louisa again according to the English law, thus preventing his further suit. Ned ultimately reforms and not only does he stay with his wife, but also gives Sir John their father's estate, which immediately wins the latter Sir Philip's consent to marry Olivia.

In spite of the final reconciliation on the personal level, political differences between the father and his sons are not overcome. As it turns out, Ned, just like John, never agreed with his father politically and only pretended to be a Tory so as to avoid a conflict in the family:

*Sir John Freeman.* I'm so much indebted to you, that I love you now, methinks, in spite of Principle.

*Ned Freeman.* My Principle, dear *Jack*, is the same with thine. I did not think it prudent to



88| contradict my Father; but no Man shall do more in Defence of his Country, or pay his Taxes more chearfully. Come to my Arms. (*They Embrace*) (Centi-Livre 95)

Especially the final reference to the defence of the country depicts Tories not only as an oppositional force, but as potential traitors and enemies to the state and its government. In contrast, it is the generosity and moral integrity of the Whig brothers that makes the happy ending possible. Consequently, only through such loyal subjects can the kingdom prosper. This kind of message, which fundamentally contrasts with Griffin and Sturmy's call for impartiality, is not surprising, given that Centlivre herself was an ardent Whig (see Loftis 55) and that her play was originally staged at Drury Lane, a theatre boasting of its Whiggism.

### Conclusion

Although none of the plays discussed in the present article is a direct adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, all of them work with well-known tropes of Shakespeare's play to conflate them with one of the topical issues of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century Britain. To describe the affinities between the three plays under study here, we could perhaps borrow the term "spin-off," known primarily from televisual culture. Although the concept originally referred to a work which borrows characters from another, as John Carlos Rowe has pointed out, a "spin-off effect" can have a broader and more general meaning, signifying "a 'new' representation made possible by its prototype, and a representation whose novelty at once marks the exhaustion of the predecessor's marketability and the survival of a valuable residuum in the predecessor" (103).<sup>[9]</sup> Indeed, all of the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century plays mentioned here were produced towards the end of the stage-life of Otway's *Caius Marius*, whose influence and political ethos, however, were still strong enough to legitimise the somewhat strange and unusual (at least from the modern perspective) association of the story of unfortunate lovers with the then current English politics. The basic story-pattern of young lovers, whose prospects are complicated by the political chauvinism of the older generation, proved a productive contribution to the rivalry between the two main London theatres of the time, Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields, which mirrored the party animosities between the ruling Whigs and Tories. The authors writing for the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, which was at the time politically on the defensive, employed the Romeo-and-Juliet-like story to call for political moderation and tolerance; on the other hand, the ostentatiously Whiggish Drury Lane theatre made use of the opportunity to attack the Tory party and promote the Whig regime. This short outline of the adaptation strategies of the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century dramatists might serve as an initial step for further research into the sociology of (post-)Restoration English theatre and the adaptation practices of the period.

### Notes

- [1] This article is dedicated to Miša, who doth teach the torches to burn bright.
- [2] Literary and theatre historians had traditionally maintained that, since theatres in the late 1670s and early 1680s were under governmental supervision, a Whig point of view was nearly absent from the London stages during the Exclusion Crisis (see Loftis 20-21). This opinion was questioned by Owen, who concluded her persuasive discussion of oppositional plays of the period with the notion that "[i]t is time to put Whig drama back on the cultural map" (274).
- [3] *Caius Marius* was regularly staged at the Drury Lane theatre almost every season up until 1727. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was revived in a partially restored hybrid version with ten performances at the Haymarket theatre in 1744 (see Hogan I).

- [4] For the most comprehensive book-length study of Restoration theatre during the Exclusion Crisis, see Owen.
- [5] Indeed, even Fletcher and Rowley's play is highly evocative of *Romeo and Juliet's* themes and language. Interestingly enough, the direct source of the Jacobean comedy, Leonard Digges's 1622 translation of Gonzalo de Céspedes y Meneses's *Poema trágico del español Gerardo y desengaño del amor lascivo*, bears many similarities with Shakespeare's story, including an initial brawl between the opposing families, the male hero's visit to the enemy's house in a mask where he falls in love with Signor Bellides's daughter, and a balcony meeting of the young lovers (see Frost and Carlson 242–43).
- [6] It is not certain that the Prologue, which, unlike the Epilogue, is in the third person, was written by Griffin, although it is very probable. The only edition of the play does not indicate the author.
- [7] Another motivation for having a major comical character on the stage was probably the fact that Griffin, being a well-known comic actor of his time, wrote the rôle for himself (see the list of rôles and actors at Griffin [8]). For more on Griffin's acting career, see Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans 364–68. Recently, Anna Mikyšková has commented on Griffin's adaptation of another Jacobean play, Philip Massinger and Thomas Dekker's *The Virgin Martyr* (1620), staged as *Injured Virtue* (1714). (See Mikyšková 41–43.)
- [8] Apart from the titles of three plays which he wrote (see Baker, Reed, and Jones 696–97), nothing is known about Sturmy's life or career. In the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1706 issue of *The Daily Courant*, a small ad was published announcing a loss of a John Sturmy, "an Aprentice to Henry Bond ... Rope maker", who "Run away from his said master on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June last past" ("Advertisement"). The ad describes Sturmy as "a Boy about 15 years of Age, of a good Complexion, brown Hair, a brown Coat , a Cinnamon colour'd Westcoat and Leather Briches". It is not unconceivable that this is the same John Sturmy who, in the 1720s, worked as a playwright (after all, Griffin was originally apprenticed to a glazier). I am grateful to Prof. Pavel Drábek for bringing this incident to my attention.
- [9] Of course, Rowe made this comment in the context of the television industry and "postmodern productivity" in general and, as such, it needs to be applied carefully. Nevertheless, his observation might still be pertinent in an attempt to understand early 18<sup>th</sup>-century adaptation practice, as well as the reception of adapted works at the time.

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### **“Prurient little Victorian ratbag”? An English Jewish Man’s Dealing with the Shadow of Thomas Hardy in Howard Jacobson’s *Peeping Tom***

*Abstract: Howard Jacobson is a contemporary British Jewish writer whose autobiographically inspired novels feature protagonists who are men of Jewish background with an extensive knowledge of English literature like the author, who read English at Cambridge. The narrator of Jacobson’s second novel *Peeping Tom* (1984) is Barney Fugleman, a literary critic whose urban Jewish heritage alienates him from the pastoral tradition embraced by much of canonical English literature. Yet, to his shock, when Fugleman undergoes hypnosis, he is revealed to be a reincarnation of Thomas Hardy, a writer he once dismissively called “prurient little Victorian ratbag.” However, as the novel discloses some similarities between Fugleman’s and Hardy’s lives, it may be read as a reflection on English Jewish sense of belonging. While the text initially portrays Jewishness and Englishness as binary opposites, it gradually highlights that both of them are inseparable aspects of Fugleman’s bifurcated identity.*

Born in 1942, Howard Jacobson is a contemporary British Jewish writer, an author of sixteen novels, including the 2010 Booker Prize-winning *The Finkler Question*, and six works of nonfiction, dealing with literary criticism, humour in literature, Jewish issues and selected phenomena in contemporary society at large. In a passage in his 1993 book *Roots Schmoots: Journeys among Jews*, a collection of essays in the form of a travelogue discussing his impressions of Jewish people living in the USA, Israel and Lithuania, Jacobson mentions reading Neal Gabler’s *An Empire of Their Own* (1988), a study of the Jewish people’s contribution to the creation of Hollywood. Jacobson comments on this fact in an ambivalent way, characterizing it as “a wonderful conceit. Eastern European refugees cooking up an idea of white, gentile, picket-fence family decency, selling it to Americans as their own identity, but still remaining excluded from it themselves. It makes me alternatively proud of my people and disgusted with them” (208). A similar ambivalence regarding Jewish subculture and the mainstream English culture is often voiced in Jacobson’s novels, which are, at least to a degree, autobiographically inspired, as they feature protagonists who are men of Jewish background with an extensive knowledge of English literature like the author, who read English at Cambridge under F. R. Leavis. For instance, the protagonist of Jacobson’s debut *Coming from Behind* (1983) is a university professor, and the main character and narrator of the author’s second novel *Peeping Tom* (1984) works as a literary critic. Similarly to the heroes of his novels, Jacobson is a member of an ethnic minority, who has contributed to the perpetuation of the concept of English literature as one of the quintessential features of English identity. For the purpose of this paper, the term Englishness may be more useful than Britishness, as I agree with Bryan Cheyette who explains his preference for the term in discussing Jewish writing in Britain: “I use the term Englishness, as opposed to a more inclusive Britishness, as this identity is based on a fixed and homogenous sense of self that is rooted in the past” (xiii). Englishness is more limiting and oppressive than Britishness, particularly from the point of view of a minority member.

While Jacobson taught English literature at several universities in the UK and Australia and his first published book was a 1978 study of Shakespeare’s tragedies co-authored with Wilbur Sanders, his nonfiction emphasizes his awareness that “[his] great-grandmother, who spoke mainly Yiddish all her life, was both at home in Manchester and a stranger to it” (Jacobson, *Roots* 448). Likewise, Barney

92| Fugleman, the protagonist of *Peeping Tom*, says at one point: "My mother's mother never learnt English" (62). Jacobson as well as the protagonist of his novel thus come from a generation whose grandparents may still have had little to no sense of themselves as being English people. The author's and the protagonist's family histories combined with their in-depth knowledge of English literary tradition situate them at the contact zone of English and Jewish cultural traits and identities. Written and published at a time characterized in Cheyette's words by "dual pressure on British Jewish writers to universalize their Jewishness out of the public sphere or to particularize it in preconceived images" (xxxiv), *Peeping Tom* provides arguably the most artistically striking expression of Jacobson's ambivalent relation to both Englishness and Jewishness.

A masterful example of non-chronological narration, the novel opens with a prologue in which Fugleman describes his "penitential walks" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 1) on the Cornish coast where he used to stay with his second wife, Camilla, until she left him. However, the story proper begins some six years earlier, when Fugleman is about twenty-seven years old and lives with his first wife, Sharon, who runs a North London bookshop located near a tube station and called *Zazie's dans le Métro* after the 1959 novel of the same name by Raymond Queneau. Like Fugleman's, Sharon's family comes from Finchley, a part of London where the Jewish population is concentrated. Yet, Fugleman admits to falling in love with Sharon exactly because she does not seem to be a typical Jewish girl: "I couldn't believe my good fortune that I had found someone who looked Jewish enough to please my parents and Brobdingnagian enough to please me. And Sharon was enraptured by being with a boy who could recite literature as he undressed her" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 100). Not only is it rather Sharon's non-Jewish features that Fugleman admires, but also the literature that brings them together is the English canon that he studied. As the first chapter reveals, the story proper of the novel starts in 1967, "that *annus mirabilis* for consenting adults" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 15), in reference to Philip Larkin's poem written in that year in celebration of the relaxation of sexual mores in Britain. Both Fugleman and Sharon are thus absorbed in the issues that concern the society at large rather than in the interests of the Jewish community. Their limited relation to Jewishness is also manifested in Barney's description of the way they spend the Christmas season: "Our Jewishness—Sharon's and mine—might not have got in the way of our buying each other Christmas presents or polishing off boxes of chocolate liqueurs, but it did rule out, on the grounds of cultural nationalism and self-respect, the singing of carols or the hanging of mistletoe" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 108). As descendants of the Jewish community, they have not accepted many of the Christian customs; however, they do not keep any particularly Jewish traditions either.

The novel also features occasional flashbacks to Fugleman's childhood in Finchley, emphasizing his Jewish, though not particularly religious, heritage. Fugleman was brought up by his father, Benjamin, and mother, Rachel, in a house next to the Flatmans, the richest people in the neighbourhood. While Menashe Flatman is described as "one of those nondescript Jewish businessmen" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 147), his wife, Rabika, becomes an object of Fugleman's early erotic fantasies which he shares with his friend Monty from a poor Orthodox Jewish family. In their teenage years, Fugleman and Monty also share pages from Nazi atrocity books, which were the only place where they could see naked—albeit starved-to-death—women. The reference to Nazism early in the novel thus refers to the boys' personal experience of growing up rather than to the traumatic history of the Jewish people.

While Fugleman becomes a well-read literary critic, his urban Jewish heritage alienates him from the pastoral tradition embraced by much of canonical English literature. As J. A. Cuddon explains, in reference to classical and early modern poetry, pastoral has traditionally been defined as tending to "an idealization of shepherd life," and "creating an image of a peaceful and uncorrupted existence, a



kind of prelapsarian world" (517). However, in the English literary tradition, even later major novelists dealing with familial and communal problems in a more realistic mode often opted for the countryside as principal setting of their texts. Peter V. Marinelli thus aptly distinguishes among the decorative and serious pastoral, adding that "if the decorative pastoral is the province of appreciation, the serious pastoral is that of appreciation and what [Dante Gabriel] Rossetti called some fundamental brain-work" (6). In Jacobson's novel, Fugleman at one point voices his lack of understanding for the persistent English admiration of the pastoral in the following way: "Some rural plot it is, hatched over the centuries in countless village halls and parlours, that convinces the English there is an indissoluble connection between literature and lakes, between meaning and mountains, between poets and peasants, between honesty and haylofts" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 7). Similarly, Jacobson himself even admitted to having a writing problem due to this tradition in English literature at the beginning of his creative career: "I didn't write my first novel until I was 38 because I wanted to be Henry James or Jane Austen and write elegantly of country houses. The only pity was I had never been in one. It's a bit shaming, but I also wanted to write about things that took me away from the Manchester I grew up in" (qtd. in Wintle). Besides his initial conviction that he must contribute to canonized English literature, Jacobson expresses a desire for a distance from his urban working-class Jewish roots. In fact, Jacobson struggled with his disconnection from the countryside at a time when the country house as a long-established symbol of Englishness was gradually becoming rather obsolete. As Jeremy Paxman notes, over 1,000 English country houses were demolished between 1875 and 1975 as "a mark of the inability of the upper classes to cope with taxation, agricultural depression, the loss of a generation in the Great War and, often, their own unworldliness" (156).

The central turning point in *Peeping Tom* provides a hyperbolic expression of these reflections on English and Jewish sense of belonging and identity. When Sharon suggests that Fugleman undergoes hypnosis, he is, to his shock, revealed to be a reincarnation of Thomas Hardy, which is explained by the fact Fugleman and Hardy were born exactly a hundred years apart. A writer who used to set his novels in a historical region called Wessex, which corresponds to the rural areas of the South and Southwest of England, Hardy has been often referred to as "the supreme poet of the English landscape," for instance on the back cover of Timothy O'Sullivan's biography of the author. Fugleman knows Hardy's works rather well, as evidenced by many of his conversations with other characters throughout the novel; at one point, he describes himself as "an old novel man" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 257). However, he completely lacks Hardy's connection to the countryside, and he does not really respect the writer, having once dismissively called him a "prurient little Victorian ratbag" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 27). Furthermore, Fugleman's Jewish heritage becomes another reason why he is unwilling to accept any link to Hardy: "What [...] could Thomas Hardy hope to resolve in the person of Barney Fugleman? Did he want to be a Jew? Did he want a Jewish wife? Or did he just want to make trouble?" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 60-61). While searching for the answers to these questions, Fugleman comes across a theory of rebirth which claims that reincarnation is "kept strictly within the family." As Fugleman finds the hypothesis "horribly feasible" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 61), he seriously starts to speculate about the unlikely possibility of his being Hardy's offspring. Yet, despite Fugleman's distress, Sharon is so excited by the idea of his being Hardy's reincarnation that she renames her shop "Eustacia's on the Heath" in reference to a character from *The Return of the Native* (1878), and starts to specialize in books by and about Hardy, which becomes a rather successful business.

Fugleman also calls Hardy "peeping Tom" in reference to a passage in the novel *A Laodicean* (1881), where the character of Captain de Stancy spies on Paula Power through a hole in the wooden wall



94| while she is “bending, wheeling and undulating” (Jacobson, *Peeping* 104), which makes him similar to the character in the legend who watched Lady Godiva riding naked. Besides equating Hardy with the figure of a male voyeur, Fugleman observes with interest that “complicity in your own cuckoldry is a recurring theme in Hardy” (Jacobson, *Peeping* 74), for instance in the novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), where the character Stephen Smith falls in love with Elfride Swancourt only to introduce her to his friend Henry Knight, which leads to the development of a love triangle. Moreover, Fugleman believes Hardy’s fiction may reflect Hardy’s own experience, as the writer was reportedly attracted to his cousin, Tryphena Sparks, but as he was not allowed to marry her, he introduced her to his friend, Horace Moule, and their developing relationship led him to experience pangs of jealousy (Jacobson, *Peeping* 69). Accordingly, Alan Bold and Robert Giddings argue that although both Hardy and Tryphena later got married, “when Tryphena died at the age of thirty-eight, Hardy wrote a poem Thoughts of Phenah (1890) in which she is described as his lost prize” (36).

The only connection Fugleman recognizes between himself and Hardy is that he, like the novelist, enjoys approaching first Sharon and later Camilla in a similar way to Hardy’s treatment of Tryphena. In Ivan Gold’s words, Fugleman “[schemes] the while to maneuver his wives toward the extramarital adventures he needs them to have (and generally likes to watch them having) to maintain the edge on his own exquisite sexual jealousy.” Fugleman’s first marriage ends when Sharon decides to leave him for his Gentile friend Rowland Fitzpiers, a literary critic and reviewer specializing in science fiction, with whom Sharon shared the discovery of Fugleman supposedly being linked to Hardy. Fugleman would often invite Fitzpiers for a visit, trying to involve him in Sharon’s extramarital adventures. As David Brauner suggests, “for Barney, it is the fact that Fitzpiers is a Gentile (as well as being an eminent literary critic and reviewer) that lends the brief ensuing *menage à trois* its piquancy” (80). After Fugleman colludes in his own cuckoldry, he and Sharon get divorced although she is pregnant, allegedly with him; however, she justifies the claim mainly by highlighting that the child was conceived early in 1967, according to some contemporaneous research exactly one hundred years after Hardy’s hypothetical son with Tryphena Sparks. While the text does not mention any names, the source of this information is probably the 1966 book *Providence and Mr. Hardy* by Lois Deacon and Terry Coleman. In any case, regardless of the source of Sharon’s beliefs, Fugleman decides to keep his distance from the child: “Fitzpiers had already tapped my unconscious and swapped my wife, I couldn’t see any good reason why he shouldn’t go on to slap my baby” (Jacobson, *Peeping* 134). As his behaviour may at times be seen as cynical, weak or difficult to understand, Fugleman is far from a model character; however, he gains a certain amount of the reader’s sympathy by honestly telling his own story. At the same time, his comfortable existence which allows him to engage in sexual eccentricity and introspective philosophizing contrasts sharply with a brief mention of hardships in Monty’s life, as Fugleman’s childhood friend has to deal with his mother’s death and father’s suicide and ends up working as a clerk on the underground in order to support himself.

Shortly before the divorce, Sharon organizes a party of Hardy experts where Fugleman meets Camilla for the first time. As the idea of Hardy having fathered an illegitimate son was soon discarded for lack of evidence in the scholarly journals of the late 1960s, in Jacobson’s novel, it is Camilla’s knowledge that assures Fugleman that Hardy had died childless, which means the Victorian writer cannot be Fugleman’s ancestor. Consequently, once Fugleman is in a relationship with Camilla, he claims he hopes to dissociate himself from Hardy and his past, seeking “confirmation of what [he] wasn’t and never had been and stood in no danger of ever being” (Jacobson, *Peeping* 171). Yet, this statement seems to correspond to his subsequent behaviour only to a degree. First, it appears rather

significant that unlike Sharon, his second wife is not Jewish; in fact, Camilla is Catholic. Yet, Ivan Gold may be right when writing that Fugleman “successively marries a pair of interchangeably buxom women.” In addition, Camilla resembles Sharon in that she manages the Alternative Centre for Thomas Hardy Studies, a bookshop and summer school devoted to the works of Thomas Hardy, located in the village of Castle Boterel on the Cornish coast where Hardy spent a considerable amount of time. Jacobson’s novel thus seems to anticipate Peter Widdowson’s later observation that Hardy has become, among other things, “an asset to the English tourist industry” (i).

Whereas Fugleman’s second marriage keeps reminding him of his connection to Hardy and does not develop in a considerably different way from the first one, his new adopted home makes him feel even more estranged. While Camilla rejoices in the beauty of the countryside, Fugleman reflects on his misplacement: “Pity the poor Jew. Let him gentrify and ruralize himself all he likes, let him surround himself with acres of goyische greenery, he will never know what it is like to take a turn around a garden” (Jacobson, *Peeping* 186). Indeed, Jewish people have always tended to live in urban rather than rural areas, which Jacobson also comments on, from a historical perspective, in *Roots Schmoots*: “It used to be said of the Jews within the Pale of Settlement that they had no aptitude for agriculture and were only good for trade and commerce. Hardly surprising, said the Jews, since we’ve been forbidden the land for centuries” (483). At the same time, as the novel includes numerous knowing references to Hardy’s novels, from *A Pair of Blue Eyes* to *Tess of D’Urbervilles*, David Brauner is right to observe that “*Peeping Tom* is also something of a homage to the tradition it affects to despise” (79). In fact, even the minor character who hypnotises Fugleman early on is named Harry Vilbert after the quack-doctor Vilbert from *Jude the Obscure* (1896). Besides voicing the Jewish people’s distance from the English pastoral, Jacobson also shows his knowledge of and, by implication, respect for it.

Gradually, Fugleman’s sense of alienation from the countryside seems to falter, as both he and Camilla become active in the public life of the community. At one point, Fugleman even notes: “We became thoroughly conscientious about our responsibilities to the place we lived in” (Jacobson, *Peeping* 237). Still, Fugleman and Camilla occasionally get away from the country to the city, usually in order to go to the theatre. However, they are usually too critical to watch the performance until the end; as Fugleman mentions in the prologue: “Together, we were very choosy in our ideas of what constituted good art” (Jacobson, *Peeping* 5). Yet, there is an exception to this general rule when they go to see a London performance of Peter Weiss’ 1963 play *Marat/Sade*, directed by a friend of Camilla’s, in 1973. In fact, it had been hinted before that Fugleman, who was born on June 2, 1940, may be linked not only to Hardy, born on June 2, 1840, but also to M. de Sade, born exactly a century earlier (Jacobson, *Peeping* 128). Still, this is not Camilla’s only reason to watch the play until the end, as she wants to go to the after party, where she flirts with two young actors, offering them a ride to Exeter in her and Fugleman’s car. Unlike Sharon, Camilla does not need to be led on to sexual experimentation, and her offer to show the actors Stonehenge at night leads to her having sex with both of them right there. Fugleman, who agreed to stay in the car, only witnesses the scene and accepts this development, as he claims to enjoy watching his wife as a voyeur. As Humphrey Carpenter observes, “Barney likes to share his women, or rather, he likes the exquisite pain of arranging to be cuckolded and then looking-on at the results.” In turn, Fugleman’s recent history repeats itself after Camilla’s open infidelity starts a series of events that bring his second marriage to a halt.

Eventually, Camilla leaves Fugleman for Max Loveday, a former academic teaching French literature who ended up on his own in Castle Boterel. Camilla abandons Fugleman at night, skilfully staging her departure so that it looks like she might have drowned while swimming in the sea late in the evening,

96| as she leaves her towel and sunglasses on the shore. In her good-bye letter, which Fugleman receives later, she writes: "I hope the melodrama of my exit hasn't caused too much trouble for anyone in the village—except you, that is. I wanted you to experience some genuine grief on my behalf, just once" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 257). Besides, she announces she is leaving for France and suggests that Fugleman runs the Alternative Centre for Thomas Hardy Studies. While Camilla has her own faults, she may be right when accusing Fugleman of self-centredness. At the same time, the first-person narration captures Fugleman's being at a loss after Camilla's disappearance so that the reader shares in first Fugleman's fear that Camilla died and then the shock that she left for good.

Besides dealing with his breakup with Camilla, Fugleman has an unexpected issue regarding his recent family history to ponder. Even earlier, his mother confides to the then twenty-seven-year-old Fugleman she had been suspecting for twenty-eight years that there was "something between" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 117) Benjamin Fugleman and Mrs Flatman. This information makes Fugleman wonder whether the man who brought him up is really his biological father: "Was it not possible that my mother, in a fit of pique after discovering them together [...], had offered herself to some other man?" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 118). Fugleman's uncertainty about who his father is parallels not only Sharon's claim about Barney being the father of her child, but also a later observation of Camilla's about Hardy's family history that "the daughters in the Hardy family were not always dead certain whose [daughters] they were" (Jacobson, *Peeping* 141), which may refer for instance to the fact that Hardy's grandmother may have given birth to an illegitimate daughter, as mentioned by Michael Millgate's biography of the author (22). Jacobson's novel thus seems to highlight the issue of an individual's parentage as a significant means of contributing to their identity formation.

It is not until both the Fuglemans and Flatmans get divorced and swap their partners that Mrs Fugleman reveals to Barney that Menashe Flatman is his biological father. This new piece of knowledge leads Fugleman to reflect on and eventually accept an additional aspect of his identity. By the end of the novel, he respects both his biological father and the one who brought him up, and wishes both of them well. In turn, Fugleman's reflection on his ancestral and environmental influences enables him to accept both Englishness and Jewishness as two coexisting aspects of his identity. As Fugleman appreciates the formative influence of Mr Fugleman Senior due to social rather than biological paternity, he also acknowledges that even without his being a descendant of Thomas Hardy, his English education and expertise in English literature had become an inseparable part of both his professional and personal identity. Fugleman thus glorifies neither Jewishness nor Englishness; rather, he stops thinking about them as mutually exclusive.

In conclusion, by the end of the novel, Fugleman comes to terms with the English and Jewish components of his identity. He realizes that viewing the mainstream English culture as completely unaccepting of the minority Jewish culture does not really reflect his personal life experience. Moreover, he no longer perceives the representatives of the two cultures as characterized primarily by clinging to a set of restrictive traditions established long ago, as both Jewish customs and symbols of Englishness do not seem to be shared by all members of the respective groups of people to the same degree. Consequently, Fugleman comes to understand both Englishness and Jewishness as becoming less oppressive and more inclusive. In the final scene of the novel, Fugleman roams the Cornish coast, although on his own, in an effort to find balance and harmony in his future life, no longer thinking of himself in mutually exclusive categories.

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## **Multidisciplinary Approaches to Foreign Language Teaching**

*Abstract: In the contemporary world, language teaching has a responsibility to prepare learners for modern workplaces and interaction with people not only in countries where the target language is spoken, but also with people of other cultural backgrounds. It develops skills and attitudes as well as knowledge. In this view, language teaching needs to promote interdisciplinary collaborative skills and content-based approaches which require redesigning learning environments through partnering with digital technologies and enabling students to internationalise their educational pathways. It needs to be linked to other disciplines such as intercultural competence, as well as to integrate critical thinking, to foster problem solving and negotiating, and to develop team work. All of this has implications for teachers' professional identity and for cooperation across the curriculum. Based on three years of experience, this paper outlines some motivational practices which may bring a more experimental nature into the language curriculum through collaborative project work and virtual exchange.*

### **Twenty-first century educational challenges and transversal skills**

The way we live and work has changed under the influence of technology, socio-political developments and rapidly increasing interconnectedness of people and economies.

As educators, we want to enhance the quality of education, to keep students' knowledge, skills and experience up-to-date, to adapt to changes of a globalizing job market, to meet new standards and requirements, internationalization being one of them. Higher education institutions across Europe claim in their strategic documents that innovation is inevitable because students have to be trained to function well in the globalized future society, which requires new ways of learning, living and working. The basic requirements the new generations have to meet include transferable skills that enable them to continuously adapt to the changing environment: core skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and communicating and cooperating across cultures. Toffler already assumed in the 1970's that "the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write but those who are not able to learn, unlearn and relearn". (Toffler 1970) Given that 85 per cent of all EU jobs need at least a basic digital skills level (Learning from Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey 2017) and with 40 per cent of European employers admitting difficulty finding people with the skills they need to grow and innovate (New Skills Agenda for Europe 2016), higher education institutions need to build interdisciplinary approaches which would allow them to face the EU's identified challenges such as a lack in transversal skills and the low number of graduates with interdisciplinary profiles. These challenges identified and described in key EU documents (A New Skills Agenda for Europe 2016; Assessment of Key Competences 2018) can be overcome through comprehensive institution-wide cooperation which would facilitate changes in higher education curricula through the adoption of innovative approaches to language learning and pedagogic frameworks of cognitive engagement, active learning, self-study, peer collaboration, and partnering with technology (Internationalisation of Higher Education 2015; Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff 2017).

Very simply explained for the purpose of this article, we describe transversal skills of the twenty-first century as those versatile skills that we can apply and make use of in a number of different roles in the workplace. The list is wide and includes several categories such as interpersonal skills, technical

skills, organizational skills, and communication skills (Cambridge University Skills Portal 2016). In language education, there is a strong potential to provide pathways for students to acquire especially some of these skills (see Figure one) needed for various professionals and the global workplace.

Information, Media and Technology Skills	Learning and Innovation Skills	Life and Career Skills
Information literacy Media literacy Digital literacy	Critical thinking Collaboration communication creativity	Flexibility and adaptability Organizational skills Social and intercultural competence Leadership and responsibility

Figure one: Twenty-first century transversal skills framework

The ability to communicate in a foreign language, particularly English which is widely used as lingua franca in the international workforce, has been categorized as one of the main learning and innovation skills for graduates’ employability, along with the information, media and digital literacy, social competence as well as their possession of needed cultural awareness and expression for the workplace (Graddol 2000). Various approaches are integrated in teaching and learning to meet the market needs; one of which is the multidisciplinary approach involving different types of work and knowledge, e.g. collaboration on a common task in multinational teams combining several professional specializations or areas of study and integrating data, tools and theories from several disciplines. In other words, teaching a foreign language becomes the linchpin in a multidisciplinary learning system to consolidate other complementing transversal skills. These can be summarized as in Figure two.

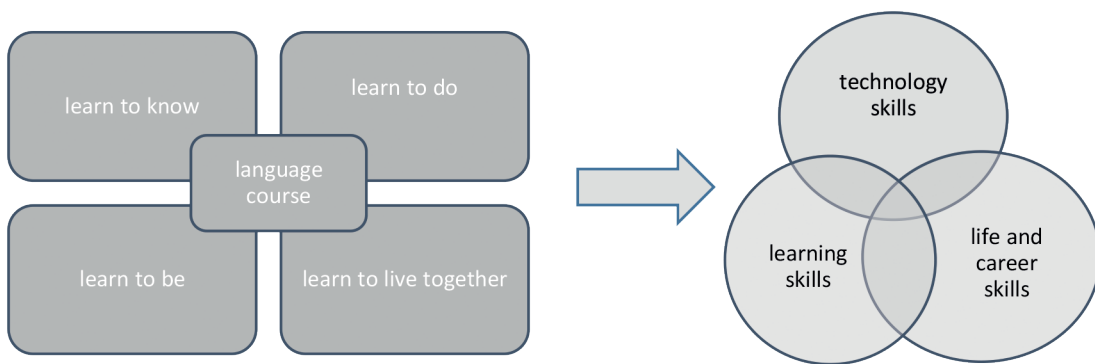


Figure two: Conceptualizing a language course in a multidisciplinary learning approach

The model (Fig. three) of multidisciplinary approach applied in creating teams, depicts how multidisciplinary can work as a complex adaptive system and a strategy which allow us to go beyond traditional system thinking. It develops creativity and innovation, as well as a common lexis and the accuracy of communication. It reveals semantic boundaries embedded in different interpretations. As a result, people with different interpretations do “not only know different things, but also know things differently” (Edmondson 2018). Thus different people may look at the same phenomenon and each see different problems, opportunities, and challenges.



To illustrate further, MIAS School of Business at the Czech Technical University in Prague redesigned language study to be able to offer to MSc and BSc business and management students foreign language courses aimed at developing both language and transversal skills for diverse real-life and work situations. With an outcome-based objective crossing the boundaries of a single area of study, the courses provide interactive multiple learning opportunities enabling students to utilize technology, and to develop life and career skills through virtual exchange project work, online communication and intercultural environment.

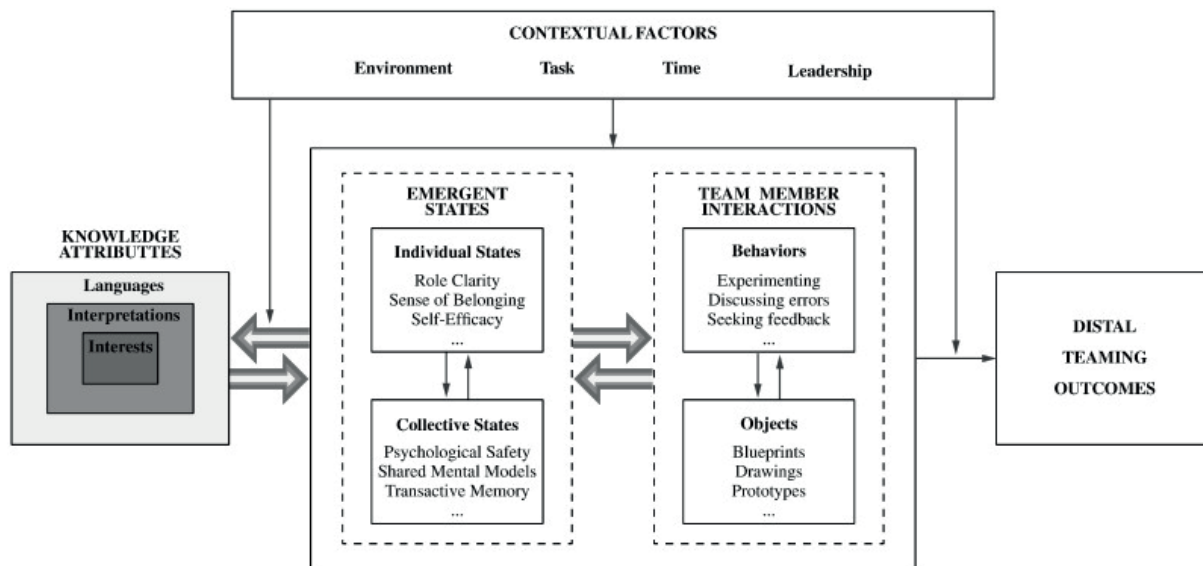


Figure three: Multidisciplinary teaming model

### Virtual Exchange Overview

The application of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in foreign language learning and teaching has become a commonplace and everyday reality of the twenty-first century in-class and out-of-class practice. Foreign language education is shaped by technologies available and their ever-increasing and changing repertoires of use. Since the advent of computers in educational settings in the 1960s, the term Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has been adopted to embrace a wide range of ICT applications and approaches to foreign language learning and teaching (Levy 1997).

In this context, VE belongs to a fast-developing area of CALL with great educational potential. The term itself has become established only recently (O'Dowd 2018, p. 3), and researchers and literature have used other terms covering similar educational concepts such as telecollaboration, online intercultural exchange or internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education. As one of its pioneers Robert O'Dowd (2011) puts it, VE is 'the application of online communication tools to bring together classes of language learners in geographically distant locations to develop their foreign language skills and intercultural competence through collaborative tasks and project work'. In other words, VEs require an online interaction between two or more learners with similar language and intercultural communicative learning objectives. In almost thirty years of existence as an educational tool, VE has been subject to changes reflecting the rapid advancement of ICT and the corresponding learning and teaching needs.

At the beginning, VEs took the form of e-pal writing (Warschauer 1995) and were used particularly in primary and secondary school settings. These were email exchanges between foreign language

learners and/or foreign language learners and their native speaking counterparts to both mutually foster mainly their reading and writing skills and to learn more about their respective partner's country, culture and life-style, and make friendships. Additionally, E-tandems (O'Rourke 2007), which first appeared in the early 90s, have been used predominately in academic contexts connecting two native speakers of complementary target languages involved in mutual language learning activities and collaboration.

The increased interaction and integration of people across the globe in the last two decades has intensified the importance of foreign language learning with respect to the development of multiple literacies responding to complexities of social and intercultural encounters (Guth and Helm 2011). Nowadays, the great richness of ICT opens space for multifaceted forms of VEs in which learners, through virtual communication, cooperate in decision-making and problem-solving processes and present joint project outputs (e.g. research reports, videos, blogs, websites, business plans). Content-wise, currently many VEs in tertiary education focus on the fields of study of the involved parties, thus enabling them to foster both expert knowledge and soft-skills acquisition. Despite its potential, until recently VEs had been implemented into courses only sporadically and very often only as an extra course activity undertaken by volunteer educators and their students. The remarkable step forward for VEs as an educational tool is that at present, they are considered as synergistic and complementary to the physical exchange study programmes for young people (Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange). Simultaneously, joint efforts of VE researchers and practitioners together with official bodies of the European Commission are aiming for recognition of VEs as a valid and effective pedagogical approach that would thusly be integrated into standard curricula.

### **VE framework and task categories**

VE practice at MIAS CTU has been implemented firstly into English for Intercultural Communication Courses (EIC) and later applied to General English and Business English Courses using a five step framework: task selection, resource management, selection and deployment of cognitive acquisition strategies, monitoring of the learning process and self-reflection, and evaluation. The courses have been run for resident, Erasmus and overseas students. The framework serves students as an organized plan which enables them to get insight into instructional strategies, learning activities and assessment. It defines the basic content, tasks and criteria which students are supposed to consider on their learning path. As a guideline, it offers adequate learning context to boost motivation and a friendly atmosphere, helps to clarify objectives and set up strategies and a general time schedule for completing the tasks successfully. Thus, work and progress are easier to monitor. The framework offers solid ground especially to uncertain and inexperienced students (and teachers) who are used to structured routines.

Although EIC aims primarily at raising intercultural awareness and the acquisition of openness to cultural otherness through communication, comparison and negotiation, the VE framework in all selected language courses fosters the analytical and critical thinking skills of students as well as learning skills, especially through self-reflection, interpretation and the evaluation process. With a teacher's assistance, students set their learning targets and choose priorities, subjecting them to discussion, analysis and evaluation in the target language. Although students identify their own individual goals, they pursue them through collaborative work in teams. Written records of their learning are required – plans and action steps, lists of useful vocabulary, summaries, self-reflections and reports. Following self-reflection and control, most suitable cognitive acquisition strategies are

102| shortlisted and monitored. Students are also engaged in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners and as a class. Thus, learner autonomy draws together the threads of self-assessment, goal-setting and reflection.

In general, VE activities are designed to encourage communication and listening skills, application of appropriate language use (e.g. language of meetings and negotiations in Business English courses), and to recognize formal register in written communication (writing a final report) while ICT skills are fostered by using tools to work in Web 2.0 (e.g. Google+ and Google Drive). Students discover new, potentially unfamiliar purposes and are compelled to look back, review situations, or view them from a different perspective. Moreover, focusing on the process as well as the outcome enables students to keep better control, engage more, and maintain a detached view. They are encouraged to decide and act autonomously within the well-defined framework while planning, organizing and presenting individual steps which, in synthesis, always lead to a completion of an online exchange task.

In an attempt to organize the online VE tasks according to a level of difficulty/complexity, we use the categorization offered by O'Dowd and Ware, (O'Dowd and Ware 2009) who recognize primarily three task categories: information exchange tasks, comparison and analysis tasks, and finally, collaborative tasks. Table 1 offers general VE task categories and VE types, a specified VE task description, and outcomes and pitfalls of selected tasks implemented into the MIAS courses. It also shows in which areas they support and develop learner autonomy. The descriptions are tailored for EIC, nevertheless, they can be modified to match a Business or General English course setting. The tasks served well both in heterogeneous and homogenous classes, however, students' approach may differ according to these and other factors arising from cultural, institutional and political background.

The first informative task provides online virtual partners with information about personal biographies (Table one, task 1a) of their counterparts. In their own personal profiles (communicative, listening, social, cultural), students try to think and learn about themselves, their values, and corresponding cultural values and dimensions related to family, friendship, religion, education, gender, authority, space, time and other factors. Meeting online (task 1b)) also functions as an introductory activity. Unlike the personal cultural profile (1a), which is highly individual and shared online asynchronously in writing, task 1b requires spoken interaction, some collaboration and organizational skills such as setting up a chair and clarifying and following rules (e.g. who is going to speak and for how long). Comparative and analytical tasks (2a, b) are seen to be more demanding as they require not only an exchange of information but go a step further and include comparisons (quizzes) or analyses (opinion poll results). These can have a cultural and linguistic focus. A potential pitfall may arise when students underestimate the effort required for proper planning and preparation and the task may thus result as a simple information exchange. Collaborative tasks are the most challenging and complex, yet they are also often the most enjoyable and fulfilling. They aim at producing a joint outcome based on co-authoring (storyboard) and co-production (shooting a video), and always require a great deal of planning, coordinating and negotiating to reach agreement and finalise the multi-media product.

VE Task	Description	Type of VE	Outcomes	Supported autonomous learning	Potential pitfalls
1. Informative exchange					
a) Personal cultural profile	Ss create their own profile based on cultural values and dimension*.  They create a pie chart or visual presentation or a short video shared online accompanied with a written description about what influences them most.	Asynchronous  In-class/out of class	Introduction online through own profile, search for interesting team partners, learning about others.	Individualized, focus on personal priorities, choice of interests and own design	Can easily turn into a stereotypical introduction without challenging input
b) Online meeting	Ss arrange an online kick-off meeting to get to know each other, share ideas for project tasks and plan means of cooperation. Only general framework is given, Ss are free to decide about day/time and priorities on the meeting agenda.	Synchronous  Out-of-class	Meeting and greeting after reading and sharing online cultural profiles,  practice of communication, small talk, planning of team work, writing of meeting minutes	Ss take full responsibility for both planning and execution of online session	Can easily turn into a chit-chat without challenging input, requires teamwork among Ss
2. Comparison and analysis					
a) Creating facts/ knowledge based quiz questions	Ss create a set of T/F or Y/N quiz question in teams covering geographical, political, economic and cultural areas of their home countries or the country of their study	Asynchronous  In-class/out-of-class	Sharing, comparing and answering online the team quizzes, online debate on the content, form and language issues	Independent fact finding, choice of questions based on Ss interests, self-discipline, peer language feedback, learning beyond the classroom, spoken and written interaction	Requires a follow-up (debate and reflection), teamwork, negotiations, tends to reduce the exchange to an information exchange
b) Carrying out an opinion poll	Ss prepare 2 questions about local and global artefacts and ask foreign students in an opinion poll	Interviews, meeting new people, semi-structured communication, spoken interaction	A written report comparing and analysing the findings, generating ideas for creating team videos	Choice of respondents, questions, method, out-of-classroom work, individual time management	Ss tend to research on visible issues (food, fashion and folklore)

3.Collaborative					
Creating a team video	Ss in international teams work together to produce a video on local and global artefact of their own choice. The joint multimedia product is assessed in a Ss contest.	Asynchronous, out-of-class(creation); and synchronous, in-class (contest)	a multimedia product (a video), developing ICT literacy, ICC, negotiation of meaning, criteria based assessment	Choice of topic, technology, storyboard, own management, vote for the winning video, decision making	Requires technology-savvy S in each team, negotiation and teamwork, off-task involvement

Table one: VE task categories and supported autonomous learning

Besides the choice of VE tasks which correspond with the target group of learners and the particular language course, there are other significant factors that may affect the nature of a VE. The following sections analyse the implementation process and the external and internal influences in the VEs and discuss to what extent these have an impact on transversal skill development.

### The Implementation Process

An example of the flow of a VE implementation process is shown in Figure four.

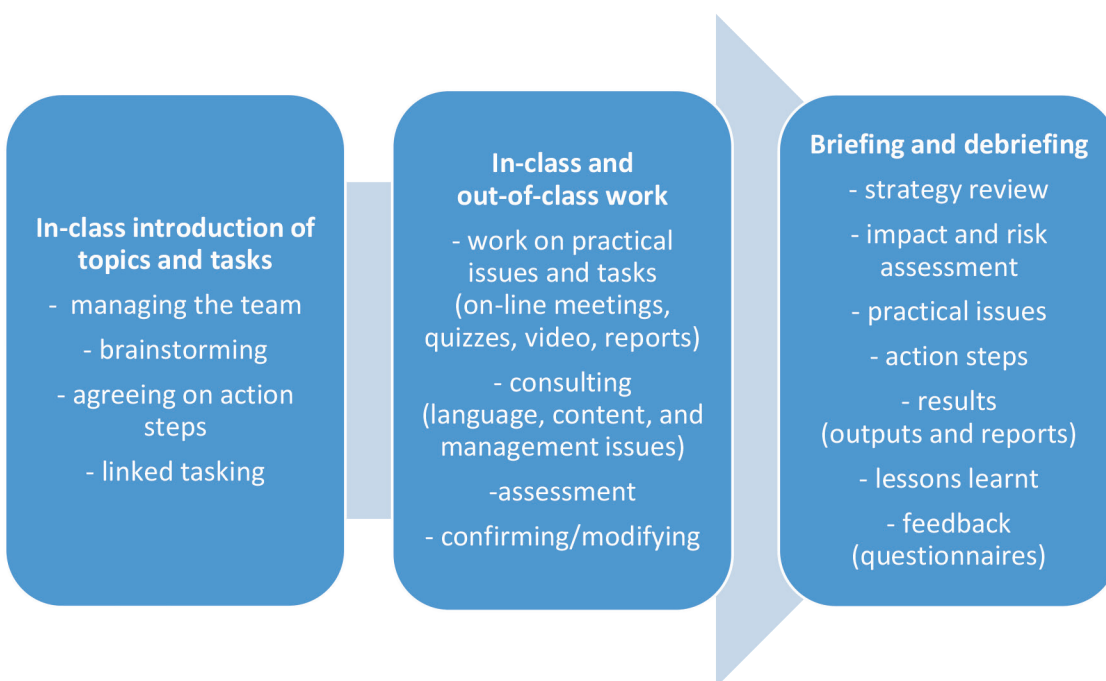


Figure four: Flow of the module implementation process

The flow starts with an in-class introduction of tasks and topics and agreement on action steps, then moves to the out-of-class work on practical issues supported by consultations and is completed with reviewing, feedback, and lessons learnt. The flowchart helps improve outcomes and understanding of how the process works and how to assess impact and risks.

Structured teacher's assistance and consultations help students think "out of the box" and enhance their intercultural knowledge, subsequently raising lateral questions. These questions have

proven productive in the preparatory and follow-up stages of transnational team discussions, when negotiating business and for managing people in an intercultural environment with a focus on perceiving diversity, developing other perspectives, searching for synergies, and developing self-awareness. Upon critical reflection, similar questions appear in the follow-up team debriefings. When students need to move forward in their project tasks, questions such as *"What can I substitute or change to achieve improvement?" "Can I use a different procedure?" "Which ideas could I adapt or borrow from others?"* were used in situations when email communication or negotiations malfunctioned, when agreement on common procedures was required and when deadlines were threatened. The end-of-course feedback questionnaires confirmed that the time allotted for the preparatory phases and implicit stereotypical assumptions tend to be underestimated.

### **External and Internal influences in VE**

Each VE may entail considerably different variables of extrinsic and intrinsic forces influencing its character. Diverse institutional and organizational conditions such as the number of collaborating partners, the choice of partner teacher and class, the number and composition of students (e.g. culturally homogeneous or heterogeneous) in each class, differences in the organisation of an academic year, time-zone disparities, and unevenness of design, content, requirements and assessment in the courses where exchange takes place, determine the background of a VE and need to be taken into account prior to the exchange itself. On the other hand, there are such intrinsic aspects as personal traits, skills and knowledge, international and team work experience, cultural values, and language proficiency of each interacting individual which complete the overall nature of a VE.

As an example of how these multiple facets may vary, the VE, which was previously analysed from the perspective of task categories, is now presented in its two implementations, which took place over two different academic years in 2017-2018 and lasted ten or eleven weeks. The VE implementation in 2017 brought together students of Budapest Business School in Hungary (BBS) and Czech Technical University in Prague (CTU) in their respective courses of Business English and English for Intercultural Communication. In the VE, the students at both universities formed teams which paired up with their partner team from the other university, thus creating four collaborating groups in the project. The students differed in age and study experience as the BBS students were only in the second year of BSc studies while the CTU teams were in the last year of MSc studies. The groups were notably culturally heterogeneous, representing countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, China, Russia, South Africa, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Tunis and Turkey. Unlike the VE implementation of 2017, which has all the features of a typical geographically dispersed exchange, the implementation of 2018 can be seen as semi-virtual. The students collaborating in the VE project were studying at the same time at the same institution, attending only two different courses. It is noteworthy that prior to the VE the students of these courses did not meet nor did they know each other. Despite the temporal geographical closeness, the students were required to work virtually also in four teams but with the optional extension of face-to-face collaboration. Nevertheless, there were other notable asymmetries in this VE. Not only were the students of the preparatory language course much younger and inexperienced than their counterparts with respect to their university studies, this group was also culturally homogenous (Chinese) as opposed to the cultural diversity of the students of EIC (Czech, Slovak, French, Turkey and Russia).

While it is relatively easy to compare the two implementations in terms of extrinsic influences, it is truly difficult to contrast them in terms of intrinsic aspects. This is perhaps not surprising given that each student participating in the VE represented a complexity of personal traits, knowledge, experience,



106| skills, and competences that interacted with others. However, there were several internal features that can be pointed out. The empirical observation of the students in the 2017 implementation showed rather balanced intrinsic powers considering mainly their language proficiency, managerial skills and intercultural experience, whereas the internal powers of the 2018 implementation were fundamentally imbalanced. The later state may be explained by the fact that the Chinese students entered the VE with a much lower level of language proficiency and communication competence than their collaborating counterparts while also lacking experience of previous intercultural encounters. The underlining factor of these asymmetries might also lie in different concepts and understandings of teamwork and communication based on different educational experience, cultural assumptions and values. The opportunity to work in both virtual and face-to-face settings in this exchange partially counterbalanced the internal asymmetries mentioned above.

Considering all these asymmetries, one could automatically presume that the VEs may have easily failed, and yet the teams in both implementations of the VE successfully managed to complete all the required tasks at a satisfactory or even high-quality level. If aforementioned asymmetries do not substantially and negatively influence the project outcomes and do not hinder the competence acquisition of VE participants, we believe that the crucial factors for effective VEs are: firstly, a suitable task design and task choice; secondly, deep involvement in complex VE processes; and thirdly, the teacher's role.

The collaborative nature of VEs places high demands on the teacher's role in these exchanges. As students become the focal point of VE activities, the traditional teaching method of a lecturer needs to be reconsidered and steps need to be taken for teachers to be able to act as facilitators, guides, monitors and e-moderators (Dooly 2010). Teachers, equally as their students, are involved in numerous on-going decision-making processes and their approach typically requires flexibility, openness towards otherness and effective communication.

## Conclusion

Foreign language study that is designed within a multidisciplinary approach has proven relevant to enable the students to explore real-life work understanding, knowledge and exposure. Additionally, communicating online in a foreign language, English in particular, is a notable transversal skill that is sought after for the current industry needs. By teaching foreign languages through a more holistic approach, and through content that is motivating and relevant to students' lives and to society, we make sure that we foster transversal skills while also teaching important knowledge about the world. Furthermore, through collaborative projects with other subjects, we help students understand the utility of language education beyond classroom walls. Finally, VEs only confirm a great potential to promote a wide variety of technology, learning, and life and career skills. Therefore, we conclude that despite the variables and challenges they may bring, they should be more systematically implemented in language teaching.

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### **Lifelong Learning, Lifelong Translating: a Development Course for EFL Teachers**

*Abstract: "The most important means of acquiring a FL is certainly the FL itself, because in many respects, a language teaches itself. But the second most important means is the learner's MT" (Butzkamm and Caldwell 25). The aim of the present paper is to present a research project aimed at the creation and verification of a development course for in-service EFL teachers (part of continuing education programme). The course focuses on the introduction of a concept of translation complying with the principles of Language Didactics and at the same time avoiding unnecessary reduction reflecting its full potential with respect to Translation Studies and tries to encourage EFL teachers to reflect on L1 use in their EFL classes and following this conception of translation to offer a range of activities enriching their repertoire.*

#### **Introduction and prior research**

Translation has been too long in exile, for all kinds of reasons which (...) have little to do with any considered pedagogic principle. It is time it was given a fair and informed appraisal. (Widdowson 160)

Widdowson's appeal seems to be an apt vocalization of the thoughts and ideas evolving currently around the concept of translation and its role with respect to language teaching. In the field of Language Didactics, but also Translation Studies, the number of research papers calling for a sort of rehabilitation of translation in the context of language teaching definitely outweighs those that would go against that tendency (see Widdowson, 2003, González Davies, 2004, Butzkamm and Caldwell, 2009, Cook, 2010, Kerr, 2014, Pym, 2015). Despite this renewed attention the issue has gained in recent years, the relation between translation and language teaching still seems not to be exhaustively researched. The individual research projects focus predominantly on advocating the role of translation in language teaching rejecting its elimination or marginalization and analysing selected aspects of translation in concrete language teaching contexts (see Leonardi, 2010, Korošec Koletnik, 2012, Tsgari and Floros 2013, Fernández-Guerra, 2014). In the Czech context, the surveys and research projects examining this issue focused on student teacher education and secondary (grammar) school level (see Šámalová 2013, 2014, Němec 2013, Skopečková 2018). The findings seem to suggest that translation - though rather in its "traditional form": most often as the translation of individual sentences, phrases or lexical items (Šámalová 122) - is quite commonly used in English language teaching and is perceived as an important part of language teaching by the EFL secondary school teachers (Šámalová, Skopečková). On the other hand, despite the fact that (literary, technical or general) translation courses are regularly part of teacher education programmes: usually as facultative courses (Mraček), the relation of translation and language teaching seems to be somewhat neglected. Following Němec, the research of teacher educators' subjective theories with respect to translation and language teaching indicates that the lack of systemic research in this part of language teaching and learning reality gives rise to various "peculiar and improvised" techniques (111).

In other words, the 21st century EFL classroom seems to be relatively open in terms of L1 use or instances of translation. On the other hand, a vague sense of doubt and reserve is still rather noticeable here. The gap between Translation Studies and Language Didactics, which has its historical roots at the beginning of the 20th century (referring to the impact of the Reform Movement and especially the Direct Method and its deliberate rejection of L1 and translation use in language teaching), has become

really substantial since then. Moreover, “behind the former Iron Curtain” (including Czechoslovakia) in the early 90s of the 20th century the ELT situation was rather specific reflecting the logical lack of quality bilingual ELT textbooks and the consequent unwavering preference for – at that time rather *rare* – native speakers of English and modern monolingual textbooks by established publishing houses (Gráf 153). Although the ELT situation has gradually changed (especially in terms of bilingual ELT textbooks corresponding to the local needs and modern language teaching trends), the use of translation and L1 in language teaching has become a sort of *taboo* for many Czech EFL teachers and was literally forced into a form of underground existence (Gráf, Skopečková). In summary, despite the evident effort of many scholars from the field of Language Didactics but also Translation Studies, it seems that the widely accepted belief that “monolingual teaching is the best way of getting bilingual results” (Widdowson 151) is still rather dominant. Furthermore, following the prior research in the field there is an evident gap between the use of translation and L1 in ELT and student teacher education. In other words, some sort of theoretical framework that would explain and show the prospective as well as in-service teachers how to use translation (and L1) in the particular foreign language teaching context reflecting its full potential – not reducing it to the translation of isolated sentences or the word-level only – and at the same time respecting the goals of language teaching and improving learners’ foreign language proficiency is still missing.

The present paper explores this definitely complex issue and introduces a research project that aims to create and verify a development course for in-service EFL teachers (part of continuing education programme at the Faculty of Education, the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen) focusing on the use of translation and L1 in language teaching: *Translation in the EFL classroom*. In particular, the research project tries to present translation to in-service EFL teachers as a concept that can be applied in the EFL classroom observing the goals and principles of Language Didactics and at the same time reflecting its thought-provoking potential following Translation Studies and its theories. The present project is a pilot project of a larger research project aimed at the creation of a new didactic model for the *optimal*<sup>1</sup> use of translation in the EFL classroom as a part of the EFL teacher preparation programme.

### **Research project, goals and research questions**

As implied above, the present paper introduces a pilot<sup>2</sup> research project focusing on in-service EFL teachers attending the continuing education programme for primary and secondary school EFL teachers at the Faculty of Education, the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. The aim of the research project is to create and verify a development course on the use of translation and L1 in language teaching for these teachers. In other words, we want to encourage the in-service EFL teachers to reflect on translation and L1 use in their EFL classes and to familiarize them with the didactic techniques and procedures following the concept of translation complying with the principles of Language Didactics and at the same time avoiding unnecessary reduction reflecting its full potential with respect to Translation Studies. L1 has been included here in order to reflect the logical relation between translation and L1 use since translation naturally “entails the use of student’s own language, so it is a kind of own-language use, but it is by no means the only one” (Cook xix). L1 use in the EFL classroom covers a variety of activities (e.g. explanation of grammar rules or classroom management) that, however, do not really have to involve translation. On the other hand, once L1 is used in a foreign language classroom, it seems impossible to separate translation and other activities involving L1 use stating clearly that a rule explanation or an L1 instruction did not include translation at all. Consequently, the issue of L1 use represents an integral – though not central - part of the present research project. The

110| primary focus remains on translation as a specific use of L1 as well as a thought-provoking and complex activity with language learning potential. Regarding the primary and secondary school level of the continuing education programme, the research project focuses on these two levels as well. In order to create and verify the development course for in-service EFL teachers: Translation in the EFL classroom, the following question was posed and examined in the pre-research phase:

RQ 1. In terms of the disciplines related to the field of foreign (English) language teaching and translation, which theoretical concepts and concrete approaches should be considered and examined for the creation of a development course for in-service EFL teachers?

and in the course of the research phase:

RQ 2. How do the in-service teachers attending the development course perceive the role and use of L1 and translation in their EFL classes?

RQ 3. After attending the development course, to what extent and how will that perception change?

RQ 4. After attending the development course for in-service EFL teachers, will the in-service teachers be able to apply the new didactic techniques and procedures following the concept of translation complying with the principles of Language Didactics and at the same time avoiding unnecessary reduction reflecting its full potential with respect to Translation Studies and to what extent?

The present paper focuses on the pre-research and first part of the research itself, which means it presents the answer to the first and the second question.

### **Methodology**

The research is divided into two phases. The first one represents in fact the pre-research, which aimed to select and explore concrete theoretical foundations related to the field in order to create a development course for in-service EFL teachers. For that purpose, relevant scholarly literature – from the field of Language Didactics as well as Translation Studies - was researched and analysed against the background of the prior research data (see Skopečková 2018).

The second phase itself is divided into two major steps: the creation and the consequent verification of the development course. Following the pre-research findings, a development course for in-service EFL teachers (*Translation in the EFL classroom*) was created to present and explain the new didactic techniques and procedures. The second step is to verify the development course by means of the teachers' reflection of these techniques and procedures.

The research design of the present research follows the principles of action research as a flexible tool that can "immediately react to a concrete problem of educational practice" (Průcha 183) and combining the roles of the development course teacher educator and the present research project researcher it seemed ideal to reflect the planned innovation in the course of the continuing education programme (Janík). In compliance with the principles of action research, the following methods were applied: questionnaire (in-service EFL teachers' opinions and attitudes), teacher's diary, syllabus of the development course, semi-structured interview (reflection of the new didactic procedures and techniques) and observing. Employing methods that are typically used in the individual phases of action research to collect and analyse data and thus combining qualitative and quantitative methods, we will also observe triangulation of data (Gavora 146).

### **Pre-research results and discussion: theoretical foundations**

In the following section, the first pre-research question related to the selection and analysis of relevant theoretical foundations will be examined:

RQ 1. In terms of the disciplines related to the field of foreign (English) language teaching and translation, which theoretical concepts and concrete approaches should be considered and examined for the creation of a development course for in-service EFL teachers?

Both translation and language teaching are unambiguously connected with a complex theoretical background: translation draws primarily on the broad field of Translation Studies and language teaching on a similarly ramified subject area, on Language Didactics (apart from other disciplines). Despite the rather difficult relations between the two disciplines (implied above), they have evidently much in common both researching a very similar area (e.g. L1 and/vs. L2, language skills development, communication and message transmission). Generally speaking, without acquiring particular level of proficiency in L2 there is hardly any translation possible and on the other hand learning L2 means that some sort of translation will definitely be part of the process since “as far as students are concerned, translation (and L1) appears in the process of language teaching-learning permanently and unintentionally” (Choděra 122). Consequently, the present project aims to perceive the relation between translation and language teaching as a space of cooperation rather than competition aiming at a possible fusion of these theoretical foundations and making use of relevant aspects from both fields.

In terms of Translation Studies, translation—contrary to the current EFL classroom concept as implied above—resembles a flexible and multi-layered phenomenon with a definitely excellent thought-provoking potential. Accordingly, it would be possible to find a great number of various definitions emphasizing always a particular aspect or theoretical approach examining the concept of translation. Consequently, translation can be defined in the following way:

Language is an indispensable element in the realisation of the verbal act. It is a necessary precondition for communication. (...) Translation is a dual act of communication. It presupposes the existence, not of a single code, but of two distinct codes, the ‘source language’ and the ‘target language’. (Brissnet 337)

Nevertheless, it might be at the same time perceived from a different angle stressing another dimension of the process:

Even though no one seems likely to deny that communication is the primary aim and function of a translated text, today we are far from thinking that translating is a simple communicative act. In contemporary translation theory (...) language is a constitutive of thought, and meaning a site of multiple determinations, so that translation is readily seen as investigating the foreign language text with a domestic significance. (Venuti 482)

The field of Translation Studies unambiguously reflects this great variety of approaches and theories that are part of the current map of Translation Studies, which has ramified under the influence of numerous related areas and disciplines evolving throughout the years (see Holmes 1988, Pym 2015). Regardless of these varied definitions and attitudes to translation, the process of translating – which means the comprehension, interpretation as well as the analysis of a particular message and its consequent transfer, synthesis and reverbalization – might be perceived on the one hand as a highly



112| complex and miscellaneous activity that requires specific skills and aptitudes. On the other hand, however, translating is also a very natural procedure. On daily basis, translation is performed in our minds on an almost unconscious level. Every day we have to communicate or simply make ourselves understood and almost daily we encounter situations in which we have to try to infer the meaning of a foreign or unfamiliar word (e.g. watching television, reading the papers etc.), read signs (e.g. to tell the time) and adapt or rephrase that what we are saying (e.g. to avoid a technical term in a casual speech, etc.). In other words, referring here to Jakobson's classification of translation as intralingual translation (or rewording), interlingual translation implying translation proper and intersemiotic translation as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign system" (Jakobson 233) translation might be considered a very natural phenomenon that more or less facilitates our everyday communication. Moreover, Pym, Malmkjaer and Gutiérrez-Colón Plana suggest to approach translation as *communication* and to "foster a view of translation as a goal-driven communicative activity that is compatible with the most institutionally dominant teaching methods" (139).

Accordingly, the development course for in-service EFL teachers on the use of translation in language teaching should reflect this concept of translation: translation as a truly multifarious, but at the same time very natural activity contributing to and enhancing communication. Regarding the complex field of translation theory, it is important to select an approach that defines translation in a similar way foregrounding its potential in terms of communication and at the same time offering feasible concepts for the EFL context. Therefore, the new didactic techniques and procedures introduced in the development course embrace the underlying principles of functionalist approaches to translation that emphasize, among others, the communicative aspect of translation. In other words, functionalist approaches describe translation as in fact "a specific kind of communicative action" (Schäffner and Wiesemann 9) and thus represent "a promising liaison" between the principles and goals of language teaching and at the same time respect the full potential of translation (Skopeczková). Functionalist approaches to translation represent a sort of "cover term for a number of theoretical reflections" (Schäffner and Wiesemann 9) connected predominantly with German and Finnish translation scholars (Vermeer 1983, Reiss 1984, Holz-Mänttari 1993, Nord 2007). This approach to translation foregrounds the belief that "texts are produced and received with a specific purpose, or function, in mind" and this purpose is perceived as "the most decisive criterion" for any translation (Schäffner and Wiesemann 9). Accordingly, scholars and translators adopting functionalist approaches stress the significance of the source and target text *skopos*<sup>3</sup> (the ST and TT function or purpose), its identification and interpretation. Furthermore, following this approach to translation the translation process is not defined as a simple two-step process only, but rather as a cycle or even as some sort of loops (Nord 36) in which we gradually move forward, but if necessary, also backwards returning to any of the previous steps and making the process an endless as well as inspiring quest for the most fitting solution. In terms of the translation process, it emphasizes the role of the source text analysis including the identification of translation problems (e.g. intercultural, interlingual, text-specific or pragmatic) (Schäffner and Wiesemann 10) and many other aspects of this complex activity. Although, in terms of the EFL context, all these functionalist principles might seem somewhat abstract or even remote from the language classroom reality, it is one of the approaches that "have proved invaluable to students who are only starting and learning to translate real texts" (Mraček 68) and seem definitely relevant with respect to language teaching since it offers a new conception of translation as a definitely creative and communication-oriented activity.

Reflecting these underlying principles of the functionalist approaches to translation, the development course for in-service EFL teachers will present an alternative view on the concept of translation: instead of word-for-word translations of isolated vocabulary and fixed phrases it will offer more complex tasks based on functionalist principles. Translation should be in the first place presented as a *purposeful* activity, which means that learners should try to identify particular purpose of various L2 (and also L1) texts and then try to compare, contrast and analyse them. Learners may also practise textual changes with respect to the change of the target text function and decide which transformations are really necessary and which source text elements need to be adapted and how. Finally, translation activities might be used to highlight the role of L1 and L2 differences. Learners may compare and contrast these referring to various linguistic levels. Last but not least, referring to Jakobson's classification it is also possible to consider the use of intralingual translation within the functionalist framework and focus on the textual changes resulting from the change of the target text function or on the practising of the individual stages of the translation process itself (e.g. identification of text function or source text comprehension realizing the circular aspect of the process of translation). Although these particular activities might seem somewhat complex in terms of language teaching, specific and purposeful instructions like these "rather than vague formulation like 'translate into English' will make students realize that they are part of a concrete communicative action" (Mraček 68), in which they will have to think about the purpose of the text they are creating and its function in real-life communication. The functionalist approaches to translation definitely seem to offer a great number of possibilities that might be in a relevant and optimal way applied also in the context of language teaching.

In terms of the EFL classroom, every language teacher strives naturally for "the objective of a language subject", which is "to develop in students a capability in a language (L2) other than their own (L1)" (Widdowson 149). Consequently, the development course for in-service EFL teachers certainly has to address key EFL methodology principles and respect the theoretical framework of Language Didactics including the issue of communicative competence and language skills development, the outcomes and intentions of curricular documents, but also the current position and use of translation and L1 in the EFL classroom, which reflects the development of individual language teaching methods and approaches but also other related fields such as pedagogy, psychology or linguistics as well as concrete circumstances. The process of marginalisation of translation and the almost unequivocal preference for the monolingual approach in terms of language teaching (Cook) has apparently a deep-rooted and well-established tradition as implied above. Generally speaking, the oscillation between often somewhat extreme positions on translation and L1 ranging between complete acceptance and full engagement on the one end of a hypothetical scale and total rejection and universal condemnation on its opposite end seems to divide the individual language teaching approaches and methods into two more or less open sets: either accepting (or possibly tolerating) L1 and translation in the foreign language classroom (e.g. Grammar-Translation Method and its variants) or not (e.g. the Reform Movement and the Direct Method starting the shift) (see Butzkamm and Caldwell 2009, Cook 2010, Choděra 2006). As implied above, also the Czech language teaching context is influenced by this rather monolingual tendency and the still dominant impact of language teaching approaches and methods from the latter set discouraging teachers and learners from translation (and L1 use). Nevertheless, as suggested by the recent research studies (Němec, Šamalová) translation (and L1) still occurs in language teaching and though offered only limited space – "except, sometimes, for exams" (González Davies 39) or primarily in connection with the use dictionaries (see FEP) (Skopeczková) – definitely presents more language learning opportunities than its current reduced form.

114| Last but not least, the use of translation in the EFL classroom has to reflect also the particular conditions and requirements of the actual school or class environment such as the teacher and his/her background, experience with and approach to translation, but also the students in terms of their level of proficiency, the concrete size of the group as well as their approach to translation and motivation to translate. This all then needs to be embedded into the concrete EFL teaching objectives and educational goals that influence the selection of particular classroom techniques and procedures, materials as well as the outcomes and effects of education.

### **Research results and discussion**

Following the pre-research findings, the development course for in-service EFL teachers was created (including a detailed syllabus, tasks and timetable). In other words, reflecting the concrete theoretical concepts and approaches, the development course tries to fuse together Jacobson's view of translation avoiding a too narrow and confined sort of definition of translation, the functionalist approach to translation reflecting its focus on the function and the communicative value of translation and the EFL classroom perspective including its goals and concrete circumstances. Accordingly, for the purposes of our research we accept on the one hand a rather broad approach to translation in language teaching defining it as the translation between two distinct codes foregrounding the creative and thought-provoking dimension of this activity. On the other hand, we stress the language teaching potential of translation perceiving it as an integral part of the language teaching and learning process since "the process of learning a foreign language should be presented not as the acquisition of new knowledge and experience but as an extension or alternative realisation of what the learner already knows" (Widdowson 71). Consequently, we partly adopt the generally accepted viewpoint distinguishing between didactic translation or pedagogical translation as a sort of "didactic tool" for increasing foreign language learners' proficiency focussing on the very process of translation and all related activities, not its product (Němec 12) and professional translation that on the contrary has to be concerned with the final product of translation and its quality, which is also the goal of professional translators. Nevertheless, reflecting the above mentioned theoretical foundations (including functionalist principles stressing the function of the source as well as the target text and the issue of translation as a product) the conception of translation pursued in the development course is somewhat broader and tries to implement concrete theoretical approaches from the field of Translation Studies in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, we neither treat translation as L1 use only nor as its subcategory – as implied above – but rather as logically related components of the issue since in practice it is often difficult (or even impossible) to make a clear-cut distinction and the two cannot be really separated and "neatly compartmentalized as the 'translation versus other uses of the own language' dichotomy seems to suggest" (Cook).

After creating the development course for in-service EFL teachers, the verification of the development course was initiated by a questionnaire survey examining the following question:

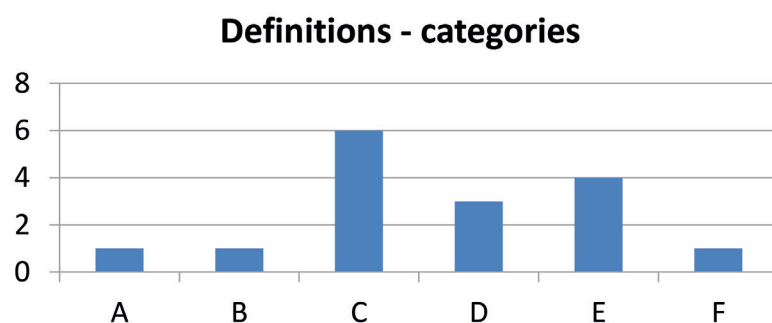
R Q 2 How do the in-service teachers attending the development course perceive the role and use of L1 and translation in their EFL classes?

Accordingly, at the very beginning of the course a non-standardized questionnaire was used to survey and afterwards to analyse the attitudes and opinions of in-service EFL teachers regarding translation and L1 use in their EFL classes. The questionnaire was based on pre-research and prior research data. It consisted firstly of items identifying the respondents and then 15 items concerning their experience, attitudes and opinions before taking the course (13 closed-ended items offering multiple-choice answers, 2 open-ended items). For the data analysis we used absolute and relative frequency.

The respondents (13) attend the continuing education programme for primary school EFL teachers (23%) or secondary school EFL teachers (77%), at the Faculty of Education, the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. All of them are in-service EFL teachers: they have been teaching English between one and five years (46%) or have just started teaching English having less than one year of teaching experience (31%) or more than five years of teaching experience (23%). The respondents have been mainly teaching at primary schools, but also secondary schools – including secondary technical schools– or other educational institution (i.e. language schools)<sup>4</sup>.

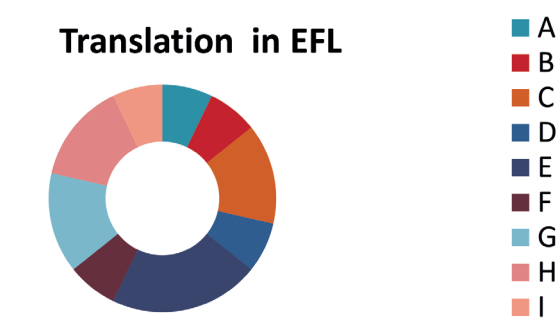
In the present paper, the two open-ended items are discussed in detail. The items concern the respondents' perception of the concept of translation. The first one asks about their experience, attitudes and opinions with respect to translation in general, whereas the second one focuses on respondents' perception of translation in terms of the EFL classroom (primary, lower secondary and secondary level). Both items are open-ended, which means the respondents expressed their opinions freely and their answers were then categorized assigning codes to the individual categories. The individual categories represent in fact sort of working definitions of translation based on respondents' answers.

*Fig. 1: Generally speaking, what does the concept of translation involve (reflecting your experience and opinions in general)?*



- A – Translation makes incomprehensible comprehensible.
- B – Translation is the transformation of words or sentences in one language into another.
- C – Translation is the transmission of ideas from one language into another.
- D – Translation is the transmission of texts and information from one language into another – including the identification of the crucial information.
- E – Translation represents the ability to reflect cultural differences.
- F – Translation is the explanation of words and their meaning.

*Fig. 2: How do you perceive translation in terms of the EFL classroom (reflecting your experience, attitudes and opinions in terms of primary, lower secondary or secondary level)?*



- A. Translation helps to learn how to use an adequate L2 expression.
- B. Translation helps to learn how to identify crucial information.
- C. Translation helps to understand and explain cultural differences and L2 context.
- D. Translation helps to check reading and listening comprehension.
- E. Translation helps to understand L2 - important to understand L2 texts.
- F. Translation helps to learn: how to translate texts and idioms.
- G. Literal translation should be avoided.
- H. Translation is an inseparable part of EFL or at least very important.
- I. Translation helps when explaining grammar or when using L2 instruction.

Apparently, both items evoked a considerable number of definitions (some of them being very close, but still stressing a different aspect of the issue), which seems to reflect the rather *peculiar and disintegrated* concept of translation that is being perceived in language teaching. This becomes especially visible when comparing the first general perception of translation and the second one focusing on respondents' opinions and perception of translation with respect to language teaching. In the second item, the individual respondents mostly tried to reflect also the particular language teaching level. Nevertheless, some of the answers were already generalisations of respondents' experience with one or more levels. Consequently, this aspect will be addressed more specifically in the final questionnaire.

The following items are presented as a summary discussing the individual aspects concerning translation and L1 use in the EFL classroom (primary, lower-secondary and secondary level). In categories like classroom management (77%), instruction (77%) and disciplining the class (62%), the respondents mostly opted for "usually combine L1 and L2". (L2 is predominantly represented here by phrases that the learners are used to.) Nevertheless, when talking with pupils individually (e.g. helping with a task, explaining instruction), respondents use usually L1 only (62%). As far as vocabulary is concerned, respondents mostly checked "usually combine L2 and L1" (85%) (e.g. L2 explanation or illustration followed by L1 equivalent). In terms of grammar, respondents mostly selected the option "usually combine L1 and L2" (62%). In the follow up question, the respondents clarified that they use L1 to explain and to mark the difference, to compare and contrast L1 and L2. L2 is then used for practising. For correcting, in tests and exams, it is usually L1 only (69%).

The data obtained during the very first part of the research show that the respondents usually combine L1 and L2 and use translation in various EFL class situations as a means for achieving concrete objectives. On the other hand, the data from the very first two items seem to suggest that respondents' perception of the role and use of translation (and L1) in language teaching is fairly varied and rather inconsistent.

### **Conclusion**

Translation is undoubtedly a very complex activity with a highly thought-provoking potential: moving between two languages, two distinct codes, seeking and exploring new possibilities or simply trying to express oneself in different ways. This will always be a fascinating and stimulating process. It is, nevertheless, a language-learning process as well, which is an often neglected aspect of the issue. In the present paper, we summarized at first prior research in this field to describe the current situation and to introduce a research project aimed at the creation and verification of a development course for in-service EFL teachers. The aim of the research project is to familiarize the in-service EFL teachers

with a concept of translation that is based on concrete theoretical foundations from the field of Translation Studies (functionalist approaches to translation in particular), but also Language Didactics. Accordingly, the conception of translation in language teaching is presented as a complex, but at the same time very natural activity that is achievable also in terms of the EFL classroom. As implied above, the present research - that is part of a larger research project examining the use of translation in language teaching - has been just initiated. Consequently, in the present paper we discussed only the data obtained during the pre-research and the very first part of the research. Nevertheless, already the preliminary data seem to imply that there is a gap between the use of L1 and translation in the EFL class and the relevant theoretical framework that would show the language teachers how to use translation (and L1) in terms of language teaching in a way that could be considered useful, systematic and *optimal* with respect to concrete language teaching context. Using Widdowson's words, it is possible to conclude: "It is time it (translation) was given a fair and informed appraisal" (160). The development course for in-service EFL teachers on the use of translation in the EFL class might be seen as one of the first steps.

#### Notes:

- [1] The notion *optimal* or *optimal use* should reflect the dual focus of the larger research project introducing translation in language teaching as a concept complying with the goals and principles of Language Didactics and, at the same time, avoiding unnecessary reduction corresponding to its full potential with respect to Translation Studies. In other words, the notion optimal use of translation should not represent a sort of rigid category qualifying individual instances of translation use, but rather implying the objective of the research project that aims to offer translation new space in terms of language teaching in a way that can be considered useful, systematic and optimal with respect to a concrete language teaching context.
- [2] The present research is a pilot project of a larger research project aimed at the creation of a new didactic model for the optimal use of translation in the EFL classroom as a part of the EFL teacher preparation programme. In other words, it aims to test the research design and eliminate possible drawbacks and will be followed by repeated verification of the new didactic model increasing the number of participants gradually (including students teachers as well) to complement and improve the new didactic procedures and techniques continually.
- [3] The functionalist approaches to translation are related to *Scopostheorie* stating that the determining principle of any translation is the purpose (*skopós* from a Greek word 'purpose'). (Nord 28).
- [4] The respondents could choose here more than one option depending on their teaching experience.

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## Introducing the STANAG 6001: Strategic and High-stakes Language Testing for NATO in the Czech Republic

*Abstract: The standardized language tests according to STANAG 6001 may be regarded as perhaps the most essential high-stakes tests for adults in the Czech Republic. Required as proof of language proficiency by the Czech military, the Ministry of Defence, and the University of Defence, these tests impact the careers and posting opportunities of approximately 30,000 military and state employees and students, while representing and symbolizing the Czech military's membership in and commitment to NATO. This paper maps how testing according to STANAG 6001 impacts strategic personnel planning in the Czech military, highlighting how these tests have gradually assumed a strategic role both in the development of the Czech military and its position vis-a-vis the Alliance. The paper also presents and comments on issues still plaguing the NATO-wide testing standardization process and introduces and discusses the measures undertaken by BILC and Ministries of Defence – calibration seminars and the Benchmark Advisory Test – to ensure continued alignment among differing testing mechanisms and formats based on the STANAG 6001 descriptors. The overall aim of the paper is to introduce and analyze a little-known, but widely used and strategically significant language-proficiency testing framework and its use in the Czech Republic.*

### Introduction

When the Czech Republic joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999, it accepted hundreds of standardized agreements – or STANAGs – between the member countries of the alliance. These agreements define various processes, procedures, terms, and conditions for common military and technical procedures or equipment to ensure the Alliance member-militaries' interoperability. The content of STANAGS ranges widely: from STANAG 1041 on anti-submarine evasive steering or STANAG 2044 on procedures for dealing with prisoners of war to one of the publicly better-known agreements, STANAG 6001, on language proficiency levels. This particular agreement establishes the rules and provides guidance for language testing within NATO member armies. Its aim is to standardize language proficiency levels for the purposes of "communicating language requirements for international staff appointments, recording and reporting, in international correspondence, measures of language proficiency, and comparing national standards through a standardized table while preserving each nation's right to maintain its own internal proficiency standards" (*NATO Standard 1-1*). Ultimately, the agreement seeks to provide a framework for ensuring linguistic interoperability among NATO member armies and Ministries of Defence (MoDs). Institutionally, standardization of language training and testing in the alliance is then supervised and carried out by the Bureau for International Language Coordination (BILC), an advisory body to NATO, which is also responsible for harmonizing language policy through the exchange of knowledge and best practices among the alliance's member states.

The framework of language testing according to STANAG 6001 comprises of several elements. As indicated, for the purposes of standardization of language proficiency levels, the agreement establishes a scale to describe a standardized language profile (SLP) in four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The six scale levels range from no proficiency (0), survival (1), functional (2), professional (3), and expert (4) to highly accurate native (5), with plus (+) levels designating stages that are more than

halfway between individual levels, but do not fully or consistently meet the criteria for the next higher level. The agreement further provides detailed descriptors of the levels in all four skills. The descriptor for survival level listening, for example, states that the test taker “can understand concrete utterances, simple questions and answers, and very simple conversations,” while it can be expected that there will be “many misunderstandings of both the main idea and supporting facts [and that the candidate] can only understand spoken language [...] if content is completely unambiguous and predictable” (*NATO Standard A-1*). Unlike the widely-used tests based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the tests according to STANAG 6001 thus involve distinct proficiency thresholds. Whereas CEFR test descriptors only use positively-stated “can-do” statements and boundaries between levels are deliberately kept vague, each level established by STANAG 6001 describes a “floor” and a “ceiling” of the candidate’s language performance, denoted by “can-do” as well as “cannot-do” statements in the descriptors (Seinhorst 18). Overall, these descriptors, along with the 6-level scale, provide a clear – if open to interpretation – framework for testing and assessing candidates according to STANAG 6001.

Beyond its technical parameters and institutional grounding, what further defines language testing according to STANAG 6001 is its strategic nature. Within NATO, language proficiency testing exists at the nexus of the military, politics, and education, at both their macro and micro levels. Correspondingly, the word *strategic* here does not refer merely to the military advantage of achieving linguistic interoperability within the Alliance, but also to the crucial political role that language proficiency plays in politics within the member states as well as between individual member states and NATO itself. This paper therefore maps how testing according to STANAG 6001 impacts strategic military planning, especially in terms of personnel, in the Czech Republic, which employs these language tests for posting purposes – i.e. for participating in international peacekeeping missions and disaster relief operations along with NATO-structure posting in Brussels and Mons – as well as for qualification requirements for professional soldiers and civilian employees of its own Ministry of Defence. The language tests thus function as extremely high-stakes and essential for the development of the Czech military and its commitment to and engagement within the Alliance. The paper also presents and comments on issues still plaguing the testing standardization process and introduces and discusses the measures undertaken by BILC and MoDs – calibration seminars and the Benchmark Advisory Test – to ensure continued alignment among differing testing mechanisms and formats based on the STANAG 6001 descriptors. The overall aim of the paper is to introduce and briefly analyze a little-known, but widely-used and strategically significant language-proficiency testing framework and its use in the Czech Republic.

### **Testing according to STANAG 6001 in the Czech Republic**

For the former members of the Warsaw Pact and other post-Soviet countries ascending to NATO from 1999 onward, the need to comply with STANAG 6001 has been an acutely strategic political step. The decision to begin transforming their language assessment policy represented to the West, according to Mark Crossey, “an important political gesture related to integration” to the Alliance, as language assessment would serve “the political goal of fostering cooperation between nations in a given region or with a similar foreign policy” (“The Role of Micropolitics” 149). Within the newly-ascending NATO members themselves, the adoption of STANAG 6001 could, at the same time, function as a “conscious policy decision to use international directives as a vehicle to wrest control over an important area of national governance, namely assessment, from powerful foreign bodies” (Tsagari 38) and as “a method of regaining the faith of key stakeholders in state sector testing” (“The Role of Micropolitics” 149).

122| However, perhaps the most significant realization on the part of the new NATO members was that “linguistic interoperability is as important to ensuring that countries are able to participate effectively in both NATO missions and wider Alliance activities as any other form of interoperability” (“Improving linguistic interoperability”), especially given the scope, seriousness, and length of the military and peacekeeping missions organized and undertaken by NATO. In short, linguistic interoperability and adherence to STANAG 6001 became strategically significant.

The Czech Republic represents a complex case study of the interplay of external and internal motivations to standardize efforts of national language proficiency testing systems according to STANAG 6001. In the Czech Republic, the standardized, criterion-referenced, proficiency tests according to STANAG 6001 have since 1999 become perhaps the most essential high-stakes tests for adults, particularly in the military and state sectors, as they represent tests upon which candidates’ career or study plans hinge (Davies 185). Even though various Czech ministries currently accept up to thirty-eight different CEFR certificates as proof of proficiency, between 2003 and 2018, tests according to STANAG 6001 were required as the sole acceptable proof of language proficiency for employees of the Czech military as well as of the Ministry and the University of Defence. High SLPs (level 3) remain mandatory for officers, necessary for deployment and NATO-structure posting, and required of the general staff members. SLP 1111 or 2222 are required of all soldiers and civilian employees, while University of Defence students must acquire SLP 2222 in English and SLP 1111 in another language (German, French, or Russian) by the end of their studies.

The importance of language proficiency in the Czech military and the Ministry of Defence keeps growing. This is mainly because proof of language proficiency according to STANAG 6001 is required not only for international missions, relief operations, and NATO-structure posting as is customary among all NATO member states, but it has also been increasingly required as a qualification for employment in the military and the MoD. When the Czech military began to test its soldiers’ language proficiency in 2003, there were 571 candidates tested that year. Within a year, the number almost quintupled to 2361 and it has not dropped below two thousand ever since. In 2017 and 2018, there were well over four thousand candidates tested per year and there is little evidence that the number should significantly decrease. In 2018, the Czech military announced its plan to increase the number of professional soldiers from the current level of 22,258 (in 2019) to 30,000 soldiers by 2026, which signals a steady future influx of predominantly high-school-educated recruits without acceptable language-proficiency certificates, who will be entering the military in need of language training and assessment. The situation differs little in the case of university-educated recruits as even they seldom hold a certificate confirming their language-proficiency. The military’s plan also envisages a higher number of students at the University of Defence, which means additional candidates to be tested (*Koncepce výstavby armády*). Indeed, Czech ministries now do accept a plethora of CEFR certificates of language proficiency; however, given the choice between army-sponsored language training for STANAG 6001, which candidates often undergo during working hours, and self-sponsored after-work language classes to earn expensive international certificates, soldiers and MoD employees will certainly opt for the former. In short, then, as the Czech military and MoD plan to expand their personnel and therefore the country’s role and influence in NATO, the demand for tests according to STANAG 6001 will remain high and the tests’ strategic significance within the country’s military and state sectors, as well as vis-à-vis the Alliance, will remain strong.

The tests according to STANAG 6001 will also remain high-stakes, given that they do not merely represent and symbolize the Czech military’s membership in the NATO, but also directly impact the



careers of approximately 30,000 soldiers, state employees and students. Results in the tests are used to make crucial decisions – to determine punishment, accolades, advancement, or compensation. They profoundly influence the test takers' military careers, study opportunities, and financial situation: students at the University of Defence, for example, receive funding during their studies and their failure to complete the required language proficiency tests may therefore result in a significant financial loss and career impediment. At the institutional level of the Czech military and the MoD, the stakes further involve fulfilling strategic obligations vis-à-vis NATO such as having the personnel capability to post with NATO structures and contribute to missions, as well as to ensure interoperability.

Given the strategic and high-stakes nature of the tests in question, there is immense pressure at the institutional level, as well as at the individual test-takers' level, on language teachers, test makers, testers, and methodologists to ensure test-takers' success. In the Czech Republic, the tests according to STANAG 6001 are prepared, calibrated, moderated, and carried out by the Testing Department (TD) at the Language Center of the University of Defence in Brno, while language training takes place in the Brno, Olomouc, Vyškov, Prague, Choceřad, and Hradec Králové teaching departments. All STANAG 6001 language testing procedures are described in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), a binding document prepared and edited by the TD, which set out the safety rules related to the preparation of tests and their implementation. It also determines how the administration of individual examinations takes place, defines key concepts of the exams, establishes the Code of Conduct for examiners and test administrators, and addresses the rights and obligations of candidates and testers. Furthermore, the document defines the format of individual levels of examinations and individual skills, specifies the rules of evaluation for productive and receptive skills, and specifies how the inspection activities related to the language tests are carried out. Along with test production and administration, the TD assures standardization as well as the tests' validity and reliability, and compliance with the standards set by BILC. The TD also provides complex feedback to test-takers and teachers and carries out research.

In essence, the Brno testing department is responsible for standardization compliance, policy formation at the MoD level, test creation, testing, feedback, and facilitation of know-how exchange between testing and teaching departments via seminars and workshops. As this section of the paper suggests, the current situation at the TD is a result of the strategic role that language tests according to STANAG 6001 have gradually assumed in the Czech military and state sectors. The number of test-takers has increased beyond the norm in most other NATO countries, as has the frequency of testing dates, and there is little evidence of future change, especially given the rising number of military recruits. At the same time, the TD is responsible for continuous standardization efforts through participation in testing-mechanism calibration and alignment activities across the Alliance. In other words, the department represents Czech Republic's commitment to achieving linguistic interoperability in the Alliance as it assumes strategic responsibilities to the Czech military and MoD as well as to NATO and other member states joining in standardization efforts.

The department is therefore deeply engaged in solving some of the issues plaguing BILC's standardization activities and strives to stay in the forefront of trends in language testing in the Alliance to be able to predict and prepare for future developments in the area of standardization and alignment. This is crucial due to the high stakes that the tests according to STANAG 6001 have in general, and the strategic role they play within the Czech Republic in particular. The following section presents and comments on some of the issues present across NATO member states as well as on existing solutions which the Czech TD has been taking part in.



## 124| Language testing standardization in NATO: Issues and Solutions

There are two prevalent issues plaguing standardization efforts in NATO member countries, including the founding states: ongoing differing interpretation of descriptors/lack of alignment in assessment across countries and consequent lack of trust in the validity of testing mechanisms and proficiency certificates. Although STANAG 6001 establishes a – admittedly rather loose – framework within which member states shall assess and compare language-proficiency levels, NATO itself does not support any complex language education policy. There still exist differing interpretations of STANAG 6001 proficiency levels across NATO member states, partially due to what Crossey refers to as “a perceived complacency on the part of some long-term NATO states,” but also due to “a lack of official discussion and agreement on [...] test content, format, and duration of validity of certificates” (“The Role of Micropolitics” 156). Although the proficiency-level descriptors established by STANAG 6001 are binding for each member state, test formats differ throughout NATO as does the frequency with which candidates may (re)take the test. In the Czech Republic, given the increasing number of candidates, the TD administer tests almost daily, sometimes testing multiple levels on the same day.

Moreover, the descriptors allow for the interpretation of proficiency levels which may differ considerably from one country to another. Consequently, states may be testing at different levels; which is an issue plaguing CEFR as well (“The Role of Micropolitics” 155, Green and Wall 384). This makes recognition of STANAG 6001 certifications difficult: there exists no central supervision on NATO’s part since “bilateral and multilateral recognition [...] is entirely dependent on local policy-makers” (“The Role of Micropolitics” 155). Between 2003 and 2015, lack of standardization and of an aligned interpretation of descriptors and levels – along with the decentralized procedures of certification recognition – fostered an environment in which, for example, private UK providers offered STANAG certification to foreign officers preparing in the UK, which led to confusion and political embarrassment (“The Role of Micropolitics” 154). Even the Czech Republic faced a similar problem with private certificate providers until recently.

Indeed, there have been proposals among testing scholars for alliance members’ militaries to recognize or even adopt the CEFR scale instead of working with and further developing tests according to STANAG 6001, especially given the aforementioned issues. By accepting thirty-eight different certificates as proof of proficiency, the Czech MoD now seems to have adopted this position as well. And yet, although NATO and BILC believe that “transferring STANAG 6001 ratings into civilian qualifications is a national responsibility,” they also strongly “discourage conversion or recognition of test results acquired on a test based on one framework in terms of levels from another framework” (Seinhorst 32). In fact, the STANAG 6001 and CEFR scales seem to be inherently incompatible, according to a BILC expert group, as they serve different purposes. Even though, generally, both of these test frameworks “serve as a common yardstick for reporting and comparing measures of foreign language competence, describe language abilities on a scale from little or no ability to that of a highly official proficiency, divide the hierarchy of language development into stages via prose descriptions,” and address language skills separately, no actual clear-cut correspondences between STANAG 6001 and CEFR scales can be drawn (Seinhorst 8, Buck 1–25). For example, CEFR reading level B1 may oscillate between STANAG 6001 levels 1 and 2+ and, in the same vein, STANAG 6001 reading level 2 may fit anywhere between CEFR levels A2 and C1 (Swender 125). This discrepancy is explained by the fact that while CEFR tests may have many different purposes – ranging from high-stakes proficiency exams to low-stakes placement tests – the tests according to STANAG 6001 serve as, by definition, general

proficiency tests and are used for high-stakes purposes only: employment, deployment, promotion, course admission, and proficiency pay (Seinhorst 20).

Moreover, testing within the parameters set by STANAG 6001 is construct-based as each level represents a separate construct that must be independently tested and scored. Each level is defined by a unique set of requirements for content, task, and accuracy. In contrast, CEFR does not require or stipulate a particular testing methodology; in fact, CEFR tests often allow for compensatory or cumulative scoring, wherein a candidate makes up for a critical weakness in one skill with a strong showing in another skill. This assessment methodology renders such performances non-ratable from the perspective of STANAG 6001, which is based on a discrete threshold system (Seinhorst 22-23, Gratton and DiBiase32). Finally, whereas there is no regulatory body for CEFR tests, BILC oversees the standardization processes concerning STANAG 6001 and administers a benchmark advisory test (Seinhorst 27). In short, an accurate comparison of the two testing frameworks is therefore not possible due to significant differences in their purpose, construct definition, delineation of the proficiency levels and the testing system (Seinhorst 31).

Although NATO and BILC leave it up to member countries to decide whether to accept CEFR certificates in lieu of STANAG 6001 and offer guidance and recommendations with only limited centralized oversight, there are also projects which do enable testing institutions in member states to improve and align the reliability and validity of their STANAG 6001 testing mechanisms across NATO. For example, since 2003, the process of harmonizing language policy through educating individual testers from member countries has been provided via the annual Language Testing Seminars (LTS) organized by BILC Working Group on Testing and Assessment, a body which consists of language testing experts from 5 NATO countries. LTS serves as a foundation course for English language testing professionals responsible for developing proficiency tests according to NATO standards. The main objective of LTS is to develop competency in the preparation and administration of language proficiency tests and to make steps to further standardize testing techniques and scoring. During the two-week-long course, participants become familiar with the STANAG 6001 descriptors and practice producing proficiency tests in the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing for levels 1, 2 and 3. They master the test development process, from drafting test specifications, selecting passages and texts, writing, moderating, and revising items to trialing tests. Ultimately, organizing and participating in such a seminar should improve linguistic interoperability through standardization of assessment practices ("Language Testing Seminar"). According to Mary Jo Biase from the Center for Language Study at Yale University, the exchange of best practices and standardization promoted and supported by the seminar has, over the years, helped evolve the level of testing sophistication in the new member nations to a highly-professional level ("PLTCE Forum").

A larger-scale and national-level solution to the standardization and harmonization issues referred to above has been the Benchmark Advisory Test (BAT), aimed at calibrating the validity of tests among member states ("Benchmark Advisory Test"). So far, two rounds of BAT have taken place: BAT 1 in 2009/10 and BAT 2 in 2019. The impetus for a benchmarking test came in 2003 when it was found that interpretations of descriptors seemed to vary significantly across member countries and that it appeared that nations trying to join NATO were expected to adhere to the standard more stringently than some older NATO nations ("Benchmark Advisory Test"). The initial objective was to develop a test against which member countries could compare the results attained on their national tests, with the test results being only of advisory nature. Eleven BILC member nations donated reading and listening items for the test item pool and a BILC working group reviewed these items for acceptability. In 2006,

126| the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) was contracted to administer the BAT reading and writing tests as well as to develop and administer tests in the speaking and writing skills. When the test development process concluded in December 2008, raters/testers were trained in the administration and scoring of the speaking and writing tests. The benchmarking process itself commenced in the spring of 2009. The tests in the listening, reading and writing skills were administered online, while the speaking test was conducted via the telephone. The results indicated a lack of alignment between the BAT and the national test results. Although some nations were aligned in some skills, in an overwhelming number of cases, the results from the national tests were higher than those achieved on the BAT. BILC ascribes the discrepancy to a variety of factors: test purpose, testing method, alignment of author purpose, text type, and reader/listener task, inadequate tester/rater norming (productive skills), inconsistencies in the interpretation of STANAG 6001, cut-off score setting, etc. ("Benchmark Advisory Test").

BAT II, conducted in 2019, was much more ambitious in scale as 21 countries took part in it under the auspices of BILC, ACTFL and the Partner Language Training Center Europe (PLTCE). Prior to testing sessions, PLTCE organized norming forums with defense-sponsored language testing professionals from 10 NATO and partner countries: Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Canada; Czech Republic; Denmark; Georgia; Latvia; Macedonia; Sweden; and, Norway. During the norming sessions, testers conducted and rated speaking proficiency interviews as well as writing sample tests, and subsequently justified and discussed their ratings to ensure the reliability and consistency of scoring from all raters in all participating nations. Furthermore, the participants wrote and moderated prompts that underwent a second round of moderation before being trialed at the Defence Language Institute English Language Center in San Antonio, Texas. In the end, these prompts were included in the BAT II ("PLTCE Hosts"). While, at the moment of writing, results from BAT II are unclear – they will be presented and discussed in detail in the September 2019 in Tours, France, at the BILC Testing Workshop – the initial feedback showed the benefits of having had norming sessions for the speaking and writing skills, as periodic norming is, according to the BILC working group, critical ("Steering Committee Minutes"). At the same time, although the purpose of the second BAT project was to evaluate how far the BILC community has come in standardizing its language testing, it should be acknowledged that the very process of the initial norming forums themselves was probably the more important endeavor ("PLTCE Hosts"). It showed NATO member countries' continued and improved cooperation in and commitment to enhancing strategic linguistic interoperability through calibrating testing mechanisms and ever-increasing standardization.

It is vital that the Czech Republic, its TD in particular, takes part and a leadership role in standardization activities such as the LTS, testing workshops, and large-scale endeavors such as the BAT. While administering tests and testing is admittedly the bread and butter of the Czech TD, participation in and promotion of NATO-wide standardization efforts is of strategic importance to the department and the Czech military as well – especially as the Czech MoD begins to accept CEFR certificates as proof of proficiency despite significant differences between CEFR and STANAG 6001 in purpose, construct definition, delineation of the proficiency levels and the testing system. The Czech Republic's military and state sectors are now financially, politically, and strategically committed to testing according to the STANAG 6001 standard as over 30,000 people's careers and studies hinge on it. Further standardization and calibration of testing mechanisms seems to be the most viable way forward and the most effective means of tackling differing interpretation of descriptors and of building trust in the validity of tests and certificates according to STANAG 6001.

## Conclusion

The tests according to STANAG 6001 are currently administered in the Czech Republic to over four thousand candidates per year and have since 2003 become a strategically and politically significant, high-stakes tests as they are required or accepted by the MoD, the University of Defence, and the Czech military as proof of language proficiency of approximately 30,000 soldiers, civilian employees, and students. The tests impact Czech military's strategic planning as they represent a commitment to NATO – in fact, it would be extremely difficult for the Czech Republic to fulfill its obligations to the alliance and achieve its own national security goals without ensuring linguistic interoperability. Tests according to STANAG 6001 remain the most viable option for the Czech military to achieve interoperability as they have been designed for the high-stakes purposes that the alliance and its member armies require – unlike tests based on CEFR, which may serve various purposes and are not always designed as high-stakes. The tests according to STANAG 6001 thus play a strategic role in the development of the Czech military as well as of its position within the Alliance. To strengthen this position and its commitment, the Czech Republic and its TD need to continue to address the existing issues plaguing the testing standardization process and must engage in and promote even further testing mechanism standardization efforts across NATO such as calibration seminars and the BAT. Given the role that the tests according to STANAG 6001 currently assume in the Czech military and state sectors, a continued lack of standardization, alignment, and trust in language proficiency certification will directly impact Czech Republic's influence within the Alliance, the political profile of the organization, and hinder achieving the strategic objective of linguistic interoperability.

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## The Loneliness of the Teacher in Digital Environment: Changing Education in Contemporary School

*Abstract: The recent transition from the literacy environment based on alphabetic technology to the digital environment is viewed with emotions by the generation used to linear printed text. In education, textbooks and conventional curriculum have become outdated. The digital environment has made traditional classrooms controlled by a teacher obsolete. The attitude of some educators unwilling to accept the fact of the transition – who still treat the Internet as a kind of circulating library – makes them offer a futile defence of traditional linear-text format against hypertext. Teachers complain that students prefer feelings to thoughts and the literacy ideal of Homo universal has been replaced by Snapchat dysmorphia. Soon bearable technology and virtual reality will replace the physical classroom and the literacy teacher's environment, as well as the now ubiquitous screens. The web and social media have become the monopoly of a few large industrial companies developing profit-generating algorithms. This article deals with the recent numerous books on the effects of the digital environment, ranging from apocalyptic visions to resigned acceptance. However, their authors are respected experts in social media, artificial intelligence and digital technologies and considering their views on education in the digital environment seems worthwhile.*

### Introduction

The initial enthusiasm for digital documents in the 80s was based on the development of hyperlinks in texts which were expected to strengthen students' critical thinking with different viewpoints that would provide them with the possibilities of new intellectual connections. The readers "would become authors of the virtual texts by selecting further and further hyperlinks" writes Nicholas Carr in his influential *The Shallows* (Carr 2011, 126).

This educational enthusiasm had been expressed in the literacy environment based on printed books, on linear-text format because the hyperlinks in the new digital texts were perceived as easily available printed books. Digital media users were expected by educators to approach digital hypertexts as if they were readers of printed books with the advantage of instantly available references. Having been restricted by alphabetic technology which had brought about literacy environments the enthusiasts were not able to imagine full consequences of cognitive effects of hypertext, particularly the future rise of "new reading" of screen surfers. The process has shifted from reading with awareness of the whole context of a book (longer texts) to searching among diverse texts for information and ultimately, to the contemporary screen surfing for instantaneous cognitive stimulation and emotional gratification.

This enthusiasm was still shared thirty years later by Clive Thompson with his Pollyannaish attitude to digital technology, he joined the discussion in 2013 with an unequivocal title *Smarter than you think, How technology is changing our minds for the better* having taken a deliberately pro-technology side. He echoes McLuhan's theoretical premise about the transitional moment that occurs at the beginning of every new medium during which we tend to view it as an advanced copy of the previous media. However, Thompson does not consider the new technology itself, as McLuhan does, but discusses its content offering an example that it has taken decades before ambitious serialized story-telling has developed from early TV that had imitated radio and vaudeville as well as theatre and movie serials,



130| and so online video will similarly take a long time, probably decades, to evolve away from the established convention of commercial TV and film. Discussing alphabetic technology his argument is similar: "When printing made it possible to mass-produce novels, authors tended to recycle the older tropes of letter-writing, mock-heroic poetry and non-fiction. It took time for the modern psychological novel to develop" (2013, 94). He compares "the older tropes" to the amateur video experiments on YouTube which in his view might eventually evolve to something truly new. However, Thompson's arguments deal with the content of technology (psychological novel, amateur video). Obviously, the developers have always had the need to expand the technological environments they inhabited. Within literacy as well as the digital technologies there has always been a significant intellectual effort and in this sense any technology is making its developers smarter, although not necessary its users. Alex Good (2013) in his review in *Quill and Quire* writes that although Thompson "wants to accentuate the positive ... he leaves a number of doors opened ... and we are only hearing half the story here". Thompson confuses the content with the technology, if the possibilities of TV or literary genre are exploited or not, if the mock-heroic poetry is substituted by modern psychological novel it is immaterial when considered from the point of view of the impact on the perception of the reader or viewer. The alphabet and not what is written, the technology of TV and not the programme have been changing our perception.

Initially, the reading, i.e. the linear literacy, was hoped to be replaced by more advanced "hypertext literacy", writes Carr (2011, 127). Hope is theoretically inevitable whenever a transition from the previous technological environment to the next one has happened because it is felt that the future will be "a larger or greatly improved version of the immediate past" (McLuhan 2011, 272). Thompson's parallels suggesting that technologies improve minds are immaterial because any new medium can be perceived and described only as a translated old medium since a new medium is always invisible to the user. We can be only aware of the impact or effects of the new medium. Because we are not able to perceive the digital environment created by the new medium/technology we describe it with the terminology of the previous literacy environment, cf. *e-book, fax (facsimile), internet*.

Incidentally, the new medium, when considered as a more advanced form of an old medium, reveals the "shortcomings" of the old one, in the case of alphabetic technology it may be a lack of interactivity on the printed page. For the digital environment users, the old literacy environment is visible only as a relic surrounded by the digital environment. The linear-text generation could not be aware of its own literacy environment which - from the perspective of the digital environment - is now obsolete and parochial. In digital environments the relationship between an iPhone and a book, viewed as instruments of learning, is similar to the relationship between a horse and motorcycle as instruments of transport.

### **Traditional linear-text format is better for learning than hypertext**

The research, as Carr points out, shows clearly that readers in a traditional linear-text format read a text faster and remember it better than hypertext readers of the same text who report a greater confusion following the meaning of the text. Hypertext "discourages absorbed and personal mode of reading" (2011, 127).

The attempts to compare the memory and speed reading of linear texts and hypertexts are flawed because we actually compare two different technologies and two different environments. It is like a comparison of the advantages of an illuminated manuscript and a printed book. The early printed books still imitated manuscripts with spaces for rubrics and illuminated initials but they were soon

ousted by simple printed texts. The literacy environment is based on linear-text formats and the digital environment is based on horizontal hyper texts or vertical scanning of screens; webpages are not designed for heavy contextual reading. When the researchers maintain that the students reading linear texts have better results in the following comprehension tests than those jumping back and forth between linked pages (2011, 128), they express a value judgement of an alphabetic technology user. Comprehension of the text is necessarily in inverse proportion to the number of links in the texts.

A hypertext does not provide an enriched experience of the text. The issue which is not addressed in the tests and criticism of hypertexts is the nature of the context of hyperlinked text, of hyper- or rich media.

Learning (defined and tested as comprehension) was not analysed and compared only between linear text and hypertext, but as Carr shows, between the linear text and hypermedia presentation of the similar linear text content as well. The researchers found out that multimedia technologies “limit rather than enhance, information acquisition” (2011, 130). The constant comparison of the hypertexts and multimedia technologies to linear reading may have a nostalgic value but the insistence on the values of literacy environments make readers grasp the raft of the technology of print in the ocean of digital waves. All these comparisons have the same denominator, they approach hypertext as if it was a non-interactive linear printed text. If they conclude that “TV broadcast with the info-graphics embedded on the screen ... exceeds viewers’ attentional capacity” (Carr 2011, 131), they actually complain that making the students read four texts at the same time “exceeds viewers’ attentional capacity”, this is a literacy-based logic not the logic of the perception of digital media.

If we approach multimedia as if they were translated linear texts and non-interactive pictures, in other words if we translate them back from the digital to the literacy environment, then pictures or graphics can – in selected contexts and for the users who are able to get involved by linear texts – reinforce written explanation. Carr’s criticism of the net fragmenting concentration confirms McLuhan’s observation that the electronic environment does not have a point of view, for McLuhan a “point of view” is plainly the result of the typographic spell (1974, 20). A reader used to a contextually based linear text is not able to perceive the Internet in any other way. Are the users of social media who vertically scan screens aware that they are involved in a mindless consumption of data or are they following a structured cognitive process determined either by their own logic, or by the software algorithm?

### **“I feel”, instead of “I think”**

The Internet as an increasingly efficient communication technology provides instantly valuable information but this advantage has cognitive consequences. Internet users become accustomed and feel entitled to an instantaneous response, even outside the Internet, in their day to day activities and they are distressed when it is absent. Carr agrees that “we vastly overvalue what happens to us right now” (2011, 134), he stresses the rational, but the psychological/cognitive consequences of the instantaneousness of the digital media may be difficult to overestimate. This constant involvement has replaced the rational “I think” with the psychologically involving “I feel”. Ramo (2016) in *The Seventh Sense* falls back on feeling as his major method expecting to recognize the right moment when dealing with digital media. Ramo openly adheres to Buddhist learning. Meditative reflection has been frequently offered as a defence against industrial efficiency or digital technology environments.

The other issue is the focus on the Internet providing facts. The aesthetic dimension of the fiction in the form of linear printed text is lost on the Internet for solely digital technology reasons. There is

132| no place on the Internet for extensive literary texts, the literacy environment based on alphabetic technology has been enveloped by the digital technology environment and become obsolete. The literate man keeps making the mistake of viewing the digital media as “animated” printed books. But they cannot have the aesthetic dimension of the printed books because the digital media cannot provide a wider context, though they may provide patterns, as McLuhan suggested.

Electronic books and printed books are not two competing technologies, they are just different technologies with different cognitive impacts, with the electronic book offering electronic bookmarks, page annotation, searches for keywords and the possibility of hyperlinks. The new technology of interactive texts has wrapped about the technology of printed books and made adding aesthetical and romantic values to a printed book obsolete. The material, whether it is parchment, velum, virtual paper or electronic page is irrelevant, it is the interactivity that changes the reading. The users do not read on the Internet because it is not designed for reading. Estimates agree that an average time on site is between 10-20 seconds and more than a half of the users leave the page if it does not load in under 3 seconds. Most marketers are aware that time on site will increase when the text is replaced with visuals confirming our presupposition that digital media cannot be treated as literary media.

“Blame teachers, professors, writers, journalists, intellectuals ...custodians of culture who will not insist upon the value of knowledge,” proclaims the national bestseller *The Dumbest Generation* in which Mark Bauerlein (2008, 161) empirically measured the vocabulary of the different media children and teens encounter. One criterion ... was the rate of “rare words” in spoken and written discourse. “Rare words” are words that do not rank in the top 10,000 in terms of frequency of usage. It shows how lexically impoverished most speech is compared to written language. It appears that in 1988 college graduates actively used a quarter of the “rare words” found in newspapers and a half of those in children’s books. Mark Bauerlein’s desperate complaint about the use of digital technology is a textbook example of McLuhan’s observation that the new technology is invisible and the attempts to describe it can be based only on the skills of older technologies. Bauerlein complains that young generation underuses or misuses digital technology instead of using it to learn about the world. In other words, he wants them to use the digital technology it as a circulating library. He blames the Internet for reducing the level of vocabulary which had been higher when books were read. The deficient use of the English language is supposed to be a sign of the digital age making young Americans stupid. Again, Bauerlein is the Socrates blaming Phaedrus for using the alphabet.

### **Not “Here and Now”, but “Now and Everywhere Else”**

This chapter heading is inspired by Ferlinghetti who observed in his interviews in Prague in 1999 (Vodrážka et al. 1999, 52, published in Czech) that technology forces us to contradict everything that had been tried to achieve through the spiritual values of the counterculture in the 60s. The main slogan used to be “*here and now*” and the present-day technology tells us to be “*now, but somewhere else*”. Ferlinghetti was referring to a cell-phone user and may have meant “*now, but not here*”, as the Internet is amorphous. His allusion to Buddhist liberation with reference to a technological environment was incidental, but some of the recent authors view “mindfulness” as a liberation from digital environments.

Buddhist training of an instinct, of a truly fresh way of looking at the world demands a specific cognitive focus, or its absence. Ramo in *The Seventh Sense* (2016) suggests starting with “A patient probing ... the birth of a new instinct requires rewiring of our mind and it can be done only at the slow pace of contemplation” (2016, 29). Ramo therefore aims to solve the problem of the new digital

technology with the old pre-literacy technology, he is harnessing a horse to pull a bike. Perceptions of networks as a problem defines Ramo and others as the generation blinded by literacy environment who are able to offer nothing but solely literacy solutions for survival. The development of *The Seventh Sense* on the basis of the Buddhist training of an instinct is not a solution for a digital environment man surfing on the froth of social media. Ramo repeats the well-known argument that technology defines all human-designed forms when he notes that "Someday soon drones will demand the redesign of our cities as automobiles did in the last century... The virtual is forcing itself into the real" (2016, 120). This is a typical reaction of the romantic viewpoint of a linear literacy user because the virtual is the new real now.

Google ensures, as Carr reminds us, that we are forever inundated by information of immediate interest to us (2011, 170). However, we believe that the content of the digital technology is the technology itself, that the important message again is the medium. The information it provides is only incidental, it is after all evident from constant influx of new applications and from the changing forms of information, from text to visual, to voice recognition and to virtual reality. Instantaneousness and immediate response combine to provide instant gratification and the feeling of entitlement to have ones' needs immediately reacted to and more importantly the entitlement to permanent social inclusion.

Books have been tried and tested for centuries and a few are still being reprinted as bestsellers. The content of the social media is the froth of the days designed for immediate consumption and its very nature of immediacy excludes it from the test of time. Applications like Snapchat exploit nothing else but immediacy. Immediacy and social inclusion are the main attractions creating involvement which was experienced before only in intensive social and physical actions and relationships. However, involvement with social media is stronger and lasts longer.

### ***Homo universal***

In Plato's dialogue Phaedrus Socrates is "quoted" complaining the alphabet would create forgetfulness, only semblance of truth and the disciples would have learned nothing. Socrates's ideal of an educated, intellectually independent human being, the ideal *homo universal*, is a frequent argument of the proponents of dystopian visions of digital environments. Its base are the arguments for and against organic memory and artificial intelligence. The issue cannot be considered without taking into account the platforms substituting organic memory.

Any physical interpersonal communication must have a shared context, shared references, similarly defined concepts etc. When online, we cannot permanently search for references or definitions. Direct physical communication is in decline and the increasing isolation of the user of digital media makes them dependent on the context and algorithm "memories" retained by specific browsers, and for the entertainment value, on the contexts offered by social media.

Another vital characteristic of the ideal *homo universal* is their integrity which is endangered, cf.: "While this cybernetic blurring of mind and machine may allow us to carry out certain cognitive tasks far more efficiently, it poses a threat to our integrity as human beings" (Carr 2011, 214). The key word here is integrity. The concept of the ideal is changing historically, but the task is not to cling nostalgically to the concept of the literate man, man as the centre of the universe, with unlimited capacities for development, but to record the changes, to attempt to understand them and try to find relationships between the observed effects of technology using McLuhan's probes and patterns.

The unceasing comparison of the ideal set of cognitive skills developed in literate environments and of the skills of digital environments has the inevitable conclusion that we learn less because we

134| 'externalize' problem solving and other cognitive chores on to the web. We reduce our brain's ability to build 'schemas' that can be later applied in new situations. This nostalgic view of every new technology reducing the skills of the old technology users is continuously illustrated by romantic comparisons with the past, cf.: "When a ditchdigger trades his shovel for a backhoe his arm muscles weaken even as his efficiency increases. A similar trade-off may well take place as we automate the work of the mind" (Carr 2011, 217). McLuhan explains on one hand the inevitability and on the other the futility of this complaint: "By continuously embracing technologies, we relate ourselves to them as servo-mechanisms. An Indian is the servo-mechanism of his canoe, as the cowboy of his horse or the executive of his clock!" (1974, 57). Similarly, the users of digital media must be their servo-mechanisms, but because of the hybrid character of the Internet its cognitive and behavioural impacts are more startling. Although we will be able to recognize the full impact of the present digital media only later, we can observe some of their effects now, e.g. their users' immediate behaviour is determined by the intended picture or video on Instagram, the effect becomes the cause. People have always assumed flattering poses when being painted or photographed, but it did not – with the exception of artists - impact their lifestyle. On Instagram everybody behaves like a movie star.

### **Instant and disposable (like Snapchat)**

From educators' points of view, it is worth examining not only why children spend more time watching TV than studying, but why the application like Snapchat is about seven times more popular than any TV network (Stein 2017, 28). Snapchat seems to not be just a compensation of the weaknesses of previous applications but rather a product of the current technology-driven social behaviour treating relationships and objects as instant (instant classics, family, gaming ...), and disposable (disposable camera, tips, baking trays ...). The collocations with the modifier "instant" are numerous in the Urban Dictionary which claims to define the world and concepts of the young generation. The content of Snapchat is applied psychology focusing on social bonding and teenage (often female) insecurities concerned with the hierarchy of super best friends, best friends, mutual "besties" etc. Snapchat is an application acknowledging and offering an alternative to the shortcomings of "the online world of trolls, fake news, hacking and narcissism that are eroding our culture" (Stein 2017, 29), thus incidentally defining the online world.

As Stein points out "(Snapchat) provides a way to spend time with their friends when they are stuck in the house with their families. Snapchat is 'Here I am'" (Stein 2017, 32). Snapchat has thus adopted for its own use the earlier social bonding practice of "flashing or streaking" enabled by mobile phones. A caller initiated a phone call and stopped it before the call was picked to inform the receiver of "Here I am, thinking of you." Digital technology has enabled Snapchat to involve not a single receiver but a whole group to be able to introduce the ranking of friendships. Another phenomenon demonstrating the degree of involvement and identification with the technology is the current Snapchat dysmorphia where people request surgery to look like the edited version of themselves as they appear through Snapchat filters.

Having discussed Ramo's *The Seventh Sense* we concluded that the virtual is the new real. McLuhan quotes W B. Yeats who with the poet's sensitivity declares that "the visible world is no longer a reality and the unseen world is no longer a dream" (1974, 44). Snapchat's E. Spiegel is blunt: "Now there is no gap between offline and online ... People are shifting from the self-promotional view of the world to one that is more self-aware" (Stein 2017, 29). Educators' need to be concerned with the level of users' involvement. The factors determining this high involvement are the gratification of dynamic ranking



of the participants and the creativity of Snapchat dysmorphia, provided by the algorithm which exploits teenagers' self-consciousness about their looks. The patent foolishness of the application absolves the users from any responsibility. None of the above could be available with the centrally controlled classroom in the pre-digital environment.

The mental engineering conspicuous in Snapchat and possibly less evident but ever-present in other social media is considered by Alter (2017) who assumes a psychological approach, examining six ingredients of behavioural addiction and the structures of digital technology applications. One of them, the irresistible and unpredictable feedback, is the basis of Instagram addiction because "some photos attract many likes while others fall short. Users chase the next big hit of likes by posting one photo after another and return to it regularly to support their friends" (2017, 9). Strong social connection, the next of the six ingredients, is a common denominator of all social media and more significantly of recent online video games (e.g. Fortnite) providing mainstream interaction for male users. As Alter points out "recovering alcoholics manage to avoid bars altogether but recovering Internet addicts are forced to use email" (Alter 9, 2017).

### **Wearable technology and its educational implications**

In a utopian vision of cognitive development possibilities unburdened by memorization, the obstacle of slow linear texts and direct physical social interaction, Chris Dancy (2018) suggests harnessing apps, sensors and data points to improve quality of life. He has been using digital technology to turn himself into a near-cyborg and he monitors all his physical activities. His philosophy of making the most of the digital technology stretches to relationships and emotions where he suggests for example digital skin-walking by switching phones with your partner (Dancy 2018a, 271) thus creating "hyper-emphatic states." He identifies himself with the data he has been collecting about his own person: I know my data will (see the future digital world), because I didn't unplug; I kept going and so should you" (Dancy 2018a, 274).

Chris Dancy follows with his arguments for "middleground" in his essay *You Can't Escape Technology, Because You Are Technology*. One of the important consequences of digital environments is their mobility, Dancy describes this as "wearable" and McLuhan noted that "In the electric age we wear all mankind as our skin" (1974, 58). Dancy not so much anticipates as he notices that "a marketplace of behaviours will come into existence, a habit store of sorts. The habit designers will be nutritionists, coaches, financial planners, event managers, dating specialist, fashionistas" (Dancy 2018b). These people will curate and share their interactions with the devices, services, and sensors in their life. With the devices, services and sensors users will download all of their "preferences," and will instantly transform their life into the lives of the designers. No screens or personal visits will be needed. The theory of lifestyle makers predicted by Darcy is credible if we consider the role of recent influencers who "educate" millions. The most popular *Daily Dose of the Internet* has invented a successful formula of new short viral-related videos uploaded daily on the channel providing "a daily dose" of non-aggressive superficial entertainment building on the recently developed cognitive predilection for instant emotional response.

In a bout of educational optimism, we can imagine that the digital technology abolishing screens will make personal visits to any educational institution redundant once the inertia of school administrators and managers has been overcome. The pupils will not only have a wearable classroom, but they will have a bespoke private tutor, a lifestyle-maker who would be an expert in all subject. Information (education) will be instantly provided by the wearable technology. The digital environment will be mobile, moving with the human cyborgs, however physical movement of the cyborgs will be



136| optional anyway, even an immobile cyborg will be “transported” by virtual reality attending (hence our optimism) monuments, museums and historical events or anything else according to their own curricula. There will be a smorgasbord of habit-providing marketplaces and it will be up to the cyborgs what behavioural models they will choose, possibly ignoring diplomas of graduation.

Virtual reality and artificial intelligence are Lanier’s (2017) frequent topics; he views the world of artificial intelligence as an engineer and does not concern himself with educational implications. He classifies education as one of social organizing principles which is not perfect. “All these systems have failure modes, as an engineer would put it. ... The only way we are going to make it as a species is to think of our systems in the same way we think about cars and refrigerators” (Lanier, 217, 334). However, he warns against the mind-set like a computer, which is totally committed to a system seeking “the socialist paradise, the absolute technocracy, or the purist libertarian floating island where no one pays taxes ...” (Lanier, 217, 334).

There is a necessary flaw with the engineers of AI, and specifically with Lanier, that they will seek a solution in moral values. The vital theoretical issue related to education in new technological environments is what will be left to be taught from the previous environment when the new technologies impose themselves on societies long habituated to older technologies. “I believe,” writes McLuhan, “that artists, in all media, respond soonest to the challenges of new pressures. I would like to suggest that they also show us ways of living with new technology without destroying earlier forms and achievements” (1963, 5).

In *Ten arguments for deleting your social media accounts right now* Lanier (2018) is further escalating his moral condemnation of digital environments coupling it with expressive language, e.g. Social media is making you into asshole (2018, 38) or Social media hates your soul (2018, 124). Theoretically it is possible – when examining the effects of the present digital environment - to apply McLuhan’s “probes”. However, Lanier does not describe effects but deals with relative moral categories like free will, insanity, truth, happiness etc. He repeats the generally accepted argument that the big Internet/social media are financed by companies to turn their users into products. It seems that the dystopian interpretation of the digital environment and its technology blame the technology instead of the behaviour of the enterprises that behave predictably because they are a product of market economy.

### **Artificial intelligence and learning instead of teaching**

Artificial intelligence is main concern of Lee, Kai-Fu, the author of *AI superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the new world order* (2018). The book is deservedly a bestseller; however we are concerned with its educational implications. Lee notices that “for decades, the artificial intelligence revolution always looked to be five years away. But with the development of deep learning over the past few years, that revolution has finally arrived” (Lee 2018, 5). China and the USA have different approaches, as Emily Parker writes the AI era will reward “the quantity of solid AI engineers over the quality of elite researchers”. According to strength will come from an army of well-trained engineers and entrepreneurs, and “China is training just such an army” (Parker 2018). But it’s not just about the numbers. China’s edge, Lee says, lies in its “abundant data, tenacious entrepreneurs, well-trained AI scientists, and a supportive policy environment” (Parker 2018).

Implicitly refusing Darcy’s wearable classroom theory Kai-Fu Lee (2018b) states that teaching will be one of *10 Jobs That Are Safe in an AI World*, cf.:

“AI will be a great tool for teachers and educational institutions, as it will help educators figure out how to personalize curriculum based on each student’s competence, progress, aptitude, and temperament. However, teaching will still need to be oriented around helping students figure out their interests, teaching students to learn independently, and providing one-on-one mentorship. These are tasks that can only be done by a human teacher. As such, there will still be a great need for human educators in the future”.

Kai-Fu Lee’s expectations correspond with the expectations of contemporary students. In the pre-digital environment, the school layout was based on a centrally controlled classroom with the prominent position of the blackboard and the teacher with textbooks. The recent centrally controlled classroom is defined by technologies, numbers of screens, projectors, speakers, equipment layout and type and ergonomics. Such a classroom has all the functions of a smartphone with the possible advantage that the classroom technologies can collect data about learning. However, when the students the University of Waterloo were asked to compare the merits of new technology-driven classrooms they mentioned the amount of space around them, outlets, suitability of desks and seating (Chappel, 2018). That may be the reason why future discussion at university moves from the technology driven approach to the flexible or active learning classrooms. The attribute “active” implicitly acknowledges the transition from literacy to digital environment. The issues of the classroom seem to be moving from new technology to physical space allowing for social interaction, if learning is to be “active, participatory, experiential and cooperative (it) requires a flexible space... student satisfaction with the room ... was influenced by the room’s ability to facilitate working with others” (Stern, N. 2008, 6). The centrally controlled classrooms, whether by instructor or technology, are obsolete. The students expect comfortable physical space, social contact and personalized learning from the “classroom”.

Kai-Fu Lee echoes the initial 1980s enthusiasm of educators excited by the possibilities of hypertexts. It is almost an obligatory attitude of the linear text educated generation (Lee has a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon). However, the recent development of digital technologies and its most involving section of computer games and social media directly competing with education do not provide grounds for educational optimism. The web and social media have become monopoly of a few large industrial companies developing profit-generating algorithms. Digital technology therefore has not changed our environment into a free virtual classroom, in spite of its potential to do so. Educators might study the techniques social media applies to obtain the involvement of their users. Educators will have to go to the artificial intelligence mountain not to be left behind in the digital race.

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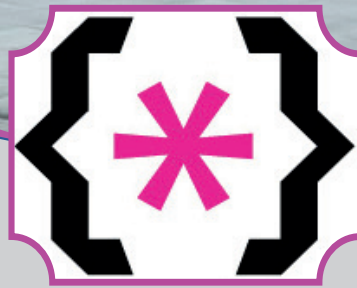


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## REVIEWS

### Is English Pronunciation Moving Closer to its Spelling?

Review of Lindsey, Geoff: *English After RP: Standard British Pronunciation Today*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 153 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-04356-8. DOI 10.1007/978-3-030-04357-5.

Received Pronunciation (RP) is a concept familiar to all ELT professionals dealing with English pronunciation and has been viewed as the standard for description of the pronunciation of British English for a long time. Most of the textbooks, certainly those used in the EU, are based on it, undergraduate phonetics courses use it as the main model that other accents are then compared to and as a result a lot of non-native speakers somewhere at the back of their minds have it as “the only” and “proper” pronunciation model they should aspire to. Nothing in the language is, however, invariable and pronunciation is not exempt to this as well, which *English After RP: Standard British Pronunciation Today* tries to argue.

The author, Geoff Lindsey, is a graduate of University College London (UCL) and the University of California, Los Angeles. He was the director of Edinburgh University’s Phonetics Laboratory and currently is Honorary Lecturer in Linguistics, and Director of the Summer Course in English Phonetics, at UCL. Besides being an accomplished researcher, Lindsey is also known as being a populariser of pronunciation related issues in mass media (e.g. “English Delight” on BBC Radio 4) and to the general public he is also known as one of the screenwriters for some of the very popular TV shows – “Family Affairs” and the “EastEnders”. I mention this because it contributes to the fact that the reviewed book is highly readable and full of references to popular culture that illustrate the points he is trying to make.

The book is divided into four parts consisting of 31 short chapters, each chapter covering one distinct aspect of the RP. The Introduction provides readers with a clear and compact history of the RP and how it evolved into its current form and position (hint – the Empire helped a lot) and why it never reached the same influence in the USA. Lindsey claims that since the 1960s due to the social change in the UK, the influence of pop culture and increased social mobility and diversity the traditional RP is losing its standing in Britain and the Standard Southern British (SSB) pronunciation is heard more often than other accents in public life. Two accents are compared throughout the book, which enables us to see the directions in which the pronunciation change is taking place.

What are the most remarkable changes that Lindsey observes? In short, the pronunciation is moving closer to the spelling (e.g. “towards” from /tdz/ to /twɔdz/), there are changes in sound distribution and apart from pronunciation of individual words, in which the Americanization of pronunciation is most visible, the influence of American pronunciation is also reflected in the more frequent use of the uptalk, vocal fry, and the strengthening of some endings. All the changes, according to Lindsey, require that we change the phonetic symbols (especially the vowel ones) that no more correctly reflect the reality of British pronunciation and hence he proposes some of those changes. This has been a long-held belief of his that he had already expressed in his previous writings (e.g. Lindsey, *The British English Vowel System*), which on the other hand produced a reaction from John Wells on his blog (2012) and sparked a lively polemic as can be seen in the comment section under the blogpost. Nevertheless, the author still acknowledges the overall character of the accent is still British with non-rhoticity and LOT vowel remaining intact. Some words even tend to be less American than they used to be (e.g. garage). Though the US influence is obvious overall, it is more significant in the vocabulary and grammar.

Part 2 focuses on vowels with Chapter 4 outlining the major changes i.e. the changes in the quality of vowels. As a result of the anti-clockwise vowel shift, Lindsey argues, some vowels are lowered (e.g. DRESS), some are more back (e.g. PRICE), some are raised (e.g. THOUGHT) while some are centralized (e.g. CURE). Chapters 5 to 13 are then devoted to individual vowels and their current state. Consequently, based on these changes, Lindsey proposes a new set of vowel symbols that would more accurately reflect these new qualities unlike the symbols promoted by Daniel Jones. Since the vowel changes are attested by other authors (to name just a few e.g. Upton; Trudgill or Bauer) it would seem only natural to adapt the relevant changes into the transcription as well. Here, however, I would advise caution and have English learners in mind (the view that the author himself manifests throughout the whole book when he points out which of the pronunciation changes are advisable for non-native speakers to adopt and which can be ignored). As the RP in its traditional transcription form is such an integral part of most British English textbooks and dictionaries, introducing a new set of symbols might in the long run turn out to be rather problematic and paradoxically cause more confusion than clarity. To be honest, Lindsey recognizes this himself and realizes that the change will not happen at once. Nevertheless, it should not mean, in his view, that it should never happen. Moreover, the question arises whether insisting on the traditional symbols necessarily means that the phonetic precision is required of non-native speakers or whether phonemic symbols are enough in this context. Do most teachers really require production of the precise phonetic values from their students? On top of that, not all the newly proposed symbols are exactly "user-friendly". For instance, the FOOT vowel should be now symbolised by "the 'barred o', [ɔ̄] (not to be confused with the symbols for schwa [ə] or the voiceless dental fricative [θ])". The author's description already suggests possible confusion which can be even bigger when we take the pitfalls of handwriting into consideration.

Part 3 describes the consonant changes such as more aspiration that applies not only to stressed syllables but to a wider spectrum of cases (Chapter 14), glottal stops that have become a common form of /t/ and "today it's entirely standard to replace syllable final /t/ with // before a consonant" (Chapter 19). Similarly, T-voicing though not yet typical is very common in certain words (e.g. British, lot) as is /l/-vocalization i.e. pronouncing /l/ only if a vowel sound follows, which can be heard in speech of for example Boris Johnson (Chapter 20). Another feature which once was frowned upon was G-dropping, i.e. using /n/ for -ing, can be heard even from the prominent public figures such as London Mayor Sadiq Khan (Chapter 21). Part 4, dealing with stress, describes two interesting developments: the tendency of stress shifting to reduce the number of weak syllables in succession (Chapter 23) and the so-called leftward stress shift (Chapter 24), probably another US influence. Connected speech is discussed in Part 5, especially intrusive /r/ which is no longer proscribed and in certain expressions became even the standard form (e.g. Pizza/r/ Express) and vocal fry (Chapter 27), i.e. creaky voice, as used terminally by young female speakers. The last part concerns intonation (Chapter 28 to 31) which has seen little changes in the form on tonality and tonicity. What has changed, sometimes considerably, are some of the tones that acquired different meanings (e.g. low falls once common in the RP "may have a patronizing connotation") whereas others became rare. The learners of English are advised to practice especially the Fall-Rise which is very common today.

The book also includes an extensive Mini Dictionary of frequently used words whose pronunciation in SSB differs from that of the RP (e.g. Asia, ate, February, happy, newspaper or secretary). Though it claims to be "mini", the Dictionary still extends over 30 pages and covers more than 100 words, each change explained and provided with the RP and SSB transcriptions for comparison. It also offers an answer to the question in the title of this review: certain words have clearly witnessed a pronunciation

closer to their spelling whereas others have experienced the opposite. Unfortunately for Czech learners of English, apart from these expressions, one should not be looking forward to English pronunciation closely mirroring its written form any time soon.

Although the book claims not to be exhaustive, it certainly tackles a lot of issues in a very informative yet entertaining way offering lots of concrete examples and providing its readers with substantial food for thought. As such it should find its way on bookshelves of anyone interested in the current state of British English pronunciation. It is also, in my opinion, a kind of cross-over publication that both the researchers and practitioners can benefit from. It does not trivialise the content while at the same time making sure to clearly explain all the necessary terms and concepts used, which is something that research still seems to struggle with, i.e. presenting the results of academic work in such a way that is not threatening to general readership. This book is a much-welcomed step in the right direction.

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## **MISSION STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS**

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*Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies*, as a peer-reviewed academic journal, aims to be a medium which brings together the results of current research of Czech and international scholars. It welcomes submissions of articles in the following fields:

- English Linguistics
- Anglophone Literatures and Cultural Studies
- English-teaching Methodology

The journal will publish both contributions presented at Hradec Králové Anglophone Conferences as well as other original unpublished papers. All submissions shall be the subject of double expert blind-review procedure whether they constitute beneficial contribution to the field of Anglophone studies.

### **Guidelines for Submissions**

The manuscripts should be submitted in English in the range of 3000–6000 words, with references formatted according to the MLA 8<sup>th</sup> edition, see [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org). Please note that submissions which do not conform to the MLA style with in-text citations will not be considered for publication. Authors are solely responsible for the correct use of English language. Each submission should be preceded by a 200-word abstract outlining the article and also short bibliographical information about the author.

There are two issues published per year. For the both Vol. 7 No. 1 and Vol. 7 No. 2 to be issued in November–December 2020 please send the contributions in electronic form to Jan Suk or Helena Polehlová, the volumes' editors. Emails to editors of both the forthcoming issues in 2020 are [Jan.Suk@uhk.cz](mailto:Jan.Suk@uhk.cz) and [Helena.Polehlova@uhk.cz](mailto:Helena.Polehlova@uhk.cz). The deadline for both volumes is 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

For more information about the periodical please contact [Jan.Suk@uhk.cz](mailto:Jan.Suk@uhk.cz)

For more information, visit the journal's webpages: <http://pdf.uhk.cz/hkjas/>

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## **ETHICAL STATEMENT**

## 158| **Publication Ethics**

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