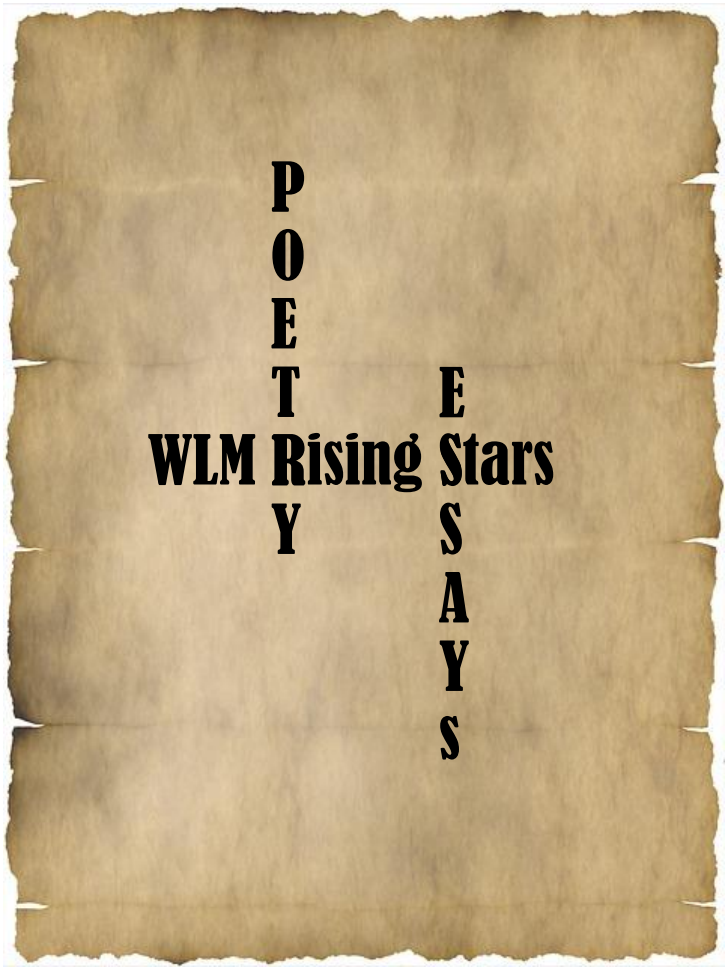
FOLIO

A STUDENTS' JOURNAL



Issue 5 (18) 2019

Contents

POETRY

Dear Readers,

We present to you the fifth issue of *FOLIO. A Students' Journal*. Apart from the best essays written by the students of our Institute, it includes five papers submitted for the Warsaw Literary Meetings Rising Stars event, an interdisciplinary conference for young scholars which took place in April 2018. The central theme of the meeting was "Body Poetics: The Representations of the Body in English Literature and Culture of the 18th and 19th Centuries", and these papers all correspond to it, making for a fascinating reading. Last but not least, the Poetry section features four new pieces by our BA students.

On a sadder note, we regret to inform you that this is the final issue of *FOLIO*. After five years and hundreds of pages of brilliant essays and poetry, we feel that we are ending this journey on a high note. We would like to thank our contributors, associate editors, and especially you, our Readers. We are grateful for your support and hope you enjoy this last issue.

The Editorial Team:

Monika Bortnowska
Maja Gajek
Alicja Kosim
Lucyna Krawczyk-Żywko

Dimensions of the Romantic Relationships in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in the Light of Sternberg's Theory of Love

Michał Klata
MA student

> Unlike many medieval writers, Chaucer is the most companionable of men, the right kind to enjoy in hours of relaxation, for the "fun" – and much else – that is in him. Such is the ideal way to read the Tales, the way Chaucer must have intended they should be read, the way we ought to read them today.
>
> – William Witherle Lawrence

> Close textual analysis of Middle English poetry is notoriously open to abuse because it is difficult to assess what overtones were carried by words in Chaucer's time.
>
> – Tony Slade

The essay looks at the romantic relationships in *The Canterbury Tales* through the lens of modern psychology, exemplified by a theory of love developed by Robert J. Sternberg of Yale University. Leaving aside the relations of power, which already have been discussed by a number of feminist critics and scholars, the three dimensions of a relationship: commitment, passion, and intimacy, will provide our analytic framework for a more precise description of the emotional aspect of the union between a man and a woman in Chaucer's work. The scope of analysis is limited to the most important marriages as presented in *The Canterbury Tales*, those from the stories told by the Wife of Bath, the Clerk, and the Franklin.

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love

The Triangular Theory of Love was presented in an article published in 1986 by a psychologist, professor Richard J. Sternberg of Yale University. The theory is a tool of analysing a relationship by placing various emotions and actions connected with love along three dimensions: **intimacy**, **passion** and **commitment**. It is supposed to cover all possible kinds of love, including the feelings between parents and children and between the siblings. In this dissertation,

the scope of interest is limited to romantic relationships as opposed to friendship or the relation between people connected with blood ties. In this regard, my understanding of the term 'romantic relationship' differs from that of Sternberg, who defines it as a relationship with an erotic component, where passion is the main factor, and opposes it to filial relationship, where intimacy and commitment are more important.

The dimension of **intimacy** covers phenomena such as "closeness, connectedness and bondedness" (Sternberg 121). It can be described as mutual understanding and empathy. Particular instances of intimacy may differ depending on the relationship and culture it is in. Examples of the actions connected with this aspect of love, as Sternberg observed them in the American society of the 1980s, include:

> Communicating inner feelings
> Promoting the other's well-being
> Sharing one's possessions, time and self
> Expressing empathy for the other
> Offering emotional and material support to the other. (133)

The dimension of **passion** covers phenomena such as "romance, physical attraction and sexual consummation" (121). It can be described as feeling strong emotions and coming into physical contact, which does not necessarily have to be connected with eroticism – according to Sternberg, apart from sexual needs, other needs, such as those of "self-esteem, succorance, nurturance, affiliation, dominance, submission, and self-actualization, may also contribute to the experiencing of passion" (125). Examples of the actions connected with this aspect of love, as observed by Sternberg, include:

> Kissing
> Hugging
> Gazing
> Touching
> Making love. (121)

The dimension of **commitment** covers, in the short term, the decision to love the other person, and in the long term, the decision to maintain that love (121). According to Sternberg, this dimension is particularly important in marriage, as it represents "a legalisation of the commitment to a decision to love another

throughout one's life" (121). Examples of the actions connected with this aspect of love, provided by Sternberg, include:

> Pledging
> Fidelity
> Staying in a relationship through hard times
> Engagement
> Marriage. (133)

Another important feature of Sternberg's theory is that there may be an asymmetry in the level of feelings, emotions, and activity in every of the dimensions. In other words, each of the partners experiences his or her own 'triangle of love' (130). It is possible, for example, that one feels very passionate about the other person but the feeling is not reciprocal. From this point of view, every relationship includes at least two love triangles which do not have to fit each other. The differences between the dimensions as experienced by individual partners may generate conflicts in the relationship.

Is it possible to apply the Triangular Theory of Love to the Middle Ages? After all, it was the time of arranged marriages, when religious feelings and servitude for one's lord were probably considered more important than love between man and woman. According to Lewis:

> Two things prevented the man of that age from connecting their ideal of romantic and passionate love with marriage. The first is, of course, the actual practice of feudal society. Marriages had nothing to do with love, and no 'nonsence' about marriage was tolerated. All matches were matches of interest (…) The second factor is the medieval theory of marriage (…) according to the medieval view passionate love itself was wicked (…). (Lewis 13–14)

First of all, Sternberg applied his theory to all kinds of relations between people which include any of the elements traditionally regarded as connected with love. The most extreme example is his description of a relation between prostitutes and their customers, where the component of passion may be important for the latter, but the element of intimacy does not exist and the only form the commitment takes is the obligation to provide sexual services for money. Secondly, it can be argued that both in Christian tradition and in *The Canterbury Tales* the ideal of marriage involves love, even if it can be quite far from the reality. Finally, it is not

only what *is* in the area of research that can be of interest to the scholar – accurate analysis must also account for what is *missing* and explain the lack of some phenomena in a given field, and this is why the theoretical framework of a comprehensive theory of love may be useful.

Female sovereignty as the key to survival: the knight and the loathly lady in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*

The story told by the Wife of Bath, opening the discussion of marriage, features a knight who is to be punished for raping a maiden he found in the forest when coming home from hawking, unless he can find the answer to a certain question within the deadline (what an accurate term under those circumstances!) of a year and a day. The question is: what do women want most? When the term draws near, the hero meets a person who seems to be an old hag. The mysterious woman tells him that female sovereignty in the marriage is the answer, which proves correct, saving his life. In exchange, the knight promises to give her the first thing she asks, provided that it is in his power. The lady wants him to marry her. Terrified but honest, the young man keeps his promise and marries the 'old hag'. When he admits that he finds her disgusting, the lady offers him a choice – either she would be fair at night and ugly during the day or the opposite. When the knight gives her what women desire most, the sovereignty in the form of leaving the choice to her, she magically transforms into a beautiful girl and promises to stay in this form. Actually it can be argued that the magical powers can suggest that the lady met in the forest is a fairy, especially when we take into account the fact that the Wife of Bath begins her tale saying that there had been lots of these creatures in the days of King Arthur but they were replaced by friars, and then makes no other connection between this apparently important fact and the rest of the story.

Let us now analyse the dimension of intimacy in the relationship between the knight and the lady. When she first met him and learned about his problem, she decided that she would help him. It is not clear whether this was a kind of caring about him, which would be a sign of intimacy, or that her main motivation was the fact that he was a "lusty bachelor" (Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', v. 883). If she was not motivated by lust, she cared about him and his feelings, which is indicated by the fact that she did not only help him by providing the answer but also consoled him and told him not to be afraid (v. 1022). On the other hand, she might have been cruel to some extent, at least when they finally went to bed after the wedding and she was smiling while her husband could not sleep, disgusted and terrified (v. 1085–1086). Until her transformation there is nothing that could indicate intimacy on the part of the knight – the fact that he kept his promise may

be regarded as a sign of commitment to the lady or rather to the chivalric values. Even the fact that he gives her sovereignty does not seem to indicate that he was emotionally attached to her but rather to prove just that he had learned the lesson that once saved his life at the court of King Arthur.

The second component of relationship in our analysis is passion. We may suspect that the lady was attracted to the handsome knight although there is no clear indication of that fact apart from her trying to encourage him to make love with her in the night after the wedding. On the part of the knight it was the opposite, which is quite understandable - when the knight saw the lady, she was so ugly that it was impossible to imagine an uglier creature than her (v. 999). When she asked him to marry her, he cried: "Allas and weylawey!" and asked her to waive the obligation and take all his goods instead. Because of her ugliness, the knight made no wedding party, he married her in secret in the morning and then he hid himself all day (v. 1078-1082). When he finally had to lie in the bed with his newly wed wife, he "walweth and he turneth to and fro" (v. 1086). The only element before the transformation of the loathly lady which resembles the typical features of passion as described by Sternberg is the fact that two needs are fulfilled, considered by the psychologist as connected with this dimension – dominance on the part of the 'old hag' and submission on the part of the knight.

The situation changes after the magical transformation. Dominance and submission ceased to play an important role, as he put "maistrye" in her hands, and she in turn "obeyed hym in every thyng / that myghte doon hym plesance and liking" (v. 1255–1256). Another change after the transformation is that the young hero performs acts typical for the modern view of passion. When he saw that the lady turned into a beauty, he hugged her and "his herte bathed in a bath of blisse" (v. 1256) and he kissed her a thousand times. We have no information on how she behaved towards him but we can safely assume that living happily ever after with the knight, she also performed this kind of activities.

Let us not analyse the dimension of commitment. The first sign of commitment on the part of the knight, which later would result in marriage, was his pledge that he would do the first thing the woman asked of him, if it was in his might (v. 1051–1052). Both parties are then committed to the fulfilment of their promises. When the lady tells the knight that she would amend whatever troubles him, and he says that she is "so loothly, and so oold also and thereto comen of so lough a kynde" (v. 1098–1103), it turns out that she possesses powers which can make her young and fair on the condition that he behaves well towards her, and she convinces the knight that "gentilesse" is not a matter of noble birth (v. 1103).

Afterwards, she gives him a difficult choice – either he would have her beautiful in the bed and ugly during the day, so that his social position is endangered when people see them together, or young and fair during the day but ugly at night. Finally, the knight behaves most honourably and courteously, answering: "My lady and my love, and wyf so deere (…) as you liketh, is suffiseth me" (v. 1230–1235).

The Wife of Bath's Tale is a story of a relationship in which the harmony of intimacy, passion, and commitment is a consequence of an act of submission performed by the man. One of the scholars dealing with analysing Chaucer's poems, Lawrence, claims that the message of the tale is that women should rule in marriage and learn how to tame the men (Lawrence 137), which can be argued against on the grounds that once the knight submitted to the lady, she obeyed him in everything. It is possible that this non-patriarchal view of marriage is a critique of Christianity which put an end to the wise fairies who knew what was most important in marriage, and replaced them with friars. Such views on female sovereignty probably were not taken seriously by the people living in the 14th-century England, and they are not taken seriously also by the rest of the pilgrims.

Dominance and Submission: Marquis Walter and Griseld in the *Clerk's Tale*

This tale is a retelling of the last story of the *Decameron* by Boccaccio, translated from Italian to Latin by Petrarch and then, under the title *Le Livre Griseldis* translated into French. It is this translation where probably Chaucer drew his inspiration from (Hussay 163). For the modern reader, it is a quite terrifying story about a submissive woman who is taken as a wife by a powerful and cruel marquis (Blamires 173). Walter constantly tests Griseld's steadfastness, waiting for any sign of discontent. He takes away her children and makes his wife believe that they are dead, finally forges a papal bull dissolving the marriage and orders Griseld to prepare his wedding with his new wife. The poor creature keeps her oath to obey her lord in everything and finally he has pity over her and becomes a good husband, after which the two live happily ever after. According to James Sledd, Griseld's behaviour must have been considered by the medieval audience a sign of good behaviour, and to consider it a sign of bad behaviour would be a mistake comparable to mistranslating Middle English (168). Nevertheless the Clerk criticises the Marquis, saying that his testing was unnecessarily cruel. If any of the readers or listeners associated the suffering of Griseld with God testing humans, and pushed this interpretation to the limits, it would be an outrageously blasphemous idea. It is possible to argue in favour of such an interpretation because the concepts of meek submission in suffering, testing one's steadfastness and the

prize that would await at the end seem suspiciously in accordance with Christianity – at least in its dominant medieval version. Another argument is that, in the *envoy*, the moral by Petrarch is repeated – that we should behave like Griseld when facing the adversities sent to us by God (164).

This strange marriage requires a different type of analysis. Many elements of this relationship, a number of behaviours, attitudes, feelings and emotion do not fall straight into one category or another but are located as if in-between, being a sign of intimacy (or the lack of it), passion and commitment at the same time. After a brief overview of the information which can be inferred from the tale regarding each of the dimensions, an analysis of this 'grey' area will be performed.

The first dimension to be analysed in intimacy. In this relationship intimacy was very asymmetrical. There was much of this factor on the part of Griseld, who often declared that her only will is to fulfil the desires of her husband. As the Clerk describes it, "ther was but o wyl, for as Walter leste, / The same lust was hire plesance also" (Chaucer, 'The Clerk's Tale', v. 616–617). It was the opposite with marquis Walter, who was cruel for her and dishonest, pretending that he took the children away from her so that they were killed, that the marriage had been dissolved, that he wants to marry a pretty young girl (who in reality was their daughter), and that he has to prepare the wedding for them. During all those terrifying events, Griseld did not complain. For example, when her daughter was taken away, she "neither weep nor syked / Conformynge hire to that the markys liked" (v. 545). When the marquis says that his subjects do not like the fact that the daughter was born from a marriage with a girl of so low a birth, she does not show any disapproval, and she does not change "neither in word, nor chiere, nor countenance" (v. 499) and she tells him that he may "save or spille" the child as he wishes and once again declares that his will is hers as well (v. 509). Another sign of intimacy on the part of Griseld is that she did a lot for her husband. While she lived with him, she was often setting the disputes among the subjects of the marquis. Even when her obligation seems to have been waived, after the forging of the papal bull, she was setting the tables, making beds, and managing the chambermaids when she had been told that she had to prepare everything for the wedding of the marquis and his new wife (v. 974–980). It was only at the end of the tale when the marquis showed a sign of intimacy – he "gan his herte dresse / to rewen upon hire wyfly stedfastnesse" (v. 1049–1050).

The second dimension to be analysed is passion. Griseld was not a passionate type in terms of sensual desire. According to the Clerk, "for povreliche yfrosted up was she, / no likerous lust was thurgh hire herte yronne." (v. 213–214). If we are to believe the narrator of the tale, it was not the passion which made the

marquis attracted to her, for "he not with wantown lookyng of folye / his eyen caste on hire, but in sad wyse / upon hir chiere he wolde hym ofte avyse / commendynge in his herte hir wommanhede, / and eek hir vertu" (v. 236–240). From another point of view, however, this relationship seems quite passionate. Lots of emotions were involved, evoked by the terrifying tests the wife was subjected to, and if among the needs connected with passion may be those of submission and dominance, as Sternberg claims, there is little doubt that this relationship was a passionate one. When it comes to cruelty, Walter seems to be a real man of passion, especially when we compare him with meek and stable Griseld. According to Blamires, unlike in much of misogynist medieval writing, here instability is definitely gendered as male rather than female (Blamires 173).

The third dimension of our analysis is commitment. While there is not much commitment on the part of the marquis, Griseld is extremely committed. Once she swore that she would always obey him without any sign of disapproval, she keeps to this promise till the end, even after the obligation is apparently waived after the forging of the bull. When the marquis declares his condition, she answers that his will is also her will, but it is not clear whether it is a sign of her love, or of her feelings of having an obligation towards her master. Actually there is also a third possibility; Lewis argues that the feelings towards one's master may have been similar to the feelings of love and that this may have been the true origin of the idea of courtly love because the relationship between the knight and the lady who was the wife of his lord combines the relation of feudal dependency with the erotic element of being attracted to the opposite sex (Lewis 11–13).

There is a lot of phenomena that cannot be fully explained when we refer only to the three dimensions analysed separately. We can say that there are other shades of grey in this relationship, a mixture of sadism and masochism. When Griseld meets what she considers her fate with patience, is it a sign of passion, commitment, or intimacy? Actually, all the three answers would be correct. It is passion in Sternbergian terms, regarded as a fulfilment of the need of submission. It is commitment in terms of keeping the oath. It is also an intimacy in terms of satisfying the needs of the partner. It would prove beneficial for the analysis if this 'grey' area would be divided into the sub-areas of sadism and masochism.

Let us now consider the sadism of Walter. This feature of the marquis' character is expressed in the condition he sets for the marriage, namely that Griseld would have to submit "with good herte" to his will, whether he would like her to experience "laughe or smerte" without any complain, or even "frownyng contenance" (Chaucer, 'The Clerk's Tale', v. 351–356). Walter was a cruel man, who wanted to test his wife with no apparent reason. When she gave birth to

a daughter, he took the girl away, lying that the child would be killed, although "he hadde assayed her ynough before / and fond hire evere good" (v. 456–457). As if this was not enough, after eight years he took away also her son, misleading her once again, and then made her believe that he wanted to marry another woman and that he, Griseld, had to prepare the wedding.

Let us now turn to the masochism of Griseld. There may be some doubts regarding the reason of her submission. It can be argued, for example, that in the medieval reality submission was the best strategy for a woman with such a cruel husband. However, it seems quite justified to opt for another option. She might have been a masochist. One of the facts that would suggest this explanation is that when she was living with her father "she wolde noght been ydel til she slepte" (v. 224), and even then there was little rest for her, as she "made hir bed ful hard and nothyng softe" (v. 228).

As a result of her masochism, Griseld did not complain under any circumstances. When the marquis says that he needs to take away also the next child, boy this time, she takes her obligation of submission to the extreme, saying that she would even like to die if this had been his will. We may wonder, though, if this was not an exaggeration of a helpless mother, for whom it was the only way to express her despair, but the marquis did not realize it, as "to his heart it was ful great pleasance" (v. 671). Why did not the mother show any sign of grief after the supposed death of her children? A natural suspicion under these circumstances would be that she just did not love them, and the narrator of the tale seems to acknowledge that, saying that this was not the case, and the marquis would have thought so if he had not known "that parfitly hir children loved she" (v. 672).

In the final trial, the marquis ordered her to prepare the wedding ceremony for him and his new wife. She received the message ordering her to come to his place "with humble herte and glad visage, / nat with no swollen thoght in hire corage" (v. 673). To the unusual order of preparing the ceremony she answered in the following manner: "Not oonly, lord, that I am glad (…) / to doon youre lust, but I desire also you for to serve and plese in my degree / withouten feyntyng, and shal evermo" (v. 697–670).

The tale, told by the Clerk as a response to the arguments of the Wife of Bath, takes the male sovereignty and the model of patriarchal marriage to extreme. It can be argued that this was an implicit critique of the dominant form of marriage by Chaucer, and a case for assertiveness in relations with others, a lesson that one should always fight for his or her rights because no one can guarantee them in a relation with a cruel person.

Gentilesse as the Ultimate Solution? Arveragus and Dorigen in the *Franklin's Tale*

The last Tale analysed will be the Franklin's Tale, the last of the group of tales identified by George Lyman Kittredge as the "marriage group". According to the scholar of Harvard, the story of Arveragus and Dorigen is a solution to the "puzzle of matrimony", an answer to the most important question of the discussion started by the Wife of Bath: what does the ideal marriage look like? The solution is to combine the ideals of courtly love and marriage – a quite uncommon idea in the Middle Ages (Lewis 36). Kittredge believes that the tale expresses Chaucer's own view on the matter, as it definitely ends the debate between the pilgrims Kittredge).

Let us now consider the dimension of commitment. Contrary to what seems to be a typical marriage in the Middle Ages, the ideal of courtly love assumes that the lover is his lady's servant (Lewis). In the tale told by the Franklin, Arveragus worked as hard as he could to serve his lady with "meke obeysaunce" and prove worthy of her love. He probably hoped only to become a courtly lover of Dorigen, but his efforts were rewarded even more – she decided to become his wife. The element of Commitment was in their case stronger than in a typical marriage. Arveragus swore that he would not show jealousy and that he would remain the servant of his lady even after the marriage. The knight

> of his free wyl (…) swoor hire as a knight
> that nevere in al his lyfe (…)
> ne sholde upon hym take no maistrie
> agayn her wyl, ne kithe hire jalousie
> but here obeye, and folwe hir wyl in al,
> as any lovere to his lady shal,
> save that the name of soveraynetee
> that wolde he have for shame of his degree
> (Chaucer, 'Franklin's Tale', v. 745–752)

Maybe the reason for his oath was that his social position was significantly lower than hers, and submission was the price he had to pay for such a marriage. Dorigen on her part obliged not to argue with Arveragus, and to be his "humble trewe wyf" until death do them apart (v. 756–760). As a result of their oaths, Arveragus and Dorigen made a Commitment to be, in medieval terms, each other's servants and lords at the same time! The knight could not however forget of his social position, which had to be maintained by keeping up appearances – they

agreed that he would act as her sovereign in the public "for shame of his degree" (v. 725).

The Commitment of the couple is maintained when Arveragus is on his quest in England. The loving husband writes letters "in al his care", so that the wife knows he is alive and well (v. 837). The wife remains faithful and she does not allow herself to flirt when "oon of the beste farynge man on lyve", handsome squire Aurelius, popular in the court discloses his feelings towards her. Dorigen rejects his advances, swearing by God that "she she shal nevere been untrewe wyf / in word ne werk" (v. 931–987). The lady claims that this is her final answer but then starts mocking her suitor promising him to be his love if he would do the impossible - remove all the rocks in the sea coast so that they do not prevent "ship ne boot to goon", and ensuring the safe return of her husband. (v. 931–994). It may seem that this is the moment when she proves a bit "untrewe wyf in word" – but then she makes a qualification: "have heer my trouthe, in al that evere I kan". In other worlds, it seems that she could always refuse to become 'his love', even if he accomplishes the task, proving that because of her marriage she cannot fulfil her obligation. What she did not expect was that Arveragus would also keep his promise – when the rocks disappear by a magic trick, Dorigen asks her husband what does she have to do, the knight does not show any sign of jealousy but instead allows her to have sexual intercourse with Aurelius (v. 1487–1492).

The next phenomenon to be analysed is passion. This component on the part of Arveragus is visible at the beginning of the tale, when he is afraid to reveal his feelings of pain and distress. After a merry period after the wedding, when the knight leaves for his quest, it is time for Dorigen to experience passion; she "loveth hire husbonde as hire hertes lyf" (v. 816), to show her feelings.

When Arveragus left, Dorigen was so sad that she could not eat nor sleep (v. 817–819). When she visited a castle by the sea, she used to look at the rocks below, afraid that they might destroy her husband's ship. "On hire feet she myghte hire not sustene" and the emotion was so strong that she even started questioning the basic assumptions of her religion, asking why God had created the rocks, the cause of death for a hundred thousand sailors (v. 847–895). When she thought she would be obliged to have sexual intercourse with Aurelius, she was even thinking about suicide because she wanted to remain faithful to her husband. From the modern perspective it may also be a sign of passion but maybe for the medieval man it was rather a sign of commitment to tragically conflicting oaths.

There was a difference between the husband and wife, as prescribed by traditional gender roles: while she was obsessed by the rocks, "no thyng list hym to been ymaginatyf" (v. 1094). At one moment Arveragus seems to be even

incredibly calm, given the circumstances – when upon his return, Dorigen tells him about her oath and complicated situation with Aurelius, he answers her with "glad cheere (…) 'Is ther ought elles, Dorigen, but this?'" (v. 1467–1468).

When she tells her husband what happened, he does not seem to be moved by that. How could such a reaction be explained? According to Alcuin Blamires, there are three possibilities: 1) although shocked, Arveragus wanted to maintain stoic and gentle attitude; 2) he wanted to keep his oath and not show jealousy; 3) he wanted to check whether his wife was telling the truth when she claimed that the oath was the only problem, and that she did not cheat on him while he was away. Anyway, soon afterwards, the knight bursts into tears, heartbroken and afraid that his wife would have sexual intercourse with another man (Blamires 153–154).

Let us now consider intimacy. Since Dorigen was higher in the social hierarchy than Arveragus, the very fact that she took pity on his suffering and became his wife may be a sign of some feelings of closeness and attachment on her part. Peculiar oaths, replacing mastery with love on the part of Arveragus and promise to nevertheless obey him without any arguing, may be another indicator of the feelings between the two. Another sign of intimacy may be the fact that the wife decided to tell her husband of her oath to the squire. Given the general attitude of Middle Ages towards intimacy in marriage, which was not regarded a worthy theme in a tale, those indicators of Intimacy between Arveragus and Dorigen are significant.

It seems that all the elements of the romantic relationship as understood by Sternberg are present in the relationship of Arveragus and Dorigen. This is what the psychologist of Yale calls a 'consummate love', the most complete kind of feeling between the lovers. If this is indeed, as Kittredge claims, the Chaucerian ideal of love, the author of the Human Comedy seems to have been ahead of his time.

Conclusions

If modern linguistics can be successful in unravelling the mysteries of the language of the Middle Ages, modern psychology and social sciences may throw some light on the ideas and society of the Middle Ages. Combining the science of the human psyche with literary analysis, one can discover new facts about the works which have already been analysed by many. Is the application of a 20th century theory an anachronism? Not necessarily so, provided that the framework or the theory is general enough to cover the culture which is very different from ours.

If the analysis presented in this dissertation is correct, marriages in the late Middle Ages may possess the same features as today, but the focus of the authors

was different. All the three dimensions were already there, but they took different forms, or rather Chaucer was interested in different aspects of the expression of these dimensions. For him hugging and kissing was not the most important aspect of passion, and physical caresses were important mainly when they could be used for a comical effect or to emphasise the moments of great importance in the plot. Commitment took more extreme forms. Intimacy was more about making two wills one or solving one's problems by the other than about mutual understanding.

If Kittredge is correct in claiming that the marriage of Arveragus and Dorigen is the final say in the discussion of marriage, the analysis presented in this dissertation covers the three most extreme examples in solving the problem of sovereignty in marriage, or of solving the problems of marriage in general. The Wife of Bath claims that the women should rule, the Clerk presents a rather terrifying reality of the rule of men, and the Franklin suggests that resigning from sovereignty and being gentle for each other would be the best solution for attaining the harmony of all the aspects of a relationship.

Works Cited

Blamires, Alcuin. *Chaucer, Ethics and Gender*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Penguin Books, 2009.

Kittredge, George. "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage." *The Canterbury Tales: Nine Tales and General Prologue*, edited by V. A. Kolve, W. W. Norton & Co., 1989, pp. 523–529.

Lawrence, William. *Chaucer and the Canterbury Tales*. Columbia University Press, 1950.

Lewis, Clive. *The Allegory of Love*. Oxford University Press, 1973.

Schoeck, Richard and Jerome Taylor, editors. *Chaucer Criticism. The Canterbury Tales*, vol. 1. University of Notre Dame Press, 1969.

Slade, Tony. "Irony in the Wife of Bath's Tale." *Chaucer. The Canterbury Tales. A Casebook*, edited by J. J. Anderson, Unwin Brothers Limited, 1977, pp. 161–171.

Sternberg, Robert J. "A Triangular Theory of Love." *Psychological Review* 93 (1986), pzacad.pitzer.edu/~dmoore/psych199/1986_sternberg_trianglelove.pdf. Accessed April 25, 2017.

A Lie That Ends the Story: The Conclusions of *Heart of Darkness* and *The House at Pooh Corner*

Mateusz Godlewski
MA Student

The ending lines of a literary work are of utmost importance to the reader. While the author usually uses the opening of a novel as an attempt to attract the reader's attention or as foreshadowing of what is to come, the ending very often provides us with an interpretative key to the text as a whole. Joseph Conrad was perfectly aware of how meaningful a coda may be. In a letter to William Blackwood dated 31 May 1902 he writes: "(…) in the light of the final incident, the whole story in all its descriptive detail shall fall into its place – acquire its value and its significance" (Conrad 210)[1]. He refers to his novel *Heart of Darkness*, the ending of which is now considered one of the most famous in literature. This "final incident" that made history is, at its core, the utterance of a lie. This lie has received a lot of critical attention; Conrad's decision to finish *Heart of Darkness* with it has been thoroughly analysed and interpreted. This essay will pursue the problem by a somewhat unobvious comparison with another piece of literature having a status of a classic, though of children's literature: *The House at Pooh Corner* by A. A. Milne. The novels[2] hardly seem to have anything in common, yet they both end with lies that, as I will argue, are of a similar, comparable nature and in both cases they have an essential interpretative significance.

In the aforementioned letter to his publisher, Conrad continues: "(…) the last pages of *Heart of Darkness* where the interview of the man and the girl locks in – as it were – the whole 30000 words of narrative description into one suggestive view of a whole phase of life and makes of that story something quite on another plane than an anecdote of a man who went mad in the Centre of Africa" (Conrad 210). The man in the interview is Marlow, who returned from Congo, having witnessed there unfathomable darkness in the man named Kurtz. The girl is Kurtz's fiancée, insisting

[1] The letter is included in Norton Critical Edition of Conrad's novel.
[2] It should be noted that there is a discrepancy in critical literature regarding the literary form of both *Heart of Darkness* and *The House at the Pooh Corner*, the former due to its relative shortness considered a novella and the latter often considered a collection of short stories. For the sake of simplification, in this essay both texts will be referred to as novels.

that Marlow should tell her the dying words of a man she was to marry. Marlow eventually consoles her with a lie saying that the last word Kurtz uttered was her name, while in fact it was "a cry that was no more than a breath: 'The horror! The horror!'" (Conrad 68). It may seem, on the surface, to be a white, protective lie. Marlow justifies himself: "I could not tell her. It would have been too dark – too dark altogether…" (76). Marlow attempts to preserve the supposed dichotomy of the world. He had travelled to the "heart of darkness", where terms such as morality and virtue were no longer sufficient and did not apply – and, though changed, returned to (the façade of) civilisation. He considers himself merely a witness, an eavesdropper: "[Kurtz] had made that last stride, he had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot. And perhaps in this is the whole difference" (69).

As Garett Stewart observes in his essay "Lying as Dying in *Heart of Darkness*", there is a "considerable number of critics who find [Marlow] receiving Conrad's unqualified assent, even in his supposedly benign final lie" (Stewart 368) and if Marlow is indeed no more than "mediator between visionary depths and the everyday" (368), then they would be correct. Nevertheless, Marlow's self-justification brings to mind the lines from Seamus Heaney's *Mycenae Lookout*: "No such thing / as innocent / bystanding" (Heaney 36). Marlow assumed there is no reason to make the innocent woman part of something that would be too much for her to grasp; no reason to break her heart and spoil her illusion of harmony with "horror". And yet, justifying Marlow's deed by attributing to him only his concern for the Intended's "purity of heart" would be a dangerous oversimplification. Attempting at moral evaluation of his lie requires broader context, as I will argue later.

A young boy named Christopher makes a decision similar to Marlow's at the end of *The House at Pooh Corner* by A. A. Milne. However, due to the strikingly distinct characters of these two texts, reasons for making such a comparison shall be explained – similarities and differences put in the right context and perspective. The world presented in two books about Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends is, again, of a dual nature. Nearly all of the action takes place in the Hundred Acre Wood, the land of children-like innocence, but we are also given glimpses into the world beyond, a more "real" one. The title of the last chapter is very telling: "In which Christopher Robin and Pooh come to an Enchanted Place, and We leave them There". It is clear that the ending of the story is a farewell between a boy and his friends (stuffed toys animated by child's imagination and his father's narration): Christopher is growing up and he must leave the Hundred Acre Wood and its habitants. Christopher did not, as Marlow, travel to the "other side" and back, but he is fully aware of its existence

and of the inevitability of change he must undergo. The animals, however, are not: "Nobody knew why he was going; nobody knew where he was going; indeed, nobody even knew why he knew that Christopher Robin *was* going away. But somehow or other everybody in the Forest felt that it was happening at last" (Milne 300). Although filled with vague premonitions, they remain as ignorant as the Intended at the end of *Heart of Darkness*.

In the conversation with Winnie-the-Pooh the boy suddenly begins to mention "some of the things" from that "other side", like Kings, Queens, Factors and "a place called Europe" (Milne 312)[3] as in attempt to clarify, explain the transition to his friend. In answer to Pooh's inquiries, he even "makes him a knight", but soon realises the futility of such a task (perhaps due to Pooh's "Positevily Startling Lack of Brain") and decides to do what Marlow did – to protect the innocence of his interlocutor at the cost of truth. When asked by Pooh whether he would come to that place to meet him in the future, Christopher answers without hesitation, as if wanting to believe it: "Yes, Pooh, I will be really. I *promise* I will be, Pooh" (Milne 315). But momentarily he expresses his doubts that may not mean much to the Bear, but for to the reader are an obvious proof of his dishonesty:

> 'Pooh,' said Christopher Robin earnestly, 'if I – if I'm not quite – ' he stopped and tried again – 'Pooh, *whatever* happens, you *will* understand, won't you?'
> 'Understand what?'
> 'Oh, nothing.' He laughed and jumped to his feet. 'Come on!' (Milne 315)

Christopher realises that Pooh does not, in fact, understand; he considers his friend unable to comprehend the world that the boy is about to enter. It resembles Marlow's desperate questions by the end of Part One: "Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything?". He also reaches a negative conclusion: "It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream – making a vain attempt (…). No, it is impossible" (Conrad 30). Kurtz's fiancée could not have been told the truth about Congo, because she (as Marlow believes) belongs to a different world – just like Winnie-the-Pooh belongs to the world of childhood playfulness and cannot exist in any other.

It is also worth observing that, in *Heart of Darkness*, the Intended in a way proves her naïveté by exclaiming: "I knew it – I was sure!" (76). Pooh, on the other hand, while not comprehending the exact nature of the situation, is somehow aware that he does not get to know the whole truth: "'So, perhaps', he said sadly to himself,

[3] Interestingly, in comparison between these dichotomies in the novels, in Conrad, Europe stands for what is (only seemingly!) moral, known, civilised, whereas in Milne, for the exact opposite: the unknown, darker world of grown-ups.

'Christopher Robin won't tell me anymore', and he wondered if being a Faithful Knight meant that you just went on being faithful without being told things" (Milne 314). This shows that, while Christopher's lie is a discomforting lesson on the inevitability of growing up – a process in which something is lost forever – Marlow's lie is a moral decision that has more dangerous implications. It was something more than merely a protective, white lie: it was, in Stewart's words, a "sacrificial capitulation of his own spiritual insight out of humanist chastity" (Stewart 369). Christopher is being protective of Pooh. He claims he can return to the Forest once he goes away while knowing that it is almost never possible. It is never implied that adulthood is somehow inherently evil; Milne does gives no such lesson (as Egoff claims, "[he] hasn't a iota of a message to deliver" [241]), but rather observes that the transition between these two stages in life is always connected with a loss. Christopher loses something valuable; Marlow, on the other hand, does something explicitly wrong. His lie is more than protection – it prolongs idealistic lies of aggressive, cruel colonialism.

Does it mean that the atavistic reality of colonialist Congo may be compared to adulthood or that a good-hearted Christopher Robin growing past his childhood is like Marlow entering the eponymous "heart of darkness"? Such far-fetched analogies are not what this paper argues; they must ultimately prove difficult to sustain and unsatisfactory. There is, however, a correlation between what happens in "An Enchanted Place" – a transitional place between the Forest and the "real" world and what happens after Marlow's return from Africa. Christopher has deceived Pooh. Having superior knowledge of the complexity of the world outside the simple one they both know, he decided to leave his "silly old" friend unaware of it. The same can be said about Marlow; his lie, in a desperate attempt to preserve innocence of the Intended, made her blind to the "horror" of existence.

But there is also a crucial difference between the two. Christopher's lie is sad, because it is a farewell between two friends – a relationship ended without sincerity and ended for good. The unspoken implication is that there is no return to the Hundred Acre Wood, ever. However regrettable it is, Marlow's lie cuts deeper, because Congo and London are not as distinct as it may seem. Whatever horror Marlow witnessed in Africa, followed him back to Europe; and more than that, it was here long before (Brussels in Marlow's narrative is famously likened to a "sepulchral city"). The space that Marlow travelled to is "(…) beyond geographical coordinates, a recessed sector of the soul to which only death, firsthand or secondhand, can guarantee passage" (Stewart 358). That is why Marlow senses "a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies" and why Stewart argues that novel's ending is "an indirect death scene" (358). It makes keeping the Intended *in the dark*

even less ethically justifiable and (to put it figuratively) multiplies this *darkness*. Does Marlow not realize it or does he actually believe he can spare her or himself the existential horror? If the latter, then the actual tragedy of Marlow's deception is that he also deceives himself.

Works Cited

Conrad, Jospeh. *Heart of Darkness*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988.

Egoff, Sheila. ""Which One's the Mockingbird?" Children's Literature from the 1920s to the Present." *Theory Into Practice,* vol. 21, no. 4, 1982. 239-246. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1476345.

Heaney, Seamus. *The Spirit Level*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.

Milne, Alan Alexander. *The Complete Winnie-the-Pooh*. London: Dean, 1995.

Stewart, Garett. "Lying as Dying in "Heart of Darkness"." Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988. 358-374.

The Tragedy of Anakin, a Jedi Knight: *Star Wars'* Anakin Skywalker as a Shakespearean Tragic Hero

Sara Górna
MA student

In 1977, when the first *Star Wars* film, later renamed *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, was released, the world was introduced to Darth Vader, a menacing, masked evil figure, who was to become an iconic villain in the years to come. However, the next two movies presented a shift to this character: Darth Vader turned out to be Luke Skywalker's father, Anakin. He was once a Jedi Knight who was seduced by the Dark Side of the Force and turned evil. But in the last act before his death, Vader turns against his master and saves his son, proving that, as Luke believes, "there is still good in him" (*Return of the Jedi* 00:47:00–00:47:02).

But how did Anakin Skywalker, described by Obi Wan as "a Jedi Knight", "a good friend" (*New Hope* 00:32:52, 00:33:11), and a "good man" (*Return of the Jedi* 00:46:19), ever became the evil that was Darth Vader? – this was the question George Lucas had to answer, when years later he wrote the Prequel Trilogy. He had to put Anakin in the centre of the plot, and show the credible story of a fall of a great man.

Lucas calls this story "the tragedy of Darth Vader" ("The Chosen One" 00:03:07), and this is exactly what it is. What is more, it is tragic in a very peculiar way, bearing an uncanny resemblance to the Shakespearean tragedies.

Star Wars saga features many themes and motifs known from Shakespeare's plays. Tragedy is one of them; others include the guidance of mystical forces, such as ghosts, and unhappy, doomed love (Zehr, "Shared motifs"). Lucas does exhibit a certain mastery of those themes (Preysner 206), adjusting them to his setting. The other noticeable similarity between Lucas's and Shakespeare's stories is that they were immensely popular at the time they were created and are still popular to this day. As Ian Doescher, author of a series of rewrites of Star Wars films titled *William Shakespeare's Star Wars* aptly notices "If Shakespeare was alive today (...) he would be writing the popular stories of the day (...) like Star Wars" (Zahr, "Talking with Doescher").

This essay will focus solely on the character of Anakin Skywalker. It will look at the first six Star Wars films in numerical order, which presents the coherent

story of the hero, and show how Anakin is similar to the Shakespearean tragic heroes, mainly Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, and Hamlet, using the definition of a tragic hero proposed by A. C. Bradley.

A. C. Bradley defines Shakespearean Tragedy as a story "of human action producing exceptional calamity and ending in the death of [a man in high estate][1]" (10). He gives additional characteristics of such heroes. They are exceptional people in degree and nature and possess a "tragic trait" – feature of character, which might be great in other circumstances, but which ultimately brings the downfall of the hero (14–15). They are not evil by nature; their tragedy has to create an "impression of waste" (16), so it is important they have the potential to be truly great. The evil, which shifts their fortunes, usually lies behind them and manifests itself in other characters (26). The actions of tragic heroes are also ruled by another power, an ultimate force, beyond human comprehension (18).

According to this definition, a Shakespearean tragic hero should be a man of high status, whose fall affects not only his life but also the entire nation (Bradley 5). Macbeth's actions disturb the whole of Scotland. Hamlet's family trouble weaken the state of Denmark. Lear's decision divides England. All those heroes are connected to something bigger than themselves. Even Othello, who is lower in status than those three, is still a Venetian general, important to the state.

Anakin fits into this paradigm; he may not be noble of birth (though there is something mysterious and unexplained about his conception), but he still has an important place within the Republic. He is very powerful and strong with the Force, and later becomes a Jedi Knight and a general. He is looked after by the Chancellor himself and marries a senator – all this places him in the middle of the affairs of the state. His actions and choices are connected to the fate of the Republic – it falls in the very moment Anakin falls, and the evil Empire it turns into is defeated because he redeems himself.

The next characteristic Bradley names is the fatal flaw, or a "tragic trait" (15), which is present in all Shakespearean tragic heroes. It refers to a quality, which is often great and admirable, but which causes the character to fall. Those traits differ from a hero to hero. In Macbeth it is his ambition and desire to please his wife; Othello is too passionate and trustful, Lear too proud and frivolous, and Hamlet is defeated by his own morality and tendency to overthink. None of those traits are evil in themselves, but triggered by wrong circumstances they cause great turmoil and tragedy.

[1] He excludes Shakespeare's two tragic heroines, Juliet and Cleopatra, from this definition.

Anakin's most prominent and damaging flaw seems to be his strong attachment to the people he loves. His first villainous act, "first scene that takes him onto the road of the Dark Side" (Lucas, Audio commentary II 01:19:46–01:19:48), is killing the Sand People who are responsible for the kidnapping of his mother and her death. He kills them because the pain of losing someone he loves is too great to bear.

This moment creates Anakin's purpose, his main goal, which is not evil, if somewhat too ambitious for a human being, even such a great one, to handle. He says to Padme that he will become so powerful as to be able to "stop people from dying", and swears at his mother's grave that he "won't fail again" (*Attack of the Clones* 01:24:50–01:24:52, 01:27:28–01:27:31). Lucas calls this "greed" and adds that it goes against the teachings of the Jedi Order, which say one has to accept the natural flow of life (Audio commentary II 01:27:31).

But it does not go against the ideology of the Sith, of the Dark Side. When Anakin completes his fall and turns to evil, he does so because Chancellor Palpatine assures him he is able to give him this power he desperately desires. At this moment, Anakin is so determined to save his wife from what he thinks is inevitable death in childbirth, that he is able to sacrifice everything else, the freedom of the Republic, the Jedi Order, and even his master and closest friend, Obi Wan Kenobi, without much difficulty. The love, the attachment to people, which is a positive trait, turns into a flaw, when it blinds him and makes him commit atrocious acts in its name.

The fatal flaw is connected to the nature of the hero, which is not evil in itself. Most tragedies make the point of showing what their hero was like before the fall, presenting him as a sympathetic character, whom the audience likes and understands. Othello is shown to be a loving husband, Macbeth to be a great general, even Lear is presented as a good, if somewhat playful, king. Hamlet from the beginning is but a shadow of his former self, but there are moments in which he is shown to be an excitable, kind, and loving person. When other characters recall what he was like before his father's death they refer to him as "good" (1.2.68), "noble" (3.1.149), and "sweet" (5.2.343).

Similarly Anakin, when he first appears in *The Phantom Menace*, is presented as a good and kind kid. He offers Qui Gon and Padme a shelter at his house, talks of how he dreamed about being a Jedi Knight and freeing all the slaves, and helps his guests get the ship parts they need. He is bright, talented, and idealistic. He tells Qui Gon he will be "the first one to see [all the stars]" (*The Phantom Menace*, 00:50:13–00:50:17). Lucas said he "wanted [Anakin] to be very earnest, very honest, very good natured", because it would make his fall more complex and interesting (Audio commentary I 00:32:40–00:33:10). Even his flaws: his pride and his fear, have

positive origins. He is proud but pride allows him to keep his dignity while being enslaved, and his greatest fear, of losing his mother, comes from the love he holds for her.

So if it is not the heroes' nature that leads them towards the path of darkness, what does? Bradley mentions two factors at work in Shakespearean tragedies, which push the heroes towards the acts they would never be capable of committing in different circumstances. The first factor is connected to the notion of fate; the second one to the notion of evil.

Let us look at the former first, i.e. at the power beyond human understanding, which works around the heroes. It can be called by many names: providence, destiny, coincidence, fate, etc. This power shapes the fortunes of the heroes; it controls the course of their actions and it decides their outcome. It is twisted and unpredictable; and it works regardless of the hero's nature or intentions, making them "an instrument of a design which is not theirs" (Bradley 20). It is most visible in Macbeth, where hero's motivations are shaped to the large degree by prophecies, but all of Shakespearean tragic heroes are to a greater or lesser extent the victims of the circumstances.

This power in *Star Wars* is known and apparent, and it goes by the name of the Force – mystical energy that links all things together and governs the whole Universe. It is safe to assume that everything that happens in the films is decided by this power, as this is the belief shared by most of the characters. It is the Force that causes the party from Naboo to land on Tatooine, so Qui Gon can meet Anakin and take him on the path that would shape his life. Just like Macbeth, Anakin has a prophecy hanging over his life; he is "the Chosen One", "the one who will bring balance to the Force" (*Phantom Menace* 01:33:26, 01:25:25). And although this prophecy is misleading – because it does not mention the bloodshed Anakin will take part in, it is also fulfilled – he does eventually destroy the Dark Side, proving that it was true from the beginning, and everything that happened was a design of the Force.

The other factor that pushes the characters towards their fall is the evil. It is more often than not personified, as Shakespearean tragedies make a point of showing that it is human action that produces the tragedy, yet it does not usually manifest itself in the hero himself; it exists beyond him. *Othello* presents personification of that evil in the character of Iago, who through lies and deceit pushes the main character towards killing Desdemona. Similar to Iago are the characters of Goneril, Regan, and Edmund in *King Lear*, who are shown to be senselessly cruel. In *Macbeth*'s case it is more complicated, as the evil manifests itself in Lady Macbeth, but it is also present in the hero himself, or rather in his unhealthy ambition.

The evil in *Star Wars* films is presented as the Dark Side of the Force, on which the Sith ideology is built. Its main avatar is Chancellor Palpatine, otherwise known as the Emperor. In a similar fashion to Iago he manipulates Anakin and makes him turn against the people he loves and the ideals in which he believes. However, Palpatine's purpose is not to destroy the hero, but to realize his ambitions through him, which puts him on a par with Lady Macbeth. He makes Anakin his ally and uses him throughout the series as a puppet, thinking he has the complete control over him.

But the evil in the tragedies is never allowed to triumph; it must be destroyed, and it must take the hero with it. Tragic hero always dies, but his death brings the end to suffering and a hope for a brighter future. He is even allowed to redeem himself before his death as does Lear in the most powerful and moving scene of his drama – the scene of Lear's reconciliation with Cordelia. There we have a child, much wronged by her father, forgive him and cure him from his insanity, redeeming him from the wrong he has done.

An almost parallel scene happens at the end of *Return of the Jedi*. There Luke, although he knows what a monster his father has become, still believes that he is not beyond redemption and tries to convince him to do good, to save him. Vader does; he turns against the Emperor and kills him, redeeming himself to the world with the help of his son. It is his last act; there is nothing left for him to do afterwards but to die. He asks Luke to take off his life-supporting helmet so that he could "look at him with [his] own eyes" (02:00:13–02:00:16) and shortly after that he dies in his arms.

The moment before the death the hero has the last chance to control his own narrative and express the want to be remembered and not misunderstood. This what Othello's "Speak of them as they are" (5.2.343) and Hamlet's "tell my story" (5.2.333) do – they both want people to know their true motives and see that they were never truly evil.

Anakin's last words, directed at Luke, are "You were right about me. Tell your sister that you were right" (*Return of the Jedi,* 02:01:19–02:01:24) and they function in the exact same way. Anakin wants his daughter to know about his redemption; to know his story.

Just like Shakespeare devised his characters so that they would appeal to a large and diverse audience so did George Lucas. Anakin closely resembles Shakespearean tragic heroes for he possesses all of their characteristics and his story is built in a similar way. This shows that certain archetypes and stories never age and can be explored regardless of the setting or genre.

Works Cited

Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy*. Third edition, Macmillan Education LTD, 1992.

Lucas, George and Hayden Christensen. "The Chosen One." *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, Disc Two, Twentieth Century Fox, 2008. DVD.

Lucas, George. Audio Commentary. *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, Twentieth Century Fox, 2008. DVD.

Lucas, George. Audio Commentary. *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*, Twentieth Century Fox, 2008. DVD.

Preysner, Elizabeth. "May the Bard be with You: William Shakespeare's Star Wars." *Imaging the Self, Constructing the Past*, edited by Robert G. Sullivan and Meriem Pagès, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. 199–207.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*, edited by Ann Thomson and Neil Taylor, Arden Shakespeare-Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2006.

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*, edited by Kenneth Muir, Arden Shakespeare-Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1972.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, edited by Kenneth Muir, Arden Shakespeare-Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1951.

Shakespeare, William. *Othello*, edited by M. R. Ridley, Arden Shakespeare-Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1958.

Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace. Directed by George Lucas, screenplay by George Lucas, Twentieth Century Fox, 1999.

Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones. Directed by George Lucas, screenplay by George Lucas, Jonathan Hales, Twentieth Century Fox, 2002.

Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith. Directed by George Lucas, screenplay by George Lucas, Twentieth Century Fox, 2005.

Star Wars Episode IV: New Hope. Directed by George Lucas, screenplay by George Lucas, Twentieth Century Fox, 1977.

Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back. Directed by Irvin Kershner, screenplay by Lawrence Kasdan, George Lucas, Leigh Brackett, Twentieth Century Fox, 1980.

Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi. Directed by Richard Marquand, screenplay by Lawrence Kasdan, George Lucas, Twentieth Century Fox, 1983.

Zehr, Dan. "Studying Skywalkers: Shared Motifs in Star Wars and Shakespeare." *Star Wars.com* (blog), https://www.starwars.com/news/studying-skywalkers-shared-motifs-in-star-wars-and-shakespeare. Accessed 4 April 2019.

Zehr, Dan. "Studying Skywalkers: Talking with *William Shakespeare's Star Wars* Author Ian Doescher." *Star Wars.com* (blog), https://www.starwars.com/news/studying-skywalkers-talking-with-william-shakespeares-star-wars-author-ian-doescher. Accessed 4 April 2019.

The Canadian Graphic Novel *The Country of Wolves*: History, Cultural Context, Analysis and Intersemiotic Translation

Anna Jaworska
MA student

The Graphic Novel and its Authors

Based on an acclaimed short film *Amaqqut Nunaat: The Country of Wolves* (2011),[1] the Canadian graphic novel of the same title was published in 2012 in three languages (English, French and traditional North Baffin dialect of Inuktitut) by Inhabit Media, an Inuit-owned publishing company whose aim is to "preserve and promote the stories, knowledge and talent of Inuit and northern Canada" ("About"). Deeply immersed in the Inuit world, this small 83-page book proves to be a compelling subject of study regarding myth, cultural and comic studies; as well, it is an intersemiotic translation described by Roman Jakobson as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (qtd. in Yablonsky 43). In the case of the graphic novel or comic book, this type of translation may be "understood as deciphering the meaning of comics from their interplay between the visual and verbal modes, their interpretation by the readers" (Yablonsky 43). This is the perspective from which *The Country of Wolves* will be analyzed in the following paper.

The graphic novel in question is a collaborative work between Neil Christopher, its originator, Ramón K. Pérez and Daniel Gies, the artists, and Louise Flaherty, a Nunavut-born co-founder of Inhabit Media, a grand-daughter of a great story teller passionate about Inuit traditions and the Inuktitut language. The first of the mentioned creators is deeply engaged in examining Inuit heritage. Having graduated from teacher's college, he moved to Resolute Bay. Since then, fascinated with its people and culture, Christopher has been conducting research on the Inuit oral culture for over a decade. Pérez is a designer and cartoonist, living currently in Toronto, with over twenty years of experience. Some additional work, as the title page informs us, was done by

[1] The film is available online on the website of the National Screen Institute: https://www.nsi-canada.ca/2016/07/amaqqut-nunaat-the-country-of-wolves/.

Daniel Gies working in the creative field, particularly in animation. The aim of *The Country of Wolves* is to save this particular folk tale from oblivion: "The first thing is about recording this knowledge before it disappears […]. We have maybe 10 years left and then all the knowledge holders will have passed" ("Interview…" 4:17-4:26).

The Storyline and a Monomyth Pattern

The storyline of the said graphic novel, which is an adaptation of an old folk tale passed on from generations across the Arctic, seems at first glance to be simple. *The Country of Wolves* begins when two brothers hunting for seal in the North end up on an ice floe that soon carries them far from their home, into an eerie village.

Afterwards, they find that the land is occupied by scary creatures that can shape-shift into wolves. Confused and lost, the siblings decide to separate in search of help. The younger brother, who heads toward the communal igloo, is mauled by the creepy inhabitants of the village called Amaqqut Inuruuqqajut. In another igloo, the older brother comes across a strange old woman. Having listened to the history of their journey, she warns him that they have reached the country of wolves, terribly unsafe for human beings. Frightened, the older brother receives from her a sagguut, a magical object in a shape of a stick which is supposed to show him the way home, and a piece of advice: wolves will lose their power when their leader dies.

When the protagonist exits the igloo, the wild creatures smell human blood and go after him. The tiring pursuit ends when the man, remembering the advice of the old woman, shoots the leader of the pack with an arrow. Soon, the predators begin to quarrel not only about the best piece of meat, but also the leadership. At the end of the day, the traveler reaches his home by dint of the magical stick, and reunites with his wife. However, this is not a happy-ending type of story. His behavior is rather odd. Extremely exhausted, he tells her to leave him in peace and refuses to take off his clothes. He gives up the ghost in his sleep.

Although the storyline might appear simple and straightforward, an insightful reader will notice that it is placed within the oral tradition and uses a large number of elements characteristic of the template of the monomyth or the hero's journey described by an American scholar Joseph Campbell. First and foremost, the scene when the two brothers float down on an ice flow through

darkness and dense fog turns out to be a crucial moment initiating the beginning of the journey (Christopher et al. 10-15). It is a peculiar "call to adventure":

> This first stage of the mythological journey […] signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown. This fateful region […] may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountain top, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds […] (Campbell 53).

As the narrator's box says, the men were driven by some mysterious powers: "And there, in the darkness, they huddled together… Adrift and at the mercy of forces far beyond their understanding" (Christopher et al. 13). It perfectly matches with the pattern described by Campbell: "The mythological hero, setting forth from his common-day hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure" (227).

Afterwards, the older brother chances on a supernatural magic helper (the strange old woman) who provides aid to the hero. Her support is both down-to-earth (a piece of advice) and supernatural (a magical object called a "sagguut"). As the story develops, it transpires that her help turns out to be priceless in the very crucial part of the journey back home: "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (Campbell 63).

Then, the protagonist is urged to undergo a test (ferocious pursuit, harshness of the weather) and has to battle a monster (the leader of wolves): "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials […]. The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region" (Campbell 89).

Even though the brother managed to escape the wolves thanks to the old woman's advice and knows the direction of his home thanks to the sagguut, he still has a long way to go: "When the hero-quest has been accomplished […], the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy" (Campbell

179). The way back is not easy because his igloo seems to be so far away. So he travels countless days through heavy snow: "The two worlds, the divine and the human, can be pictured only as distinct from each other – different as life and death, as day and night. The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness […] and his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone" (Campbell 201).

When the exhausted traveler finally reaches his home, he refuses to take off his worn-out clothes, which may foreshadow his death and indicate that he will not be symbolically born again. Although the action of that Inuit folktale takes place during the spring, usually associated with rebirth, the older brother was never meant to survive but rather he was to share his younger brother's fate and fall into eternal sleep:

> What, now, is the result of the miraculous passage and return? The battlefield is symbolic of the field of life, where every creature lives on the death of another. The goal of the myth is to dispel the need for such life ignorance by effecting a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will. And this is effected through a realization of the true relationship of the passing phenomena of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all (Campbell 221).

Between Words: The Language of the Graphic Novel

Attention should be paid not only to what is happening but also the way the story is presented, mainly what kind of language is used. The text, appearing in speech balloons and text boxes, in *The Country of Wolves* serves as narration, dialogue and sound effect.

The language of the graphic novel harmonizes with the oral character of the story which is stressed at the very beginning of the publication: "To some this is a sacred story, as all traditional stories are sacred to those who know their value. Remember that stories link people to their ancestors and to the land" (Christopher et al. 5).

The oral nature of the story displays itself, inter alia, in the narrative point of view. The text included in the narrator's text boxes is told through the lens of an inhabitant of the North and it is communicated from the perspective of the first person plural. It might be noticed when a possessive pronoun 'our' appears in the following sentence: "In the winter, our land is a place of ice, snow, wind, and darkness" (Christopher et al. 6).

However, there are some other linguistic features of the text of *The Country of Wolves* that link specifically to the story that was to be shared orally among members of the same communities, i.e. the insiders. For example, in certain fragments of the graphic novel, there are some names found only in the North that are not encountered in other parts of the world. Thus, the international readers must do their own research to understand such lexemes like "quillq", an oil lamp used in the Arctic, or "sagguut", a magical pole that indicates the way home. The creators of the graphic novel also made their own contribution as they decided to leave the Inuit version of the word "igloo", i.e. "iglu" (ᐃᖃᓗᐃᑦ). All of those unfamiliar words not only make the story exotic, but also more reliable and mysterious.

What is more, it should be stressed that it seems that it is not an accident that neither of the brothers have names nor are there any proper names in the graphic novel. The story itself is thus about *everyman* and therefore universal. Such stories, as reported by Neil Christopher, "about two hunters that go out on the ice […] get lost and don't come back […]", are very common in the North ("Interview…" 1:02-1:10). For Christopher, „that's a reality in traditional life, it's even a reality in modern life in the Arctic so […] that story resonates with a lot of people that live in a harsh environment" ("Interview…" 1:10-1:21).

Visual Aspect and Intersemiotic Translation

As a graphic novel is a combination of text and art, one should analyze how the visual aspect of *The Country of Wolves* functions within the book or, using the notion of intersemiotic translation, how the story swings from verbal signs to nonverbal sign systems. As in the case of the storyline, there is more to the visual aspect of *The Country of Wolves* than meets the eye. The content and the oral character of the story perfectly correspond with the visual aspect of the graphic novel created in 2012.

First of all, the artistic elements of this particular graphic novel are extremely connected with the Inuit world. There are no written descriptions of the land or the weather, but visually much attention is given to the environment. The artist drew igloos, caribou, ice floes, ice bergs, snow, fog, torments of ocean, vast spaces, hills and tundra. The visual aspects of the graphic novel thereby complement the text and present what is not described in words. These seem not to be accidental as the Inuit relation to the environment is profound. It was the harsh and snowy land that inspired the Inuit mythology, including the described story.

It is well worth noting that in the case of *The Country of Wolves*, the graphic side of the book enriches the pattern of the monomyth by depicting some elements unique to the Northern landscape, treated as sacred and very relevant for the Inuit living in harmony with nature. For instance, at the beginning of the graphic novel one can notice Aurora Borealis (Christopher et al. 4-5), a significant component of Inuit traditional beliefs according to which the Polar Lights form "a bridge the dead use to cross over into the land of the spirits" (Flaherty and Christopher 85). Another example is the moon appearing when the older brother strives to escape. This "watchful moon" is a reference to "a place visited on a spirit's journey, which is inhabited by beings both kind and dangerous" (Flaherty and Christopher 85). Inasmuch the names 'Aurora Borealis' or 'moon' do not appear in the text, it is the role of the drawings to introduce these crucial components of Inuit beliefs necessary to interpret properly this folk tale as a whole.

Secondly, the artist draws extensively on another cultural creation of the North which is Inuit art. The drawings "do not look as though they were rigidly contorted and distorted by a computer, but rather puppeteered by a sensitive hand" (Christopher, "Director's Notes"). As reported by the originator of the graphic novel:

> Illustrator Ramón Pérez's art style suited this aesthetic; his work uses aggressive, hand-drawn ink lines that are minimalist and clean—much like the land of the North. His drawings are combined with real paper textures, earthy watercolor washes, and subtle lighting, creating a distinctively natural look This story is an ancient legend, and the hand-made quality represents the physical aspect of telling a story. We chose this minimalist style as we felt it would engage a contemporary Northern audience, but still leave a lot to the imagination, thus respecting the Inuit oral tradition (Christopher, "Director's Notes").

In the case of translating the verbal aspect of the story into the color semiotics, the palate in the graphic novel is quite dark. In *The Country of Wolves*, the colors that prevail are different shades of dark blue, considered in color theory as cool. Some other colors are significantly present, i.e. purple, grey and black. The choice of those particular colors sets the dark mood and reflects the rawness of the North. It also says a lot about the world the artist depicted. That it is dangerous, mysterious and unpredictable like the narrator

put it in his narration: "[…] the two brothers had travelled […] through the dark and cold" (Christopher et al. 8). In the language of art, the mentioned colors might suggest the feelings that such reoccurring words as "ice", "snow", "darkness" imply. This phenomenon proves to be an apt example of a translation, or transposition, between two semiotic systems, communication modes, i.e. *words* mode and *image/color* mode, as described by Adriano Clayton da Silva: "A form of perceiving, or feeling, a word can be translated into another possible mode, but related to that word in another way, like a color, an image or even a smell" (77).

The page layout is well worth discussing as well as it seems to be carefully chosen. In general, two pages of the graphic novel form one panel and that is the equivalent of one scene of the film version of the story. What follows is that in most scenes, the page is organized according to the following schema: the order of pictures is horizontal. This might reflect the linearity of telling a story. Nonetheless, on some horizontal pages the pattern presented above is violated as there are additional smaller panels with black rectangular borders clearly breaking the mould. In some cases, the additional panels are horizontal (Christopher et al. 48-49), in others they are vertical (Christopher et al. 54-55).

Further investigation reveals that – in relation to the pattern of the page layout – the additional smaller panels appear in the most dramatic scenes of the graphic novel, i.e. when the brothers realize they are lost (Christopher et al. 14-15), when the younger brother enters the igloo inhabited by the bloodthirsty creatures (Christopher et al. 18-19) and is savaged by them (Christopher et al. 32-37), in the chase scenes (Christopher et al. 46-51, 54-55, 58-67, 70-73) and in the scene of death of the older brother (Christopher et al. 76-77, 80-81). On the one hand, this technique might reflect the dramatic tension of these particular scenes and the pace of action. On the other hand, it illustrates the unpredictability of the landscape, both harsh and full of dangers, and the changing weather in the Arctic as described by one of the creators of the graphic novel:

> This story is dark and pensive […]. After a long day's journey, what seems like a small grouping of rocks on a nearby hill becomes immense, otherworldly boulders. Giant, snow-covered peaks hundreds of meters high that stretch beyond sight will vanish with the change of a season. In the Far North, nothing is ever what it seems. Such is the methodology behind

creating *Amaqqut Nunaat: The Country of Wolves* (Christopher, "Director's Notes").

In the graphic novel prevails one particular type of transition of panels theorized by Scott McCloud, i.e. action-to-action. It appears especially in the dynamic scenes of the pursuit (Christopher et al. 46-71). Nevertheless, it does not mean that the artist keeps away from other transitions. There are also subject-to-subject transitions like those when the younger brother is attacked by the beasts (Christopher et al. 33-37), and aspect-to-aspect transitions where the nature of the North is depicted (Christopher et al. 4-7) and when the older brother passes away at the end of the graphic novel (Christopher et al. 76-79). This phenomenon links to what McCloud pointed out – that mainly aspect-to-aspect transition is "most often used to establish a mood or a sense of place, time seems to stand still in these quiet, contemplative combinations" (79).

As far as the basic features of the images are concerned, the artist used multiple types of shots. A careful reader can spot long shots and several close-ups and zooms. The most prominent example of the latter is used during the conversation of the older brother with the extraordinary woman (Christopher et al. 30-31). Thanks to a close-up, the reader can notice her multiple wrinkles and her inhuman teeth, sharp and pointed. According to McCloud, "closure can be a powerful force within panels as well as between them […]" (86). In this particular scene featuring the old woman, it seems that the powerful force clearly reveals itself in a way described by the scholar in another passage: "the comic creator asks us to join a silent dance of the seen and the unseen. The visible and the invisible (McCloud 92).

When it comes to the interplay between the visual and verbal aspect of the book, in many panels the text matches the drawings to a great extent. For instance, the already mentioned close-up of the old woman's wrinkled and odd face perfectly illustrates what is described in the text included in the narrator's box: "The flames of the quilliq cast shadows across her ancient face. In this light she appeared savage, lupine and inhuman" (Christopher et al. 30-31). This indicates that she is not a human but rather a member of the ghoulish creatures' community, possibly a shaman. This correspondence between the visual and linguistic sides of the graphic novel in this scene was also spotted by the reviewer of the graphic novel, Thaddeus Andracki:

> […] This graphic novel employs tight language that evokes oral storytelling to produce a tangibly creepy atmosphere ("In this light she appeared savage, lupine, inhuman"). This effect is enhanced by the illustrations, which employs the thick black lining and saturated color of comic books modified by digital effects to create hazy landscapes and a luminescent moon and by an often cold-hued palette (260).

Conclusions

As shown, Christopher, Pérez, Gies and Luise Flaherty created a work which turns out to be a promising study material which has a lot to offer to scholars, specializing in a variety of fields such as comic, myth, cultural or translation studies, who would like to conduct further research on different aspects of the graphic novel, from its storyline and language to the visual aspect and the interplay between the verbal and the non-verbal. The storyline of the analyzed folktale, encompassing three major topics – "Inuit traditional beliefs, shamanism and the Inuit traditional relationship to the environment" (Cowan et al. 12) – includes a great number of elements characteristic of monomyth or the hero's journey pinpointed by Joseph Campbell: a magic helper, supernatural aid, several tests, a battle with a monster and final journey home.

The language of *The Country of Wolves* fits the oral character of the story and is characterized by such features as the use of the first person plural perspective, exotic names and avoidance of proper names. Last but not least, the visual aspect of the graphic novel not only matches the text and complements it by translating, for example, words into the color semiotic, but also adds new content such as highlighting the importance of the Northern landscape and introducing crucial elements of traditional Inuit belief such as the Aurora Borealis or the moon. All of the mentioned characteristics make *The Country of Wolves* "an intriguing example of oldest stories translated into newest media" (Andracki 260).

Works Cited

"About." *Inhabit Media*, https://inhabitmedia.com/about/. Accessed 21 January 2019.

Andracki, Thaddeus. "Christopher, Neil, ad. *The Country of Wolves*; illus. by Ramón Pérez. Inhabit Media Inc., 2013. 83p. ISBN 978-1-927095-04-1 $24.95 R* Gr. 8-12." *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, vol. 67, no. 5, 2014, p. 260, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/531497. Accessed 21 January 2019.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton University Press, 2004.

Clayton da Silva, Adriano. "On Jakobson's Intersemiotic Translations in Asterix Comics." *Comparatismi*, no. 2, 2017, pp. 71-81, https://www.ledijournals.com/ojs/index.php/comparatismi/article/view/1233/1255. Accessed 21 January 2019.

Christopher, Neil. "Director's Notes." *Amaqqut Nunaat: The Country of Wolves (2011)*, https://taqqut.com/amaqqut-nunaat-the-country-of-wolves/. Accessed 21 January 2019.

Christopher, Neil, et al. *The Country of Wolves*. Inhabit Media, 2012.

Cowan, Cindy, et al. *The Country of Wolves: Intermediate Graphic Novel Study*. Inhabit Media, 2012, https://inhabitmedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/TheCountryofWolvesInterm1.pdf. Accessed 25 December 2018.

Flaherty, Louise, and Neil Christopher. "Story Background." *The Country of Wolves*. Inhabit Media, 2012, p. 85.

"Interview | Dir. Neil Christopher | October 2013 – NFMLA." *YouTube*, uploaded by NFMLA, 28 January 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InMhaONp0Zk.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1994.

Yablonsky, Milena. "Text and Image in Translation." *CLEaR*, no. 3 (2), 2016, pp. 40-51, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309696217_Text_and_Image_in_Translation. Accessed 21 January 2019.

The Human Body as the Transmitting Telegraph: Mesmerism and Literature in the Victorian Era

Rafał Borkowski
University of Gdańsk

Abstract

The first half of the 19th century was the era when the science, particularly in the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States, flourished. Scientists began to focus on such ideas as electricity, movement and transmission of data, or, as it was described in that era, on 'electronic communication'. Among scholars researching the above-mentioned areas were arising ideas that suggested that the human body works, to a certain degree, as an electric, wireless net of communication. For instance, Emil du Bois-Reymond, a German physician, compared the human body to the transmitting telegraph. This metaphor was remarkably attractive both for the 19th-century scholars and writers. The idea of *mesmerism*, i.e. the invisible human force which could have physical effects will be the topic of the paper. Moreover, this paper is to present the 19th-century scholars' scientific theories upon the notions of mesmerism as well as to present how these notions influenced the writers and poets. As the examples of academic theses will be discussed, for instance, Chauncey Hare Townsend's *Facts in Mesmerism* (1840) and Harriet Martineau's *Letters on Mesmerism* (1845). The literary works would be represented by such authors and writings as: James Esdaile's *Mesmerism in India* (1847), Robert Browning's *Mesmerism* (1855) and Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868).

Keywords: body, mesmerism, mind, science, society

The end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century is generally known as the Industrial Revolution era. The development of the industry, which related to the great migration of people from rural into industrial areas, especially in Europe reveal a high demand on the expansion of transportation systems. The invention of the spinning jenny in 1770 in England as well the continuous works upon the steam

engine by such inventors as Thomas Savery, Thomas Newcomen and finally James Watt caused that the world started communicating faster. However, this era in the history was not only the witness of the development of the Industrial Revolution but also of science, including such branches as neurology thermodynamics and information technologies. Even though the idea of comparing organic systems, like humans or animals, with the machines was not a new idea, it can be hazard a guess that perception of the human body in this manner is vivid in a high degree in the late 18th and mid-19th centuries. Moreover, the development of science had indirectly influenced the origin of new branches of science like mesmerism, which explored the mysteries of the mind-body relations. The theme of mesmerism was also noticed by writers and poets, who had been looking for new ways of expressing humans' feelings.

As Laura Otis points out in her *Networking. Communicating with Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century* "[s]ince the eighteenth century, scientists designing communications systems have been inspired by the structures of living bodies" (2001, 4). Indeed, John Francis, a British historian, in his book about the history of the English Railway compares the telegraph to the organic communications system (1851). Such comparison was not unitary: Samuel Morse compared his telegraph lines to nerves whereas Alessandro Volta based his Voltaic pile on the electric organ of a fish (Otis 2001: 4).

The comparison of machines' functionalities, especially those used in communication and transportation, with the design of the nervous system was the subject of a fierce debate between scholars in the mid-19th. For instance, Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) called telegraphy *Gedankendrahtung* ("writing thoughts") and compared the telegraphic cables to "nerves transmitting the impulses of a society" (Otis 2001, 1). The idea where all members of the society relate to one another by the electric impulses generated by the body would be the core of the studies upon mesmerism through the whole 19th century, nevertheless it must be pointed out that the fascination with mesmerism or *animal magnetism* can be recognized as one of the vital factors which contribute to the development of studies upon communication.

Alexander von Humboldt's studies upon the relations between the nervous system and electricity was one of the examples how the 19th-century scholars were under the influence of the animal magnetism; however, it needs to be pointed out who provoked the debate that lasted over half a century, this person was Luigi Aloisio Galvani (1737–1798), an Italian physician and biologist. In 1780 Galvani made his greatest discovery, finding out that dead frogs' legs twitch when struck by an electrical spark. The further research upon this discovery lead to the publication

of his *opus magnum De Viribus Electricitatis* (*Commentary on the Effects of Electricity on Muscular Motion*) in 1791 where he proved his theses about electricity existing in the animals' muscles:

> From what is known and explored thus far, I think it is sufficiently established that there is electricity in animals, which, with Bartholinus and others, we may be permitted to call by the general name of animal electricity. This, if not in all, yet is contained in most parts of animals; but manifests itself most conspicuously in muscles and nerves (Otis 2002, 136).

Galvani's research upon the topic of animal magnetism and the movement of the electrical energy within the muscles and nerves of living organisms can be inextricably connected with the invention of the steam engine. His suggestions that the energy "flows from muscles to nerves" and that "the electricity in these parts is, one positive, as we may believe, the other negative, and that one is wholly distinct in nature from the other" (136) can be translated onto the construction of the steam engine, especially the work of high- and low-pressure cylinders and importance of tubes in the construction of such a device. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the 18th-century scholars believed that the energy was a kind of fluid which flows through veins like blood or other liquids, which evokes the similarity with the steam engine.[1]

The idea of the body compared to a steam engine was further developed by other scientists, like a German physicist Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894) who in his "The Interaction of Natural Forces" (1854) wrote as follows:

> Those limits of accuracy which have been as yet attainable, the experiments show that the heat generated in the animal body corresponds to the amount which would be generated by the chemical processes. The animal body therefore does not differ from the steam-engine as regards the manner in which it obtains heat and force, but does differ from it in the manner in which the force gained is to be made use of. (Helmholtz 37)

The development of more advanced devices allowing for a faster communication such as the telegraph, the typewriter or the telephone had an impact upon how societies not only communicated but also how they perceived their minds. Suffice it to say, that a German physician Emil du Bois-Reymond (1818–

[1] Galvani calls electricity the "nerve fluid" (137).

1896) identified the nervous system as a model for the telegraph (Otis 2001, 13). The growing fascination with the animal magnetism in the 1830s and 1840s was somehow merged with the general interests in mesmerism, causing the letter term eventually became synonymic with it. Moreover, the general interest in this subject was not omitted by the politics and became an important point in the Congress of the United States. For instance, during the 1842–1843 session of the Congress debated about a telegraph line based on Morse's model simultaneously arising the matter of mesmeric experiments as the Chair stated that "it would require a scientific analysis to determine how far the magnetism of mesmerism was analogous to that to be employed in telegraphs" (Morse 194–195). The above-mentioned example only depicts the importance of *mesmerism* in the mid-19th century.

The idea of mesmerism was created by the eighteen-century physician Franz Mesmer (1734–1815) whose research pivoted around the ideas of the animal magnetism combined with Newtonian philosophy. Mesmer claimed that his technique allows the mesmerist to affect the other people's mind and body (Mesmer 26–52). Even though many 18th-century scholars criticized this kind of therapy, giving it a mocking name "mesmerism", the therapy became more and more popular among all strata of the society. It worth pointing out that mesmeric séances, gathering together both factory workers and aristocrats, became one of the favorite pastimes of the Victorian Britain society of 1830s and 1840s. There were minute differences between séances, however the general idea was the same; Alison Winter in her book *Mesmerised: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* describes a typical mesmeric séance as follows:

> A group of witnesses would assemble, in numbers ranging from a few people in a parlor to thousands in a crowded hall. The mesmerist would seat the subject before him (or her, though most mesmerists were men). Everyone would fall silent and watch. Mesmerist and the subject would stare into each others' eyes as he made "magnetic process" over her (or him, though subjects were more commonly women). These "passes" were long sweeping movements of the hands skimming the surface of the skin without actually touching it, so close that each felt the heat of the other's body. (…) After a period ranging from a few minutes to over an hour, the subject would sink into a state known as the mesmeric "trance" or "coma". She appeared to sleep, though her eyes might stay open for a short time. (2–3)

During the mesmeric "trance" the subject was able to open a new sense, the one which allows him or her to see the future, distant lands or even the heaven. After such a trance, which may last even several hours, the witnesses of the therapy were trying to interpret the subject's thoughts and opinions. It very often happened that the witnesses were trying to check if the subject is not cheating, i.e. if he or she is in the state of unconsciousness. Among the variety of techniques one can list as follows: firing pistols near the subject's ears, waving smelling salts, pouring acid on the skin, or using electric shocks (Winter 3).

The mesmerist played equally important role in the process as the subject. Many mesmerists, like Chauncey Hare Townsend in his *Facts in Mesmerism* (1840) described a peculiar connection between the subject and the mesmerist's mind, who allow the letter to control the subject's body movements. In his book, he considered that "our bodies are its [the mind] medium of action" (Otis 2002, 392). By the term "mind" Townsend meant an inner power, similar to light, heat or electricity which enables us to control our body. However, he also claimed that the mind, or the spirit, can be taken control during the mesmeric process thus, the mesmerist can take control over the subject. Intriguingly, Townsend in his work tries to prove that the mesmerism subjects to the laws of nature comparing for instance the mesmerist-subject relation to "the needle that has become a magnet" (Otis 2002, 392).[2] Moreover, following Franz Mesmer's references to Newtonian philosophy, Townsend claims that:

> [Newton] cannot be wrong in preserving an unbroken series of atoms between separate bodies which manifestly influence each other, – between the sun and the earth for instance, – since, in this case, there is mutual action, and motion communicated from a distance. (Otis 2002, 394).

The ideas proposed by Townsend were trying to scientifically prove that mesmerism should not be only perceived as fringe or pseudo-science, but that its rules follow the commonly accepted ones proposed by Newton. On the other hand, the sense of strangeness was one of the major factors alluring the Victorian Britain society to mesmeric séances. Alison Winter claims that the huge popularity of such events derived from Victorians' pervasive pleasure of observing themselves as a society (5). As it has been mentioned, among the witnesses could be found both

[2] „We move a magnet over the needle; the needle moves in a corresponding manner; and the human mind is so constituted that we cannot behold these two facts, in seeming connection, without uniting them by a third, which we consider as *proved* by them, since it is in truth their necessary consequence" (Otis 2002, 393).

poor workers and intellectuals, and the mesmeric experience could provoke to a fundamental discussion between faith and doctrine. Thus, Winter points out that the Victorian society did not attend séances only for pleasure, in fact "they were carrying out experiments on their own society" (4).

Another vital role which mesmerism played in the Victorian society was to reveal the malleable nature of the science itself. The mesmeric practices permeated to many scientific disciplines including medicine, physics or chemistry revealing that there was no clear division between a proper science and a scientific practice. Worth mentioning is the fact that in the Victorian society of the 1830s and 1840s did not exist a clear definition of what science was. Until the first bill, namely the Medical Registration Act of 1858, which partly regulated the medical market and allowed to create a professional class of scientist (Winter 6), everyone could be a mesmerist. The unlimited access to the profession, which also allowed to unlimited experiments by the people who had not had a professional scientific background, played an invaluable role both in intellectual and sociological areas. On the one hand, the limit-free experiments contributed to the development of research in many areas on the other, the social status of mesmerists, or we should call them scientists, and their perception in the society apparently increased. The meeting of a "proper" medicine and mesmerism can be observed in the scientific papers and books from the relevant period. In *Surgical Operations without Pain in the Mesmeric State* (1843), John Elliotson (1791–1868), a professor of practice of medicine at University College Hospital, describes a case of the patient whose leg was to be amputated above the knee. Before the operation, he conducted the patient's treatment cooperating with a mesmerist and a barrister, William Topham. According to Elliotson's report:

> After constantly mesmerising him for ten or twelve days, a great change was observed in his appearance. *The hue of health returned; he became cheerful; felt much stronger; was easier, both in mind and body; slept well, and recovered his appetite* (Otis 2002, 397).

Moreover, the mesmeric process was also conducted during the operation itself. Elliotson expressed his astonishment when it turned out that:

> *The* PLACID *look of his countenance never changed for* AN INSTANT*;* his whole frame rested, *uncontrolled*, in *perfect stillness* and repose; *not a muscle was seen to twitch.* (…) [Through – R.B.] a period of upward of twenty minutes, he *lay like a statue* (Otis 2002, 399–400).

The above-mentioned report depicts several aspects of how mesmerism functioned in the society; the usage of the unconventional process in the act of a "proper" medicine, the non-regulated state of the mesmerist, finally the experimental nature of the therapy.

The Medical Registration Act of 1858, and other similar laws from the period 1850–1870, significantly contributed to the decreasing role of mesmerism in the Victorian Britain. Besides dividing the general term science into such disciplines as biology, chemistry or medicine, it also forced that the "[m]embers of the General Council representing the Medical Corporations must be qualified to be registered under this Act" (The Medical Registration Act of 1858, Article VII). This act also increased the role of universities which developed their own laboratories. In addition, mesmerism, who was mostly relevant for such disciplines as physics, gradually was assimilated by laboratory sciences, which eventually rid its aura of mystery. The other factor which diminished the role of mesmerism was the development of such sciences as psychology or psychoanalysis which naturally replaced the demand on such practices. Finally, more and more people in the second half of the 19th century were formally educated (the Forester Act of 1870 or Elementary Education Act of 1880) which also caused that such practices as mesmeric séances were less and less popular. Despite its final extinction at the verge of the 20th century, mesmerism took its toll on the development of the 19th century science and the Victorian society. Its traces can be also found in culture, especially in literature.

Through centuries novelists had been trying to describe mental state of their characters, predominantly using physical descriptions. Thus, it is not surprising that the development of psychological studies, among which was mesmerism, eventually infiltrated to the world of literature. The precedent contact between writers and scientists dealing with mesmerism can be depicted on the example of afore-mentioned John Elliotson and Charles Dickens (1812–1870).

In *The Letters of Charles Dickens* one can read that on 24 November 1838, Charles Dickens invited his friend George Cruikshank to accompany him to see John Elliotson's mesmeric experimentations (Storey and House 461). Their lifelong friendship caused that connections between mesmerism and literature in the 19th century reached reciprocal relations. For instance, Elliotson in the periodical the *Zoist*, which he founded in 1843, referred to the state of humanity based on the character of Nancy from Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (Willis and Wynne 2); on the other hand, it is a known fact that Dickens was practicing mesmerism himself. His first practice was on his wife, Catherine, during a lecture tour of America in 1842 (Waterfield 190). Besides *Oliver Twist* the mesmeric practices

appear in other Dickensian books. In his final and unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), the author explores the mind of John Jasper, a mesmerist who wants to impose his sexual desires on his subject, Rosa Bud. The fragment depicts the ambiguous position of mesmerism as science in the society, but simultaneously is a vehicle which allows the writer to describe the protagonist's state of mind and inner emotional state:

> He has made a slave of me with his looks …. When I play, he never moves his eyes from my hands. When I sing, he never moves his eyes from my lips. When he corrects me, and strikes a note, or a chord, or plays a passage, he himself is in the sounds, whispering that he pursues me as a lover, and commanding me to keep his secret. I avoid his eyes but he forces me to see them without looking at them. (53–54)

The other author who significantly contributed to the growing popularity of mesmerism was Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), a very popular journalist and documentary writer of her era. In the early 1840s she fell seriously ill. Being permanently in a terrible pain she was immobilized in her bed and eventually became invalid. Her tenacity to live normally eventually led her to mesmeric practices. In the early 1840s mesmerism was still an unusual treatment of pain, however Martineau accepted that treatment enthusiastically. Her experiences she finally published in *Letters on Mesmerism* (1845). The vivid language of this work as well as original metaphors allowed readers to better understand the nature of mesmerism, for instance:

> I became sensible of an extraordinary appearance, most unexpected, and wholly unlike anything I had ever conceived of. Something seemed to diffuse itself through the atmosphere, —not like smoke, nor steam, nor haze, —but most like a clear twilight, closing in from the windows and down from the ceiling, and in which one object after another melted away, till scarcely anything was left visible before my wide-open eyes. (Otis 2002, 407)

John Elliotson in his research perceived his patients as laboratory instruments. On the other hand, the mesmeric trance relied mainly on the patient's perception. Thus, patient played a double role, of a subject and of an object. Such a position could not be more suitable for writers who through such a process could analyze and describe feelings of their characters. The above-mentioned fragment of

Martineau's letter can be treated as an exercise upon the protagonist's (in this case also the author's) attempt to capture an ephemeral state of mind.

Another aspect of mesmerism depicted in literature is the matter of superiority originating from the political status of the United Kingdom in the 19th century. The growing popularity of mesmeric practices shortly left the boundaries of the British Isles and arrived in other countries and nations under the protection of the British Empire. In 1845 Victorian mesmerism arrived to India, the place which was a playground for doctors to test, in laboratory environment, the outputs of anesthesia and other ways of treatment. More important for our discussion is the fact that local British residents started to practise mesmerism on ethnic inhabitants of India. The relations of a Scottish surgeon James Esdaile (1808–1859) covered in his *Mesmerism in India* (1847) revealed the dubious and controversial nature of such experiments on the Indian community. Esdaile's intentions, which he covered in his work, point out that India played the role of a laboratory where mesmeric coma could be practised freely:

> I intended to have reserved this branch of the subject [i.e. of the Somnambulism – R.B.] till I had examined it in all its purely medical bearings; but I was forced, by most extraordinary circumstances, to enter prematurely into this difficult and obscure field of experiment, in order to enable me to give my evidence in a court of justice; and in describing my experiments, I hope it will be borne in mind, that I had never seen a somnambulist, or thought of making one, up to this date. My first essay was as extemporaneous and accidental as the production of mesmeric coma, on the first occasion I tried to mesmerise: — the facts are simply these. (Otis 2002, 410)

Furthermore. the magical-oriented nature of the Indian society of that time encouraged to spread the mesmeric practices in India. According to Esdaile's reports, mesmerism became shortly the reason of growing anxiety of mind control. The surgeon reported about the incidents of kidnapping by means of mesmerism. For most Victorians from the United Kingdom, such reported only intensified the perception of India as a primitive and superstitious country. The motif of controlling mind by mesmerism, which also reveals the opportunities which open because of it, can be found out in other literary works. Referring to Esdaile's works, a novelist Wilkie Collins (1824–1889) in his *The Moonstone* (1868) used the mesmeristic motifs in a reverse way; this time an English boy is mesmerised by the group of Indian youngsters:

> They first looked up the road and down the road, and made sure that they were alone. Then they all three faced about, and stared hard in the direction of our house. Then they jabbered and disputed in their own language, and looked at each other like men in doubt. Then they all turned to their little English boy, as if they expected *him* to help them. And then the chief Indian, who spoke English, said to the boy, 'Hold out your hand.' (Otis 2002, 420–421)

The power of mesmeric mind, which allows to control the world around us was also a subject of poetry. Robert Browning (1812–1889), in his poem *Mesmerism* (1855), makes a clear statement which corresponds to the works of the above-mentioned authors like Dickens, Martineau or Collins; that the power of the mind is undeniable and enables us to influence upon the world around us, both in positive and negative ways as the first stanza of the poem depicts:

> All I believe is true!
> I am able yet
> All I want, to get
> By a method as strange as new
> Dare I trust the same to you?

To sum up, the relations between mesmerism and literature, based on the presented examples, allow us to reveal how many field of life mesmeric practices covered during such a short period. For the purpose of this work, the number of discussed works has been limited, albeit some other imminent writes covering this topic should be mentioned like: Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Bram Stoker or Arthur Conan Doyle. Mesmerism became a tool which on the one hand significantly contributed to the development and systematization of science and, on the other, allowed the Victorian society to raise new questions, predominantly asking about the nature of mind and 'I'. Moreover, it took its toll on the society, revealing its inequality but also duplicitous nature. Mesmerism provoked to ask questions about colonial status of the British Empire's subjects and the social inequality between the Victorian Britain, and for instance Indians societies. Another topic not covered in this paper is, the status of women in the Victorian society and the gender to which mesmerism contributed as well. All in all, the role of mesmerism is ambiguous and continuously invites scholars to the discussion.

Works Cited

Browning, Robert. *Mesmerism* (1855). *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 415–419.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Moonstone* (1868). *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 419–421.

Darnton, Robert. *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1986.

Dickens Charles, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, edited by Madeline House, Graham Storey, Kathleen Tillotson, vol. 1. Oxford Clarendon House, 1965.

Dickens, Charles. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). *Victorian Literary Mesmerism*, edited by Martin Willis and Catherine Wynne, Amsterdam-New York, Consterus New Series, 2006, pp. 1–17.

Elliotson, John. *Surgical Operations without Pain in the Mesmeric State* (1843). *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 396–400.

Esdaile, James. *Mesmerism in India* (1847). *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 410–414.

Francis, John. *A History of the English Railway: Its Social Relations 1820–1845.* 2 vols. London, Longman 1851.

Galvani, Aloisio. *De Viribus Electricitatis* (1791). *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Helmholtz von, Hermann. "The Interaction of Natural Forces" (1854). *Science and Culture. Popular and Philosophical Essays*, edited by David Cahan, The University of Chicago Press, 1995, pp. 18–45.

Martineau, Harriet, *Letters on Mesmerism* (1845). *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 406–409.

Mesmer, Franz Anton. *Mesmerism: The Discovery of Animal Magnetism*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.

Morse, Samuel. *Samuel F.B. Morse: His Letters and Journals*, edited by Edward Lind Morse, 2 vols, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1914.

Otis, Laura, editor. *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Otis, Laura. *Networking. Communicating with Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century*. The University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Pearl, Sharrona. "Dazed and Abused Gender and Mesmerism in Wilkie Collins". *Victorian Literary Mesmerism*, edited by Martin Willis and Catherine Wynne, Amsterdam-New York, Consterus New Series, 2006, pp. 163–183.

Storey, Graham, Madeline House, editors. *The Pilgrim Edition of the Letters of Charles Dickens*. Oxford University Press, 1965.

Townsend, Chauncey Hare. *Facts in Mesmerism* (1840). *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century. An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 391–395.

Willis, Martin, Catherine Wynne, editors. *Victorian Literary Mesmerism.* Amsterdam-New York, Consterus New Series, 2006.

Winter, Alison. *Mesmerised: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain.* The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

The Body as a Means of Exerting Control: Mesmerism and Shapeshifting in *The Beetle* by Richard Marsh

Joanna Morawska
University of Gdańsk

Abstract

The Beetle or *The Beetle: A Mystery* is a horror novel written by Richard Marsh and published in 1897. The narrative offers a perspective of four different narrators who concurrently partake in the accounted events. The story revolves around a mysterious and vindictive being with an ability to shapeshift. Shapeshifting seems to be the most prominent reference to bodily matters, however it is by no means the only one that the narrative draws out. The story pertains to the issue of one's body being controlled by supernatural forces and hypnosis as well as by human emotions such as fear and terror. The characters, unable to exert control over their own bodies, become vulnerable and devoid of any influence on their fate. They become reduced to mere observers at the mercy of an ominous being. Following this idea, I would strive to argue that the body constitutes the prime mover and victim of the events. The aim of the paper is to explore all aspects of the body as they are demonstrated in the novel.

Keywords: body, control, corporeality, embodiment, gender, mesmerism, Richard Marsh

Using the body as a means to assert control over another human being has a long history in Western culture. As Michel Foucault argues, this idea dates back as far as to the classical age when the body was discovered "as object and target of power" (136). According to Foucault, the ancients attached great significance to the body that is "manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its forces" (136). The Foucauldian thought has been pursued and further developed by feminist scholars. In her book *The Body and Shame – Phenomenology, Feminism, and the Socially Shaped Body,* Luna Dolezal states that the body can be approached from multiple standpoints which results in

elicitation of various conceptualisations of the body (xi). Following the abovementioned views, I would like to determine the framework which will be assumed in this paper. Namely, for the purpose of the discussion the main focus will be put on the manipulated body which is prone to obey and responds in the desirable manner. I wish to argue that the corporeal mutability foregrounded in the novel points to the fear of the other. Moreover, the discussion will encompass the aspects of sexuality, the instability of the corporeal, and gender fluidity.

The Beetle or as it is also called – *The Beetle: A Mystery* – a Gothic horror story by Richard Marsh was first published in 1897. Its initial financial success and readership's acclaim exceeded that of Bram Stoker's *Dracula,* thereby securing the author's "momentary fame" (Wolfreys 11). Despite Marsh's extensive bibliography, it is the novel in question which he became most renowned for. Interestingly, contrary to Stoker's masterpiece which got included in the literary canon, Marsh's novel was not academically explored until 2004. It was then that it was rediscovered and approached in an academic manner in the first scholarly edition thanks to Julian Wolfreys. In his insightful introduction, Wolfreys investigates various aspects of the novel, as well as historical and cultural background of Victorian Britain. According to him, the novel should be understood "as wholly of its time" (12):

> It is a novel in which the various facets of late-Victorian modernity, science, parliamentary democracy, imperial identity, and, most generally expressed, the nineteenth-century investment in the attainability and efficacy of knowledge as a form of power and control are confronted by the non-rational, the inexplicable, the archaic, *the other*. (Wolfreys 12)

As the above passage indicates, *The Beetle* is a very complex text, offering a number of interesting analytical possibilities. The following paper, however, will only concern chosen aspects of the novel, namely those which relate to bodily matters.

The body seems to be a prominent motif in Marsh's novel – a substantial focus is put on the characters' physical condition as well as on their appearance. In the opening scenes, the reader witnesses Robert Holt – one of the four narrators of the novel – being reduced to a tramp and forced to beg in order to fulfil his physiological needs such as hunger, the need to rest and have a shelter from adverse weather conditions. A substantial passage of the opening paragraphs is concerned with a detailed description of the physical sensations the character is

experiencing, as well as his mental processes. We immediately learn about his poor physical state as he is "sick at heart depressed in mind and in body, exhausted by hunger and fatigue" (Marsh 41). Due to his miserable state of being, Holt is driven to actions he would not otherwise undertake: "It was really hunger which drove me to the workhouse door" (45). Finding himself on the verge of endurance ("For a loaf of bread what wouldn't I do!" [46]), he enters a seemingly deserted house. From the foregoing examples, one could reach a conclusion that the character has no control over his actions which are essentially subservient to his fundamental biological needs. Actually, these needs seem to constitute the basis for satisfactory existence, as the reason why he is searching for an occupation in the first place is to "keep body and soul together" (45). This phrase is repeated twice in Holt's narrative (pages 45 and 55). Therefore, mental well-being proves to be inextricably connected with bodily contentment resulting from fulfilling the physiological needs.

When Holt enters the house which he considers his shelter, the initial sense of relief, becomes quickly replaced by a rather different sensation. Being prevented from seeing due to the room's complete darkness, he is forced to rely on the remaining senses to explore the inside, which alarm him of some ominous presence. The language he uses to express the sensation taking over his body, yet again suggests inability to control the situation: "It was as though something in my mental organization had been stricken by a sudden paralysis"; "a sensation of panic fear"; "I remained rooted to the spot on which I stood, not daring to move, fearing to draw my breath"; "spellbound" (49). It seems that he is prevented from any movement by extreme emotions which have taken over his body – which is not uncommon feeling (the prevalence of such feelings is even reflected in language, e.g. scared stiff; petrified; fossilized – all used to express fear). However, as the menace becomes more and more palpable, the biological explanation for his failure to move seems insufficient: "I had to put the greatest amount of pressure upon myself before I could summon up sufficient courage to enable me to even turn my head upon my shoulders,—and the moment I did so I turned it back again. What constrained me, to save my soul I could not have said,—but I was constrained" (49); "So intense was my desire to fly that I would much rather have died than stood there still; yet I could not control a limb; my limbs were as if they were not mine" (50). This irrational helplessness might seem disturbing especially for the original reader as it later turns out to be caused by the use of mesmerism. During this first encounter with the ominous creature, Holt is not only deprived of the control over his body ("I had not a muscle at my command" [51]) but he is also physically violated by the unknown culprit. The Beetle violates his physical

boundaries in a sort of eroticised act of mounting him: "it enveloped my face with its huge, slimy, evil-smelling body, and embraced me with its myriad legs" (52). The erotic nature of the creature's behaviour becomes more overt when it assumes human form and commands Holt to undress himself. Being physically unable to oppose, he unwillingly obeys and becomes subjected to the Beetle's sexual gaze – it is reported to be "devouring" Holt "with his glances" (55). This time, his body is not only violated but it becomes reduced to an object of perverted admiration: "A look came on his face, as I stood naked in front of him, which, if it was meant for a smile, was a satyr's smile, and which filled me with a sensation of shuddering repulsion" (55). The sexual implications of mesmerism are substantiated in Wolfreys's introduction.

Mesmerism was prevalent in Victorian society, initially as a form of medical practise (late eighteenth century) soon to be deemed as fraudulent, and throughout the nineteenth century it became reduced to merely a form of entertainment. However, by some it was continuously associated with "non-rational, non-European mysticism" (Wolfreys 12). According to Wolfreys, "mesmerism provides the opportunity for the unscrupulous predatory alien to control and devastate not merely through physical attack and corporeal destruction, but also through the psychic erasure of the boundaries which one imposes on oneself as the necessary limits of self-definition" (13). He goes on to suggest that mesmerism employed in *The Beetle* can be read "as an act analogous with sexual penetration" (13). Given that this practise of taking control is performed by foreign forces against English citizens additively perpetuates the fear of the nineteenth century Britain as it "produces an imaginative reversal of colonial relations between master and servant" (Wolfreys 15). The reversal can be traced in the way Holt's body is exploited by the Beetle to achieve the purpose. Due to the continuance of being under the mesmeric influence, Holt loses his strengths entirely which ultimately leads to his death. His body is quite literally used as a mere tool in the Beetle's hands and exploited till complete exhaustion. Once dispensable, he is discarded and left to die. Moreover, gaining control over Holt did not constitute an intrinsic value, on the contrary, his objectified body served as a means to achieve the primary purpose, namely exacting revenge on Paul Lessingham. To use the Foucauldian terminology, Holt's body was forced to a position of 'docility-utility' (137).

Although Holt dies, he seems to be in the liminal state between life and death on numerous occasions prior to his final end. While already under the mesmeric influence, he is experiencing a deeper state of hypnosis which he confuses with death. Unless he is actually dead, though it might seem implausible

due to his continuant mental awareness: "Does the body die and the brain—the I, the ego—still live on?" (57). Such metaphysical ruminations accompany him throughout this state of complete paralysis. The motif of death of the corporeal recurs on several occasions in the novel. Similar a state is described by Lessingham when he recounts the events of his past to Champnell. The Beetle exerts this mesmeric power through physically assaulting him with kisses. Similarly, the creature uses its body to gain control over Holt – through kisses and hand gestures it imposes on him this ambiguous state of bodily death: "He moved his hand, doing something to me, I know not what, as it passed through the air—cutting the solid ground from underneath my feet, so that I fell headlong to the ground. Where I fell, there I lay, like a log" (56). The Beetle itself seems to consider this state as actual death, as it pronounces Holt dead or alive. Even more ambiguous event occurs when the Beetle performs a reversal act. Through the same means of physical contact, it seems to bring a minor character back to life: "As I stared at him, senselessly, aimlessly, the stranger, passing his arms beneath his body, extended himself at full length upon his motionless form. Putting his lips to Percy's, he seemed to be pumping life from his own body into the unconscious man's. As I gazed bewildered, surprised, presently there came a movement of Percy's body" (139). From this passage, one may reach a conclusion that the Beetle's mesmeric powers enable it not merely to exert control over one's body, but also decide on a person's life or death.

Let us now consider the physical appearance of the characters and its functions in the narrative. The novel applies a number of narratological techniques to illustrate the differences between the Beetle and the remaining characters. First of all, the characters' Englishness (and consequently, their assumed superiority towards other nations) is emphasized in their manner of speaking, their habits, and lifestyle. Foreignness seems to be the fundamental aspect that differentiates the Beetle from other characters. For example, this is how Marjorie Lindon describes Robert Holt: "He looks like an Englishman, and he speaks like one, and not, I should say, of the lowest class. It is true that there is a very curious, a weird, quality in his voice (…) but it is not un-English" (165). The Beetle's speech, on the other hand, is referred to as "a little guttural, though whether it was a man speaking I could not have positively said; but I had no doubt it was a foreigner" (52). These references to descent are emphasised on numerous occasions by various characters. The supposed superiority of the English protagonists is additionally underlined through their occupations and social positions. Sydney Atherton – the focalizer of the second narrative – represents scientific innovation and is highly esteemed among English society. Paul Lessingham, who is not a narrator, and yet constitutes

the central character of the novel, is a prominent politician and a statesman with a promising future career. Marjorie Lindon, who narrates the third part of the novel, is an upper-class woman with strong political opinions and unconventional views in regard to social norms. Finally, there is Augustus Champnell – the voice of the concluding part – who is a criminal investigator and also a member of the upper class. Being based in London – the capital of British Empire – they all can be regarded as embodiment of the ruling classes of the modern world. The Beetle, on the other hand, originates from eastern culture which is deemed inferior and it stands for the uncivilized, superstitious beliefs and practises (mesmerism being the case in point). This contrast between the modern and the ancient, the superior and the inferior is additionally accentuated in the physical qualities of the characters. The first description of the Beetle is delivered to the reader through the eyes of Robert Holt:

> There was not a hair upon his face or head, but, to make up for it, the skin, which was a saffron yellow, was an amazing mass of wrinkles. The cranium, and, indeed, the whole skull, was so small as to be disagreeably suggestive of something animal. The nose, on the other hand, was abnormally large; so extravagant were its dimensions, and so peculiar its shape, it resembled the beak od some bird of prey. A characteristic of the face—and an uncomfortable one!—was that, practically, it stopped short at the mouth. The mouth, with its blubber lips, came immediately underneath the nose, and chin, to all intents and purposes, there was none. This deformity—for the absence of chin amounted to that—it was which gave to the face the appearance of something not human,—that, and the eyes. For so marked a feature of the man were his eyes, that, ere long, it seemed to me that he was nothing but eyes.
>
> His eyes ran, literally, across the whole of the upper portion of his face,—remember, the face was unwontedly small, and the columna of the nose was razor-edged. (Marsh 53)

In the above description, the most prominent features are those of the creature's face. Holt emphasises the animalistic elements of the Beetle's appearance and places it in the position of inferiority in regard to human beings. What is more, this inability to ascribe unambiguously human traits perpetuates the notion of otherness and fuels the fear of the unknown. Julian Wolfreys, referring to the pseudo-scientific claims prevalent in Victorian period, suggests that the facial features described by Holt might have suggested both degenerate and criminal nature of the

Beetle, as such qualities were often associated with "criminality, deviancy, and degeneracy" (15). Interestingly, the creature itself seems to be aware of its undesirable features as it expresses longing for more "properly European" appearance: "What a white skin you have,—how white! What would I not give for a skin as white as that,—ah yes!" (Marsh 55). Yet again, the Beetle's racial inferiority is emphasised through the use of physical characteristics. Perhaps illustrating the Beetle as such an appalling and abominable creature adds to the sense of terror and humiliation arising from being incapacitated.

However, perhaps the most overt reference to the bodily matters in relation to the Beetle is his/her ability to shapeshift. The mysterious creature can assume a form of an insect, and more specifically a beetle of unprecedented size: "… I saw him taking a different shape before my eyes. His loose draperies all fell off him, and, as they were in the very act of falling, there issued, or there seemed to issue out of them, a monstrous creature of the beetle tribe,—the man himself was gone" (150). Scarab beetles are associated with Ancient Egypt due to their religious and symbolic significance. They accompanied the statue of Isis in the mysterious chamber reminisced by Paul Lessingham: "Wherever the eye turned it rested on a scarab" (242). Thus, it is not only indicative of Egyptian origin but also of the religious practises performed by the worshippers of Isis which may be deemed unsettling to the Victorian society. Moreover, the physical aspect of the scarab only enhances the feeling of dismay and disgust which such a creature may evoke. However, the transformation into the beetle is by no means the only form the creature can assume. It is also known to different characters as a man of unspecified age and unequivocally foreign origins. They tend to refer to him as man, though he possesses feminine traits which make the characters question his (or her) gender:

> I could not at once decide if it was a man or a woman … . But, afterwards, I knew it to be a man,—for this reason, if for no other, that it was impossible such a creature could be feminine. … His age I could not guess; such a look of age I had never imagined. Had he asserted that he had been living through the ages, I should have been forced to admit that, at least, he looked it. And yet I felt that it was quite within the range of possibility that he was no older than myself … . (Marsh 53)

Interestingly, although the Beetle's gender is highly dubious, the characters unanimously use male pronouns in reference to him (or should I rather say her?). The creature's sex becomes revealed before Atherton, but it is only through

unequivocally female physical elements that he gains certainty that she is in fact a woman: "One startling fact nudity revealed,—that I had been egregiously mistaken on the question of sex. My visitor was not a man, but a woman, and, judging from the brief glimpse which I had of her body, by no means old or ill-shapen either" (152). It is interesting that once her sexual identity is proved to be female, her body immediately becomes sexualized. For this brief moment the roles seem to reverse, and it is the Beetle's body that is objectified. It is, however, not the only instance in the novel, when the creature is presented as overtly female. In Lessingham's report of the events he participated in twenty years back, he mentions a woman, who, almost like a mythical siren, lures him with singing and subjects him to devious and pervert practises.

This element of gender indeterminacy may refer to social anxieties of the time, as sexual and gendered self were the most vulnerable aspects of national identity (Wolfreys 14). According to Wolfreys, the Beetle's mesmeric abilities are "aimed at undermining any self-reflective certainties about stability of identity, whether one is speaking of class-position, masculinity, femininity, national identity … (13). He goes on to argue that mesmerism poses a threat to "conventional cultural and psychic constructions of gender" (13). Indeed, Holt describes the state of being under the mesmeric influence as emasculating: "For a time I was no longer a man; my manhood was merged in his" (54); and Lessingham reports that his oppressor, through the use of her mesmeric powers, reduced him to an "emasculated creature" (245). Therefore, it seems that loosing control over one's body threatens the stability of sexual identity. However, it is not only masculinity which the Beetle targets. The more symbolic transgression of gender occurs through the Beetle's abduction of Marjorie and transforming her into a man. S/he denudes her of clothing and cuts her hair and then dresses her in man's clothes. This act violates her gender identity and reduces her to a mere imitation of a man (Wolfreys 29). According to Wolfreys, Marjorie's transformation into a man constitutes a mockery of Victorian masculinity introduced to exacerbate cultural anxiety (29). As a result, she becomes a threat to the male characters and as such, she assumes the role of the other, yet familiar (or, as Wolfreys calls it – "other-within" [30]). Therefore, both the Beetle and Marjorie might be considered to constitute the element of otherness and to perform the same function, namely destabilising the established cultural norms. Moreover, gender fluidity was bound to cause dismay among Victorian society, yet again emphasizing the Beetle's otherness.

The instability of the corporeal seems to be foregrounded in language of the novel. As mentioned before, *The Beetle* offers four narratives, each of which

assumes a distinct perspective of a focalized narrator. Wolfreys believes that introducing multiple narrators instead of one strengthens the feeling of indeterminacy: "that there *are* four narrators … is indicative of the late Victorian anxious comprehension that there is no consistent or stable language with which to address any matter or concern" (29). Interestingly, the two principal protagonists who constitute the focal point of the narrative are devoid of their own voice, thus the reader is left with the limited and highly personalised versions of the story delivered by the onlookers. Therefore, both the language of the novel and introducing the transgender, transhuman being seem to perform the same function in the text. Namely, they deliberately cause a destabilising effect to emphasise the instability of the corporeal.

Summing up, *The Beetle* is a novel which explores matters of control through the use of corporeality. It stresses the instability of the body which makes it prone to manipulation. Through introducing the rather unsettling practises of mesmerism, it illustrates how helpless a human being becomes when deprived of the control over their bodies. Moreover, the creature capable of such practises is neither human nor animal, though it is able to assume both forms. It can fluidly manoeuvre between genders, which makes it impossible to categorise. The aspect of gender indeterminacy is additionally emphasised through the character of Marjorie and her transformation into a man. The instability of the corporeal is reflected in language which also proves to be inconsistent. This destabilising nature of the characters' fluidity, as well as the instability of language, prevent the reader from unequivocally determining the nature of the Beetle. Therefore, I would risk a statement that the character of the Beetle constitutes an embodiment of the indeterminate, the indefinable which underlies the ongoing fear of the Other.

Works Cited

Dolezal, Luna. *The Body and Shame. Phenomenology, Feminism, and the Socially Shaped Body.* Lexington Books, 2015.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison.* Vintage Books, 1975.

Marsh, Richard. *The Beetle,* edited by Julian Wolfreys, Broadview Editions, 2004.

Wolfreys, Julian. Introduction. *The Beetle,* by Richard Marsh, edited by Julian Wolfreys, Broadview Editions, 2004.

Working Bodies as the Sight of Horror and Pride: *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (1832) and *A Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd a Factory Cripple* (1841)

Aleksandra Baryłowicz
University of Opole

Abstract

The nineteenth century in Britain was particularly interesting in terms of the reorganization of the society and the formation of the new class, namely the working class. During the first decades of the century a considerable number of the employed in industries started to unite and identify themselves with this term. Interestingly, the physical appearance and the body became one of the symbols of what it meant to be a working class man. Moreover, lame and disabled bodies became a vital argument in the battles for the improvement of the working conditions and workers' rights. For the first time in history, the working class men joined the debate concerning their rights and they were able to speak for themselves. In their writing they referred to deformities of their bodies and treated their lameness as an argument against the oppressive factory system. The purpose of this article is to scrutinize the concept of the body in the context of class belonging and recognition, as well as to explore the representation of the body alongside its cultural and literary uses and meaning in the fight for the workers' rights. The voice of the workers was best audible in a form of autobiographical writing of the "factory hands", hence, this article concentrates on the depiction of the body in the two main life stories of the time, that is *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (1832) and *A Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd a Factory Cripple* (1841).

Keywords: autobiographical texts, class formation, nineteenth century, working body, working class

When one attempts to talk about one of the greatest revolutions in the human history, it is not easy to find apt words. On the one hand, the Industrial Revolution evokes feelings of pride and admiration for human skills and progress, but on the other, it is common knowledge that it entailed a large number of nameless victims. Alexis de Tocqueville in his *Journeys to England and Ireland* (1835) interestingly phrased his observations saying that "from this foul drain the greatest stream of human industry flows out to fertilise the whole world. From this filthy sewer pure gold flows. Here humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish; here civilisation works its miracles, and civilised man is turned back almost into a savage" (Tocqueville 94). These are the words of a French diplomat and political scientist who, being best known for his apt analysis of the American democracy in the nineteenth century, also criticized the influence of industrialization on people and landscape in the United Kingdom. During his tour around England and Ireland in 1833, he was moved by the way the country was transformed into a smoggy, filthy and noisy den where the residents died young and lived crude and exhausting lives. He described places like Manchester and Liverpool as sites filled with dirt of all kind, not only of filth and smoke but also of moral and ethical decay. He observed an interesting paradox of how certain mechanisms of human industry could elevate one group, change its position and importance in the society; could have impact on the position and the economic situation of the country in "the whole world", as he put it; but at the same time, could dehumanize and subordinate the majority of the citizens who stayed deprived of any decisive power (Tocqueville 95-96). Interestingly enough, the greatness of the nineteenth-century Britain would not be possible without the strength of the human body. When analyzing historical, economic and socio-cultural transformations at the time, one cannot deny the connection between the financial as well as the political success of the country and the collective physical effort of the majority of the British population. The Industrial Revolution brought the overall progress and financial gain, however, as for individuals who were employed in various factories and mills, frequently, their work negatively affected their body structure, fitness and health. The abusive treatment of working class men and exploitive character of their employment finally led to strikes and protests, which eventually resulted in the formation of a more organized movement, namely, Chartism. The two main aims of this article are the analysis of the depictions of workers' bodies in the two main life stories of the time, that is *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (1832) and *A Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd a Factory Cripple* (1841), which were used to support the workers' actions aiming

at improving their conditions; and the scrutiny of the reasons why referring to body in the industrial debates was important at that time.

When between 1842 and 1844 a young and passionate son of a successful German entrepreneur, Friedrich Engels, travelled around the north-west parts of England, which at the beginning of the century changed into the industrial area of the country, with "Cottonopolis", that is Manchester, being its main centre, he was moved by the sight of the workers and the conditions in which they lived and toiled. One out of many descriptions which appear in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845) portrays the appearance and the general body constitution of the workers. He provides certain statistics according to which 26 out of 46 seventeen-years-old youths from a Sunday school in Manchester were employed in factories. Their approximate weight was 104.5 pounds (47.5 kg), whereas the average weight of remaining twenty youths was 117.7 pounds (53.39 kg). Because of poor stature and health they were frequently rejected in examination for the military service. While observing people on streets, Engels noted that they were relatively short, as there were few men in Manchester who could reach 5 feet 8 inches (172.72 cm). They were usually 5 feet and 6 or 7 inches high (167.64 cm – 170.18 cm), while in the agricultural regions 5 feet 8 inches was the average height. Engels noted that women were more seriously deformed than men. They suffered from deformities of pelvis, hip bones, malformation of spines and were liable to miscarriage (Engels 178-179).

That and many other similar depictions of those employed in the industrial areas were fairly common at that time. They frequently served as a proof confirming a popular at the time observation about the gap between the rich and the poor but at the same time they showed the need for action and reforms to improve the life of the underprivileged. Benjamin Disraeli's famous sentence about the two nations "between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws . . . . THE RICH AND THE POOR" (Disraeli 65-66) perfectly explains the division of the society, which eventually led to the formation of a new social order. The new class division is one of the most interesting phenomena of the times, sociologically and culturally speaking. British society had never been uniform, however, the Industrial Revolution enhanced the growing disparity in wealth. As a consequence, new classes emerged, that is the middle and the working class. According to Raymond Williams and Peter J. Keating, the term *working class* started to be used as a social label around 1815, as by that time there

were numerous attempts to attract the attention of the Parliament to the plight of the artisans and workers who had to deal with the new reality which was being shaped by growing industrialization (Keating 10, Williams 14-15). The worsening economic conditions and rising frustration of workers led to the growing need to unite. As a consequence, growing working class consciousness and faith in being able to alter the situation, motivated a considerable number of working people to join various protests, strikes, and eventually movements. The most influential one, which gathered the largest number of supporters and managed to alarm the Parliament about the growing strength of that social group, was Chartism, which was particularly active in 1830s and 40s.

Together with the political activists, the movement attracted a group of social writers and journalists who got engaged in their cause by publishing articles and issuing pamphlets and periodicals which aimed at raising public awareness of the situation in the industrial north. Among a number of factual and fictional publications, which are today frequently referred to as the condition-of-England texts, there appeared a body of biographical and autobiographical works, which were either written by the workers themselves or dictated to writers who later edited and published those accounts in the press. This literary activity was particularly important since that was the first time in the history that the "voice of the people" was heard and they were able to speak for themselves. From the stylistic point of view, those works lacked sophistication and originality, however, their content was invaluable. Apart from descriptions of everyday life and work, the workers often talked about the hardship they had to endure and the influence their work had on their bodies. Bodily deformations that resulted from the exhausting work in factories and mills were one of the arguments used to persuade the Parliament that the reforms were needed as that kind of work was detrimental to health.

The condition of the body was a decisive factor in a process of finding and keeping work and, unfortunately, any forms of disability or physically weakness, inborn or acquired, were disqualifying. Able body became the main characteristic and eventually a symbol of working class strength and belonging. On the other hand, the deformed or crippled body started to represent the destructive effects of factory work. In the two chosen texts, that is a memoir of Robert Blincoe, a factory operative, and the autobiography by William Dodd, a factory cripple, which appeared in the first half of the century and were widely read and were used in Chartist campaigns, the comments both on the importance of possessing a healthy body in terms of class belonging and the impact of the factory system on the body frame appear.

The first of the abovementioned text was edited by John Brown, and its full title that appeared in the first edition of the work published in 1828, was: *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, An Orphan Boy; sent from the workhouse of St Pancras, London, at seven years of age, to endure the Horrors of a Cotton-Mill, through his infancy and youth, with a minute detail of his sufferings, being the first memoir of the kind published*. Despite its veracity, the book cannot be treated as an autobiography as such, due to the fact that Blincoe, being illiterate, did not write it himself but used Brown to serve as an amanuensis. Nevertheless, this memoir is considered one of the first examples of life-writing in the nineteenth century (Simmons 339). The second text entitled *A Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd, A Factory Cripple. Written by Himself* (1841) is an interesting account of a struggle which was a consequence of the bodily deformation. Having twenty-five years of experience in factory work, Dodd found himself perfectly suited and entitled to describe and criticize the factory system, which he believed to be a victim of. His voice was an important contribution to the discussion concerning the problems resulting from industrialization, also the body discourse.

A common point of departure for both texts is the suitability for work. Blincoe starts his story with depicting his life in St. Pancras workhouse in London, where he was placed after his parents' death. He desperately dreamed of leaving that institution and when the opportunity came, that is when chimney sweeps came to find some hands to help, he tried to appear stronger and more grown-up than he was. Brown wrote that

> although at this time he was a fine grown boy, being fearful that he might be deemed too low in stature, ha accustomed himself to walk in an erect posture, and went almost tip-toe; by a ludicrous conceit, he used to hang by the hands to the rafters and balustrades, supposing that the exercise, which could only lengthen his arms, would produce the same effect on his legs and body (Brown 100-101).

Despite those practices, unfortunately, he was not picked, which left him disappointed and sorrowful. The same willingness reappeared when Lowdam Mill officials arrived to find some children to be apprenticed in their cotton factory and Blincoe did everything to stand out. He knew that the only way to attract their attention was to appear tall, healthy and strong. In Blincoe's case and in many others', the disposition of the body and fitness were the only criteria needed to be accepted to work and the need for being healthy is repeated a few times in the book. The same situation appears in William Dodd's autobiography, but the author

is not an orphan like Blincoe, but grows up with three brothers and sisters. However, as it was frequently practiced among poor families, at the age of five he is sent to work, and just like Blincoe, he stresses his physical strength saying,

> I was then a fine, strong, healthy, hard boy, straight in every limb, and remarkably stout and active. It was predicted by many of our acquaintances, that I should be the very model of my father, who was the picture of robust health and strength, and, in his time, had been the don of the village, and had carried off the prize at almost every manly sport (Dodd 187).

Fine body and health evoked feelings of pride and they signified good fortune and future. Since the work they had to perform was strictly physical, so the bodily fitness was of the greatest value. It should not surprise then, that those suitable for such positions, were chosen on the basis of their physical capability. What was however worrying and eventually became the main reason of complaints and later strikes, was the harmful and destructive form of employment. Financial aspect was also frequently raised, however, the vast majority of arguments used to encourage the Parliament to take action and pass bills that would improve the situation in the north, evolved around the notion of exploitation and destructive character of the employment.[1]

Blincoe and Dodd commented widely on hardship connected with factory work, stressing the length of a workday, which varied from twelve to fourteen hours (Brown 118) or as Dodd put it, "till we could work no longer" (192) or "till I could scarcely get home" (192); the exhausting tasks; and the cruelty towards those incapable of keeping up with the assigned duties. The horrifying fact was that oftentimes the adult operatives were not the major victims of that system but children who were forced to work. Blincoe mentioned the assignments he was given, which were too difficult for him to perform due to his low height; Brown wrote dowm, "being too short of stature, to reach to his work, standing on the floor, he was placed on a block; but this expedient only remedied a part of the evil; for he was not able by any possible exertion, to keep pace with the machinery" (116). Dodd also provided a number of examples where given tasks were far too hard for children to perform. He repeated a few times in his text that "the greatest number of cripples are made from over-exertion" (188-192) and he recalled injuries which he suffered regularly, like bleeding fingers from which the skin was worn off, swollen

[1] To find more about the debates and arguments which were put forward see: *Parliamentary Papers*, Volumes 15-21 (Session 1830-31).

limbs, knees which gave way, a deformed foot which was called "the splay foot" and many other (189-191). After an incident when he was thrashed, he dropped the job and went home saying "this was more than I could bear" (191) but being forced by his mother to go back, he had no choice but to comply. Eventually, after working twenty-five years in factories, he turned into a cripple, and he blamed the system of work for it; he stated, "think not, dear reader, that I have here drawn an exaggerated picture of a factory life:–it would be well for me if it could be proved that I am wrong—if, instead of being a miserable cripple, scarcely the shadow of a man, it could be proved that I am straight, strong, and hardy as when I entered the factories" (221). As a consequence, it was virtually impossible for him to find any employment and was it not for Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, who asked Dodd to work for him as a correspondent from the industrial towns, he would have probably ended up in a workhouse, being dependant for the rest of his life.

Another important issue concerning the body was corporal punishment. Blincoe provided numerous examples of how he and his colleagues were abused; among the most common forms of "disciplining" were: beating; cuffing; kicking; scourging; striking with sticks, bobbins, rope-ends; giving flat-handed blows; tearing hair and scalp off head; dashing upon the floor; tearing ears; or even filing teeth (Brown 141-143). Dodd also mentioned a few examples of how he was treated; he referred to striking with straps and billy-rollers which he was afraid of, as once he was "struck almost motionless on the factory floor" (191) and the other time, he was "thrashed with a billy-roller till [his] back, arms, and legs were covered with ridges as thick as [his] fingers" (191). Those forms of abuse together with frequent outbreaks of various contagious diseases, terrible sanitary conditions, and poor diet turned working bodies into the sight of horror, injustice, early capitalism's greed, ruthlessness, and exploitation.

The image that springs from both texts, illustrates crippled, deformed, "diminutive as to stature" (Brown, 94) bodies with distorted limbs, crooked legs, amputated arms, humps, and weak frames. Bodies, which experienced all forms of humiliation, exploitation, hardship and abuse. Bodies of poor health, lacking nutritious food, decent sanitary conditions and exposed to various infections and diseases. Bodies, which experienced an early death of the close ones and saw colleagues being killed at workplaces. Bodies which resembled ghosts more than living creatures, and frequently stayed invisible to passersby. But the same bodies, when gathered together and united for the same cause, were no longer just the sight of horror but the sight of pride and unity. Despite various, hard to even imagine experiences, they were able to join hands and attract the attention of a wide public

and, eventually, persuaded the Parliament to hear their cry. The appearance of the working class consciousness and eventually identity and culture, were probably one of the positive consequences of the Industrial Revolution, although in the early years, the price for it was very high.

Summing up, Blincoe's and Dodd's narratives were only two out of many working class life stories which came to light in the first half of the century. Without them, probably the process of introducing new laws to regulate the work of those employed in factories and other industries would be much slower and such regulations as 1832 Reform Act, 1833 Factory Act, 1847 Factory Act (10 Hours Act), Act of 1867 and further Factory Acts, in 1878, 1891 and 1895, and many other, would probably appear a lot later or, as Marx tried to speculate, after a proletarian revolution. An important aspect of workers' autobiographies was a frequent reference to their body, which on the one hand, qualified them for work and as a consequence ensured them with the feeling of belonging to a certain group, but on the other, was constantly abused. It can be concluded that the body and its condition became a symbol of the fights for reforms and unity. In the abovementioned texts, the working body is represented as a sight of interplay between the physical limits of the human construction and pressures put on it by the system. Fortunately, when certain borders are crossed, the room for resistance and protest appears and, just like in case of Chartism, the sense of unity and belonging replaces the feelings of despair and senselessness.

Works Cited

Brown, John. *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe; An Orphan Boy*. Caliban Books, 1977.

Carlisle, Janice and James R Simmons. Jr. *Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working-class Autobiographies*. Broadview Press, 2007.

Disraeli, Benjamin. *Sybil; Or, the Two Nations*. 1845. Oxford University Press, 1981.

Dodd, William. *A Narrative of the Experience and Sufferings of William Dodd: A Factory Cripple*, 1841. https://books.google.pl/books?id=0OdYQAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl =pl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Engels, Friedrich. *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. Penguin Books Ltd, 2009.

Keating, Peter J. *The Working-Classes in Victorian Fiction*. Routledge, 1971.

Later Factory Legislation
https://www.parliament.uk/about/livingheritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/19thcentury/overview/factoryact/.

Parliamentary Papers, Volumes 15-21; Sessions 1830-31. https://archive.org.

Simmons, James R. "Industrial and Condition of England Novels." *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, edited by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005, pp. 336-352.

Tocqueville, Alexis. *Journeys to England and Ireland*. 1835, https://archive.org/details/journe ystoenglan013498mbp.

Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*. 1960, https://archive.org/stream/culture society17001850mbp/culturesociety17001850mbp_djvu.txt.

"Dressed as the dirty old Jew, I knew I should not be recognized": Disguised Bodies and Physical Britishness in Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1905)

Maria Szafrańska-Chmielarz
University of Warsaw

Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze the physicality of the Scarlet Pimpernel and contrast them with the idealized notion of Britishness. The Britishness in question, equated with Englishness is shown within the novel as fluid and impossible to define, yet required of a true hero. Through comparison of Pimpernel's descriptions as "tall, above the average, even for an Englishman, broad-shouldered and massively built" with the descriptions of Chauvelin and other characters of different nationalities and social status, this article highlights how the "Britishness" is being constructed in opposition to "The Other", here – the French. The article also investigates the reasons behind the successfulness of Pimpernel's disguises, pointing to the xenophobia of other nations, once again showcasing the superiority of the British ideal. By analyzing the novel it becomes clear that such contrast and the need to glorify the British spirit comes from the need for reinforcement of waning national pride of the Empire at the beginning of the 20th century. The conclusion of the study is that *The Scarlet Pimpernel* uses descriptions of physical features of the characters to promote the ideas of Britishness and build national pride by ascribing other nations the role of "the other", inferior to the Anglo-Saxon culture and ideals.

Keywords: 20th century literature, Britishness, British nationalism, French Revolution, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*

The Scarlet Pimpernel written by Baroness Emmuska Orczy is one of the novels that have remained popular up to this day. Published in 1905, the story of an aristocrat who creates a secret identity to outsmart the villains and save the innocent gained popularity almost instantly. Even though it began its history as a

theatre play in 1903, it was the novel version that captured the hearts of the readers, leading Orczy to write a whole series of Percy Blakeney's adventures. The story found its way back to the theatre stage with the American musical adaptation from 1997 and its various alternate versions (for example a fairly recent Japanese Umeda Theatre's translation from 2016) and with countless movie, comic book and radio adaptations it ensured its place in culture. Although it has become a worldwide phenomenon, the reason for its popularity lies not only in the plot or its characters, no matter how original, but in the national pride it promoted.

Through the story of Sir Percy's struggle against the French agent Chauvelin and the daring escapes he orchestrates for the aristocrats, Baroness Orczy paints a very flattering and uplifting image of an ideal Englishman. The nationality of the Scarlet Pimpernel and virtues that stem from the said nationality are strongly protruding from the text, especially when contrasted with the French – here presented as either terrified or terrifying. The characters of Sir Percy Blakeney and his companions are all perfect images of the Britishness not only in their behavior and beliefs, but – as the author claims – also in their appearances. But what constitutes the physical Britishness? As Ian Bradley notices in his *Believing in Britain* (2007):

> Britishness is an extraordinarily difficult entity to define. There are at least three ways of approaching it: in ethnic terms, where the emphasis is on ancestry, birth and bloodline; in terms of civic identity, where the emphasis is on the legal and political construct of British citizenship; and through the more elusive route of myths, values and customs. (33)

It is also worth noting, that while the definition of "Britishness" remains elusive, the majority of theorists agree that it is widely considered as a set of features connected with English history and values that are applied to other nationalities within the Commonwealth. In *Britishness since 1870* (2004) Paul Ward quotes Gwynford Evans, who claims that although inclusive for the Welsh and Scottish, Britishness is a term born of the English values and customs:

> What is Britishness? The first thing to realize is that it is another word for Englishness; it is a political word which arose from the existence of the British state and which extends Englishness over the lives of the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish. If one asks what the difference is between English culture and British culture one realises that there is no difference. They are the same. The British language is the English language. British education is English education. British television is English television. The British press

> is the English press. The British Crown is the English Crown, and the Queen of Britain is the Queen of England . . . Britishness is Englishness (142)

While throughout history the concept of Britishness became widened and changed to accommodate many different ethnicities and races living on the British Isles, the identity contested by Baroness Orczy is definitely English. It is evident in the fact that the author uses words 'British' and 'English' interchangeably, making Sir Percy and advocate of the aforementioned 'English Britishness'. However, throughout his fight with the injustice of The Reign of Terror his identity is not defined simply by the values and features shared by the English society, but also by a direct opposition to values of the enemy – France.

Louise Marshall in *National Myth and Imperial Fantasy* (2008) claims, that Britishness as such is less concerned with true characteristics of a nation, but rather with a fantastic version of it, it is a myth created from history and literature. She writes:

> But it is not the veracity of these historical accounts that is pertinent to their intersection with notions of British identity and the part played by the history plays in promoting various fantasies associated with Britishness, such as liberty and patriotism. (182)

If considered as a fantasy, Britishness can be understood as all kinds of characteristics that the ideal Briton should have, no matter if spiritual, mental or physical. If it is just a fantastical imagination of how the ideal should look, multiple answers are possible, depending on the era in which they were conceived. By the description of Sir Percy's physical appearance, as well as his disguises, Baroness Orczy creates and interesting portrayal of fantastical Britishness created at the turn of the 20th century.

The Britishness of the Scarlet Pimpernel

The main character of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* is, interestingly, not the man himself. The reader is seldom given an insight into the psyche of Sir Percy Blakeney. Instead, he is introduced to the character by the author through various observations other characters make while interacting with Sir Percy. Though the most prominent focalizer looking at him is his wife, Marguerite, she is not the only character whose opinion the reader is privy to. The narration is as crucial as Marguerite's observations, if not more. The narrator speaks from the position of a member British society, and although they appear to be omniscient, they seem to be

equally fooled by Sir Percy's disguise. It is just an illusion though, created by frequent descriptions of society's opinions of him as illustrated by these quotations: "As for Sir Percy himself, he was universally voted to be totally unqualified for the onerous post he had taken upon himself" (50), or "Everyone knew he was hopelessly stupid" (51). In this aspect the narrator is also wearing a disguise, hiding behind the society's opinions and misleading the reader, keeping Sir Percy's true character a secret. It might be seen as a commentary on superficiality of general opinions based mostly on rumours and assumptions, but most importantly, it is an interesting insight into how such opinions are shaped and influenced by the national ideals and pride.

The first time Blakeney appears in the narrative, he is not introduced through the description of his appearance, but rather by his laughter and behaviour: "a pleasant, though distinctly inane laugh was heard from the outside, and the next moment an unusually tall and very richly dressed figure appeared in the doorway" (47). This is not without a reason, for there is a clear dissonance between the way Sir Percy looks and the way he speaks and acts, something the author empathizes constantly, especially through the first impressions Sir Percy leaves on the different focalizers, as well as through the information given by the narrator. The first description of the character's appearance, provided by the narrator states that:

> Sir Percy Blakeney, as the chronicles of the time inform us, was in this year of grace 1792, still a year or two on the right side of thirty. Tall, above the average, even for an Englishman, broad-shouldered and massively built, he would have been called unusually good-looking, but for a certain lazy expression in his deep-set blue eyes, and that perpetual inane laugh which seemed to disfigure his strong, clearly-cut mouth. (48)

It is worth noting that the only flaws the narrator point out in the physicality of Sir Percy stem not from his body, but from his behavior – the laziness and the inane smile. Both faults, as the reader later learns, are part of disguise the character uses to keep his heroic alter ego hidden. The narrator names him even the epitome of the British way of life, calling him "He, the sleepiest, dullest, most British Britisher that had ever set a pretty woman yawning" (48). From this quotation a question that arises is what is to be understood through Sir Percy's "Britishness". In chapter VI, where aside from Sir Percy's figure and behavior the readers are introduced to his sense of style, once again equated with him being the perfect picture of a Britishman:

> Physically, Sir Percy Blakeney was undeniably handsome – always excepting the lazy, bored look which was habitual to him. He was always irreproachably dressed, and wore the exaggerated "Incroyable" fashions, which had just crept across from Paris to England, with the perfect good taste innate in an English gentleman. […] in spite of the long journey by coach, in spite of rain and mud, his coat set irreproachably across his fine shoulders, his hands looked almost femininely white […] in repose one might have admired so fine a specimen of English manhood, until the foppish ways, the affected movements, the perpetual inane laugh, brought one's admiration of Sir Percy Blakeney to an abrupt close. (52)

Through this description the reader is given a clear indication that a sense of fashion is only one of components that created an image of the perfect English gentleman – although Blakeney's clothes are of French origin, the sense with which he chose them and the fact that his look remained unperturbed by weather, that is what makes him a "fine specimen of English manhood". Only his behavior, untrue to his character is genuinely described as un-British. It is important to notice, that this notion of Britishness is created by the aristocracy, not by general consensus, which is why this ideal image is that of a tall, strong, imposing man, who is aesthetically pleasing, yet intimidating, who was born of the glorious British history and goes boldly into the future, aware of changes and trends. He is both modern and old-fashioned, and always looking and behaving like a proper gentleman.

Another component of Sir Percy's image as the perfect Britishman is his lineage. Although his parents were not necessarily perfect as his father, "the late Sir Algernon Blakeney, had the terrible misfortune of seeing an idolized young wife become hopelessly insane after two years of a happy marriage" (50), yet the Blakeney family was considered noble and respect-worthy due to their position, heroic deeds and love for the country. As the reader learns through Armand St. Just's, Blakeney's brother-in-law, inner monologue:

> Percy Blakeney was dull-witted, but in his slow-going mind, there would still be room for that ineradicable pride of a descendant of a long line of English gentlemen. A Blakeney had died on Bosworth Field, another had sacrificed life and fortune for the sake of a treacherous Stuart: and the same pride- foolish and prejudiced […]. (65)

It is significant that this piece of information is given to the reader by a Frenchman, a man from the outside, who seems critical of the British pride and dares to call it

out-dated. He also looks for the source of his sister, Margeurite's marital problems in aforementioned pride, assuming that Percy couldn't forgive her mistake – unknowingly denouncing a French aristocrat to the Revolutionists – because of this English pride and old-fashioned notion of honour. However, this quotation also gives an insight into why Sir Percy holds such a high position in the society. He is described as slow-witted many times: by his wife, friends and outsiders, and yet he is never shunned away. Quite the contrary, he thrives in the society. The reason for that is not the society's pity, but his family name and his fortune. In fact, his whole family, well-known and well-respected was not famous for their intellect. Good family name and riches, those are the pillars on which Sir Percy's position is built. As the narrator describes:

> Sir Percy was rich, his wife was accomplished, the Prince of Wales took a very great likening to them both. Within six months they were the acknowledged leaders of fashion and of style. […] Everyone knew that he was hopelessly stupid, but then that was scarcely to be wondered at, seeing that all the Blakeneys for generations had been notoriously dull, and that his mother had died an imbecile. (51)

It is also important to note, that according to the descriptions provided by the narrator, lineage is something that can be perceived visually, as is the case of Pimpernel's companions: "They all looked a merry, even a happy party, as they sat round the table; Sir Andrew Ffoulkes and Lord Anthony Dewhurst, two typical good-looking, well-born and well-bred Englishmen of that year of grace 1792" (31). Therefore, Britishness is something not only associated with one's nationality, but also with the class they belong to – throughout the novel there is not an instance of lower classes being mentioned, unless they were of French origin, e.g. the innkeeper in Calais.

What is worth noting is that there is a difference between the perception of Sir Percy and his alter ego, The Scarlet Pimpernel. While Blakeney is an average member of the society, not notable in any way, the bold vigilante is not as easy to classify. The high-class society considers him to be an unreal figure, like the hero of old and that allows them to worship him without making him susceptible to their standards. When Chauvelin, the French agent trying to find and arrest the Pimpernel, attends the Prince's ball in the hope of catching the vigilante, he is met with a strong support for the man's actions:

> Here in England, Monsieur […] we but name the Scarlet Pimpernel, and every fair cheek is suffused with a blush of enthusiasm. […] We know not

> if he be tall or short, fair or dark, handsome or ill-formed; but we know that he is the bravest gentleman in all the world, and we all feel a little proud, Monsieur, when we remember that he is an Englishman. (111)

There is a clear difference between the attitude of the aristocracy towards Sir Percy and towards the Scarlet Pimpernel. While Blakeney embodies the idea of an ideal man, the Pimpernel is a perfect image of a hero, a man of courage who is worthy of praise not only because of his actions, but because he is English, he is someone the society can be proud of. However, where there are people trying to imitate Sir Percy's behavior and style, when it comes to the Pimpernel the aristocrats are more comfortable showing off their support and admiration for him, instead of following him. He is admirable and respected only when he remains in the realm of fiction, of a rumour. He is allowed to be unsightly, but only if he stays a fiction, a hero like Robin Hood. The moment the hero enters the realm of the real, he wouldn't be accepted.

Interestingly, Sir Percy himself seems not to have any problem with separating his alter ego from his true identity. Although he wears masks, lets himself be beaten, ridiculed and disregarded as the Scarlet Pimpernel, his English pride remains intact. After he manages to outwit Chauvelin with his disguise of an old Jew and gets hit by Chauvelin's men he stays quiet, not getting out of character. Yet one of his first words after the Frenchmen leave are: "I marvel whether it has ever happened before, that an English gentleman allowed himself to be licked by a demmed foreigner, and made no attempt to give as good as he got" (297). It is a clear indication that Sir Percy dons the mask of the Scarlet Pimpernel not to defy the British standards of a proper man, but to reinforce them, to live by them. Both the Pimpernel and Blakeney are found lacking by the society – Blakeney has the right position and the look, yet he is boring and dim-witted, while the Scarlet Pimpernel is fascinating and chivalrous, but without social standing. However, since they are one and the same person, it can be argued that Sir Percy Blakeney underneath his disguises, both as a bore and as a vigilante is the perfect epitome of Britishness, being both a hero and a gentleman.

The Otherness of the Pimpernel's Disguises and the French Inferiority

One of the reasons for Sir Percy's efficiency in concealing his identity as the Scarlet Pimpernel is his ability to disguise his character as well as his physical appearance. Although his body build is often described as drawing attention – with his great height, feminine fingers and bulk posture, he still manages to hide them by a well-thought choice of the disguise.

By describing the Pimpernel's ingenious disguises the author comments not only on the intelligence of the hero, but also on the way appearances do not always depend on senses but on internal beliefs and prejudices. The first masquerade the reader is aware of is that of an ugly old hag, which is successful not only because of the Pimpernel's acting skills, but also because of the French soldier's unwillingness to look at someone who doesn't meet their aesthetic standards:

> 'He! La mere!' said Bibot to one of these horrible hags, […] He had seen her earlier in the day, with her knitting and the whip of her cart close beside her. […] hardened soldier though he was, could not help shuddering at the awful loathsomeness of this semblance of a woman […]. (8)

Although the main reason why the French soldier lets the "woman" go is the fact that she claims that she is driving a boy with small-pox, the appearance of said hag is not coincidental. Because of its ugliness this disguise allows the Scarlet Pimpernel to go unperturbed. Bibot is not inclined to look closely at the woman and because of that he misses the opportunity to notice that the woman is, in fact, a man. Another part of this masquerade that ensures its effectiveness is the cart – by sitting with his back hunched the Pimpernel is able to cover up his exceptional height and posture. However, the main factor that makes the whole dress up so successful is the choice of the character – by choosing an old, ugly, poor woman as Sir Percy's disguise the author clearly indicates that such people are below notice for the French.

It is not the only instance of the Pimpernel's usage of French prejudices against them. In the climax of the story, when Sir Percy travels to France to save his brother-in-law and is meant to fall into Chauvelin's trap, he dons on a disguise of an old Jew. By changing his demeanor and mannerisms, as well as his clothes he is able to converse with Chauvelin himself, without any suspicion from the French agent. From the moment the Jew is brought in front of Chauvelin, the usually observant and cunning man is unable to see through the disguise due to his own prejudices clouding his mind:

> About five minutes later, Desgas returned, followed by an elderly Jew in a dirty, threadbare gabardine, worn greasy across the shoulders. His red hair, which he wore after the fashion of the Polish Jews, with the corkscrew curls each side of his face, was plentifully sprinkled with grey – a general coating of grime, about his cheeks and his chin, gave him a peculiarly dirty and loathsome appearance. (246)

Such description shows that Sir Percy is aware of the way the Jews are viewed in France, it also highlights how damaging belief in such stereotypes can be. Chauvelin would have caught the Pimpernel if he had looked more closely at the man whose ethnicity he abhorred. This is something Sir Percy is well aware of, as he claims: " 'Dressed as the dirty old Jew,' he said gaily, 'I knew I should not be recognized.'"(299). When met with Marguerite's confusion, he elaborates:

> 'I know human nature pretty well by now,' he added, with a note of sadness in his cheery, young voice, 'and I know these Frenchmen out and out. They so loathe a Jew, that they never come nearer than a couple of yards of him.' (300)

This supposed French animosity towards the Jews that causes Chauvelin's failure is further empathized by the narrator whenever Chauvelin is the focalizer of the narration. Whenever he is described looking at the Jew in front of him there appears a detailed record of his disgust with the sight, a fault which the narrator blames on the French mentality: "Chauvlin, who had all the Frenchman's prejudice against the despised race, motioned to the fellow to keep at a respectful distance." (246) This instance of violent anti-Semitism is further exemplified by Chauvelin's behavior towards the Jew when he learns of Armand St. Just's escape – he doesn't want to blame his men, so instead he directs his anger at someone he deems lesser than Frenchmen:

> 'Bring the cowardly brute here,' commanded Chauvelin. He certainly felt exceedingly vicious, and since he had no reasonable grounds for venting his ill-humour on the soldiers who had but too punctually obeyed his orders, he felt that the son of the despised race would prove an excellent butt. With true French contempt of the Jew, which has survived the lapse of centuries even to this day, he would not go too near him […]. (288)

This knowledge of the French nature is Sir Percy's greatest advantage, and although he gets beaten in the process, he remains uncaught. He exploits this French prejudice, but at the same time shows that he is different from his enemies – if he can imitate the unwanted, it means that he notices them. Although the main conflict of the novel is between Chauvelin and Sir Percy, the fact that they are both described as personifications of their respective nationalities makes the outcome – Sir Percy's victory – a clear proclamation of the British moral supremacy. It is an echo of Bradley's words from *Believing in Britain*, when he lists the British values: "But what are these values? Those most often cited are creativity, adaptability,

openness, tolerance, liberty, fairness, decency, fair play, courtesy, civic duty, forbearance and magnanimity" (55). By his clever usage of the disguises and apparent sadness at the way Chauvelin and his men perceive others, the Pimpernel fits all of the criteria cited above. The choice of 'the Other,' against whom the British morals shine the brightest, as the French is also not coincidental – the 19th century introduced a figure of John Bull into culture, a persona that, as Bradley claims, "stood against the equally stereotyped caricature of the excitable, bellicose, atheist, radical, libertine Frenchman" (125).

There is also a visible distinction between the way the British and the French are described. The most prominent difference is, obviously between Chauvelin and Sir Percy. While Blakeney's features, despite his lazy demeanor, are continuously proclaimed to be ideal (and therefore British to the core), the way the narrator describes Chauvelin is much more individualistic: "Chauvelin was then nearer forty than thirty - a clever, shrewd-looking personality, with a curious fox-like expression in the deep, sunken eyes" (71). As the aforementioned quotation shows, the French agent's appearance mirrors his character – he is cunning, observant and dangerous. Often likened to a fox, an animal very frequently associated with quick-wit and deceitful nature, Chauvelin is also portrayed as manipulative and terrifying: "Yes, you…" he urged still more earnestly, whilst his thin fox-like face seemed suddenly to have grown impressive and full of dignity" (75). He takes great pride in his position and in the country, showing disdain for aristocracy and he could be written like Hugo's Inspector Javert in *Les Miserables* – an antagonist who is simply following his own moral code and tries to be true to the letter of the law. But instead he is shown as a dangerous, but ultimately unworthy adversary, mainly because of his nationality.

This discrepancy between the descriptions of the British and the French is not limited to these two characters, though. It is also present in the characterization of minor characters. The notion of one's nationality being a physical feature is visible throughout the novel and even the anonymous characters are presented in a positive light because of their origin, as it is illustrated by the description of the guests of Prince of Wales's ball: "Marguerite looked round at everyone, at the aristocratic high-typed Norman faces, the squarely-built, fair-haired Saxon, the more gentle, humorous caste of the Celt" (116). It is worth noting, that the narrator does not hold everyone to a unified standard of "British beauty", he acknowledges different roots of British aristocracy. It indicates two conclusions – the first being that the Britishness is indeed a physical feature and the second being the fact that this is something inherently connected to the roots of the characters being described.

The image of the French created by the narration is less favourable and deeply influenced by the narrators opinion on France itself. It is unclear whether the author tries to suggest that the Frenchmen are inferior to the English simply because they are not English and do not believe in British values, or that they have lost their way because of the revolution. The text provides arguments for both of these conclusions. In Marguerite's talk with Sir Andrew there is an instance where Lady Blakeney admits that England is a country of the law, unlike her motherland: "The laws of this country do not permit murder! It is only in our beautiful France that wholesale slaughter is done lawfully, in the name of Liberty and brotherly love" (200). These words may be understood as criticism of the revolution (although Marguerite admits at some point that she has no sympathy for the aristocracy), or of the country itself, for needing the Revolution to begin with. No matter which answer is more likely, the contrast between France and England is almost palpable. The novel paints a terrifying picture of Calais: "Every man nowadays was a spy upon his fellows: the most innocent word uttered in jest might at any time be brought up as a proof of aristocratic tendencies, or of treachery against the people" (205). In such circumstances, it is no wonder that the men are rather unpleasant. The narrator describes them with biting sarcasm, showing how vulgar and rude they have become. One such example may be Brogard, a tavern owner, whose manners astound Margeurite – he smokes pipe under her nose "as any free-born citizen who was anybody's equal should do" (211), and cursing the "Saccres aristos". As the narrator explains later: " It was distinctly more fitting to his newborn dignity to be as rude as possible; it was a sure sign of servility to meekly reply to civil questions" (213). Interestingly, such division of English/The Other within the novel exists only in the case of men – the women, Marguerite and young Suzanne, although French, are presented in a rather favourable light and believing in the same values their English partners do (Sir Percy and Sir Andrew, respectively). This is something that Paul Ward notices while searching for a unified definition for the term "Britishness" in *Britishness since 1870*:

> Britishness has not formed a monolithic identity. It is mediated by other identities, of place, of class, of religion. It is further mediated by identities of gender. To be British is not necessarily the same for women as it is for men, for girls as it is for boys. (37)

In the case of Marguerite and Suzanne, they become British by default the moment they give their affections to Britishmen. As long as they remain faithful to their husbands and share their values, they are considered good British women, even though both come from abhorred France. What is interesting is that the Comtesse,

mother of Suzanne and wife to a Frenchman is shown as rather rude in her behavior towards Marguerite. She is not granted "Britishness by association" and although ultimately a victim, she is shown as a member of aristocracy who deserves punishment because of her pride.

This discrepancy in the portrayal of women, the fox-like, unpleasant appearance of Chauvelin, his subconscious hatred and disregard of the poor and Jews, all of these serve one purpose: to emphasize the Britishness of Sir Percy and his friends. The same could be said about the descriptions of other characters – the rude and vulgar French lower classes are juxtaposed with English aristocracy and clearly shown as inferior, lacking. Though the reader is given some notions as to how to understand the concept, it is by the clash with Chauvelin and other Frenchmen that the Britishness is truly perceivable.

Conclusion

As shown by the aforementioned examples, the Britishness of the Pimpernel seems to be created by using two different means. The first one is showing the aesthetically pleasing appearance as something that is not only something inherently British in itself, but also as a manifestation of being born and raised properly in the country with superior morals and virtues. The second is based on putting these values against the values and beliefs of "the Other," the French in this case, to highlight the superiority of the British way and, by extension – of the appearances.

This blatant national pride is not coincidental. *The Scarlet Pimpernel* was written and published at the close of 19th century which, as Ward notes, is the era of a shift from nationalism into the crisis of said nationality: "If the nineteenth century can be characterised as the age of nationalism, then the late twentieth century may be said to have experienced a crisis of the national identities that emerged out of that period of nation-building" (170). Therefore it can be argued, that Sir Percy was created as the perfect Britisher both to appeal to the readers and to promote the national pride that started to diminish with the fall of the British Empire. It is also the reason for frequent adaptations of *The Pimpernel*, both of American and British origin – in the age of globalization and unification of the world, the Pimpernel is a hero from the glorious past that reminds the reader of the greatness of Britain. The aforementioned role is one of the reasons why the character is sometimes called the first superhero. As Marco diPaolo argues in Introduction to his *War, Politics and Superheroes* (2011),

> this book will not only discuss such figures in depth, but will also consider preternaturally heroic characters from related genres, such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, the crime thriller, and the espionage narrative because those characters represent similar political values and often influence or are influenced by, traditional superhero stories. After all, to many genre critics, James Bond, Sherlock Holmes, the Doctor, and Harry Potter are as much superheroes as those that reside in Gotham City or the Baxter Building. (2)

In this regard, the Pimpernel with his wit, clever disguises and demonstration of British values fits the description perfectly. His physical appearance, close to the ideal is therefore, truly fantastical and is the result of him believing and living by his nation's values. In the light of this statement, the need for the Pimpernel's presence in culture throughout the 20th century shows a deep nostalgia for British pride and for the Victorian nationalism based on it.

Works Cited

Bradley, Ian. *Believing in Britain: The Spiritual Identity of 'Britishness'*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007.

DiPaolo, Marco. *War, Politics and Superheroes: Ethics and Propaganda in Comics and Film*. McFarland & Company, 2011.

Marshall, Louise, H. *National Myth and Imperial Fantasy: Representations of Britishness on the Early Eighteenth-Century Stage*. Palgrave MacMillian, 2008.

Orczy, Emmuska. *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Bantam Books, 1905.

Ward, Paul. *Britishness Since 1870*. Routledge, 2004.

Anthropology and Literature in Movement: Savage Dance in H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and Lilly Grove's *Dancing* (1895)

Katarzyna Koźma
University of Wrocław

Abstract

The late Victorian period was a time of a growing interest in rituals and religious practices of the peoples the Victorian anthropologists labelled "modern savages." At the end of the century, dance became an object of scientific enquiry—a legitimate subject of anthropology (Buckland 2014). Lilly Grove published *Dancing* in 1895; it was first text on dance anthropology, and it included an elaborate chapter on "primitive dances". However, H. Rider Haggard described dance in African tribes ten years earlier in his novel *The King Solomon's Mines*. This paper presents a case study, which juxtaposes these two late Victorian texts to present the relationship between dance anthropology and literature of the period, in which literary text could precede scientific findings.

Keywords: anthropology, dance, *Dancing*, H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*, Lilly Grove

In the Victorian period, scientists and creative writers displayed a keen interest in each other's work. It was as common for a scientist to explain their findings through a means of a literary metaphor as it was for a novelist to draw inspiration for their writing from the realm of science (Otis xvii). James Buzard in his work *Disorienting Fiction* (2006) notes that the mid-Victorian novel anticipated the approaches taken by modern anthropology. Literature actively participated in the creation of a specialist discourse. The close interaction between the two continued into the late Victorian period, and it seems to be most clearly visible in the treatment of dance; indeed, the novelists were the first to describe "dances of savages" in their writings. The purpose of this paper is to present the relationship between science and literature through the prism of a case study, juxtaposing two late Victorian texts: H. Rider Haggard's *The King Solomon's*

Mines (1885) and Lilly Grove's *Dancing* (1895). I will show that Haggard's literary text describes the dance of the native African tribe in exactly the same terms and with the same categories as those which would be employed by Grove ten years later.

According to Theresa Buckland, the end of the Victorian period was a time in which dance started to be treated as a "cultural phenomenon worthy of intellectual consideration" (174). Publications on dance began to be more descriptive and focused on its history, rather than the earlier texts, which consisted mainly of manuals and instructions on dancing (Buckland 174), among which were *A Companion to the Ball Room* (1816) by Thomas Wilson, *A Guide to the Ball Room* (1842) by an unnamed author, or *The Royal Ball-Room Guide* (1877) by Rudolph Radestock, to name just a few. This shift, which transformed the field of dance research, was only possible as a result of growing interest in the "primitive history" of humankind in anthropology. In 1871, the Anthropological Institute was established, "out of reunion of Ethnological and Anthropological Societies of London" (Lorimer, "Theoretical Racism", 406-407). In the age of New Imperialism and growing British Empire, scientists embarked on a "quest for 'natural man' living in a state untouched by Western colonialism" (Lorimer "Science and the Secularization", 216). Anthropologists believed, that "the study of savages could illuminate the history of mankind, since they represented a preserved, childhood stage of man" (Foote 34). For James Frazer, the solution was a study of rituals, which "(usually enacted in the form of a dance) were more reliable for study than myths" (Foote 36). Although one of the most easily recognizable anthropologists to study rituals, Frazer was by no means the only, or even the first, one. Edward Tylor mentions dance in his *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865). As Susan Foote notes, Tylor greatly focuses on folklore, and tries to explain existence of "similar customs, arts, and legends…among widely distributed peoples" (33). John Lubbock, on the other hand, in *The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man* (1870) writes about dance "among savages" in terms of a ceremony (359). His comments on the issue of dance, however, seem to be laconic and scarce. Herbert Spencer's *The Principles of Sociology* from 1876 treats dance in an even more sketchy manner, categorising it as one of many aspects of cultural life. The first publication to treat dance as a topic of study in its own right, both within the field of anthropology as well as outside of it, was Lilly Grove's *Dancing* (1895).

Lilly Grove (née Elisabeth Johanna de Boys Adelsdorfer), displayed her professional interest in dance for the first time in 1893, at the meeting of the British Association, when her paper "On the Ethnographic Aspect of Dancing" was presented to the public (Foote 12, 14). Although the text itself appears to be lost, the abstract has been preserved in the report from the meeting (Foote 14). It reads:

> Dancing corresponds to a universal primitive instinct in man. The value of a scientific study of dancing as illustrating some aspects of ethnology is very great. At all periods there were three kinds of dances: - 1. The imaginative or poetic. 2. The descriptive. 3. The religious. This last is most important, and may be called the fountain of the other kinds…Among the savaged the idea of magic always accompanies it…A strange feature is the fact that so many dances are performed in a circle…Excellence in dancing among savages is obtained by very simple means; anyone who makes a mistake in dance is killed. Women take a larger share in the dance than men. This is accounted for by Herbert Spencer…In conclusion, the universality and the naturalness of dancing make it an important factor in the history of man. (Grove, "On the Ethnographic Aspect," 895)

The abstract shows Grove's major scientific interests, which she will later fully develop in *Dancing*: the dance of savages, focus on the reoccurring patterns of the rituals, and idea of universality of dance. She properly entered the world of late Victorian anthropology as she began her research in preparation for *Dancing*. During this time (1894) Grove met her future husband, James Frazer, who introduced her into the world of anthropology, which strongly influenced her writing. As Susan Foote notes, "Grove profited from their [anthropologists'] ideas and experiences, following their methods of direct field observations, and comparative folklore investigations, and attempting to trace the lineage of recurrent customs and rituals" (4). This interdisciplinary approach differentiated *Dancing* from its contemporary dance histories (Foote 3).

Dancing, however, did not prove to be successful, as the approach towards "primitive past of man" changed around the period of the publication of the book (Foote 5). Anthropologists started to perceive each culture as possessing individual history, which patterns cannot be transferred on other groups (Foote 5). Theresa Buckland highlights the older approach in which *Dancing* was

written, as she notes: "Grove's subsequent monograph was similarly based in 'armchair' anthropology, waving together…[sources] already well known in the dance literature…[with] travellers and ethnological reports of the practices of 'savage'" (184).

Although there is no direct evidence of any meeting between Lilly Grove and H. Rider Haggard, it seems highly improbable that they never met and were unaware of each other's work since they shared a wide circle of mutual acquaintances and friends. Lilly Grove and James Frazer married in 1896, and the possible contact between her and Haggard would be most probably possible thanks to her husband's work and social life. In a 1899 letter, James Frazer mentions his wife to the writer Edmund Gosse (Frazer, "To Edmund Gosse", 154). The included information suggests Gosse's familiarity with Lilly Grove, Lady Frazer. In turn, Gosse and Haggard exchange letters in 1887, in which Gosse praises Haggard's novels (Gosse, "My Dear Haggard", 250). The later fate of their friendship, however, is unknown. A similarly uncertain connection between Grove and Haggard is provided by Frazer's cooperation with Andrew Lang, an anthropologist. In 1893, Frazer and Lang published a paper "The Youth of Achilles". Even though it seems that their friendship declined in the next few years, Frazer asks about Lang in his letter to A. W. Howitt, from 1899 (Frazer, "To A.W. Howitt", 151). Andrew Lang and H. Rider Haggard met in 1883 and remained close friends until Lang's death in 1912. As it seems, however, the most direct link between Grove and Haggard was Edward Clodd, a writer and anthropologist. Lilly Grove's husband corresponded with Clodd between 1896 and 1924, mentioning Grove in his letters. From the 1880s, Clodd was meeting with Haggard and Gosse in the Savile Club in London (McCabe 64). Taking into the account all of the personal connections, it seems highly probable that Lilly Grove had a chance to read *The King Solomon's Mines*, although most probably after publication of *Dancing*. This net of mutual friends is especially interesting when one takes into account the fact that both Grove and Haggard could have been inspired by the same people and ideas, but it was rather unlikely that they directly influenced each other.

Haggard's knowledge of African tribes resulted mainly from his own travels. Linda Stieble observes that Haggard "was able…to add his own anecdotes to [his writings]; he had several 'adventures': including seeing a war-dance outside Chief Pagate's krall" (23). She remarks that "he kept copious notes of all he saw, including details of Zulu customs and language" (23). Haggard's fascination with everyday life of an African tribe was enhanced by his close

cooperation and personal friendship with the above-mentioned Andrew Lang. Jeremy MacClancy observes that "Lang greatly developed Haggard's interest in anthropology, co-wrote three novels with him, and would also provide him with plots drawn from his own studies in comparative mythology" (25).

The two dances in *King Solomon's Mines*, the witch-hunt and dance of the girls, take place roughly in the middle of the novel, as Allan Quatermain, Sir Henry Curtis, and Captain Good enter the land of Kukuanaland. The witch-hunt, or the great dance, is performed during the night. Gagool and her female helpers enter a near-trance state and point out the "evil-doer[s]" (Haggard 163), who are subsequently killed. The whole scene is described through the eyes of Allen Quatermain, who gives a meticulous account of the whole magical ritual. However, he, together with his companions and Ignosi, the rightful heir to the throne of Kukuanas, seem not to believe the dance and killing are connected with the supernatural. They regard it as a way of exercising power by current, ruling king. This attitude distinguishes them from the members of the tribe, putting them in the role of outsiders and observers. During the evening after the witch-hunt, "the great annual 'dance of girls'" takes place (177). The women of Kukuanas "crowned with a wreath of flowers, and holding a palm leaf in one hand and a tall white lily (the arum) in the other" dance one by one before Quatermain, his friends, the king, Gagool, boy, and guards (Haggard 177). The girl who gives the best performance must be ritually sacrificed. Haggard created both described dances emphasising their features that would be later examined through the prism of dance anthropology by Lilly Grove: focus on magical, religious, and ritualistic character of the performed dances, their connection to death, and employment of characteristic for "savage dances" steps. Haggard describes the dances from the Western point of view, using the European way of speaking about dance, which is yet another connection between his and Grove's approaches.

The witch-hunt as well as the dance of girls are strictly connected with the beliefs of Kukuanas, in which magic and religion seem to be merging into one whole. In the dialogue proceeding the great dance, Gagool speaks openly about magic, which she bestows on her "daughters":

> "Mother, old mother, we are here."
> "*Good! good! good!*" answered that aged Iniquity. "Are your eyes keen, *Isanusis* [witch doctresses], ye seers in dark places?"
> "Mother, they are keen."

> "*Good! good! good!* Are your ears open, *Isanusis*, ye who hear words that come not from the tongue?"
> "Mother, they are open."
> "*Good! good! good!* Are your senses awake, *Isanusis*—can ye smell blood, can ye purge the land of the wicked ones who compass evil against the king and against their neighbours? Are ye ready to do the justice of 'Heaven above,' ye whom I have taught, who have eaten of the bread of my wisdom, and drunk of the water of my magic?"
> "Mother, we can." (Haggard 162-163)

Thanks to magic, Gagool and her helpers can find the culprits. The knowledge about the misdeeds committed by the people, however, is endowed on Gagool and Isanusis through ritualistic dance. The witch-hunters mark those condemned to death only after whirling frantically in circles. Thus, dance is necessary for the supernatural power to work. The dance of the girls is similarly connected to magical and religious beliefs. The only reason for killing the most skilled dancer, given by king Twala, is based on their belief in the supernatural order of the world. He says: "Thus runs the prophecy of my people: 'If the king offer not a sacrifice of a fair girl, on the day of the dance of maidens, to the old ones who sit and watch on the mountains, then shall he fall, and his house" (Haggard 180-181). The dance of the girls is a ritual necessary for maintaining peace and order in Kukuanaland.

In Lilly Grove's *Dancing*, religious and magical dances are among the most meticulously researched ones. In her thinking on dance, "Grove embraced Frazer's scheme of evolution as set out in *The Golden Bough*: "that magic came first in men's minds, then religion, and the science: each giving way slowly and incompletely to the next" (Foote 38). Grove applied this scheme not only to the prehistoric dances but, even more importantly, to "barbarous tribes" living in her times. She borrowed from Frazer again as she developed the concept of "magical dancing." In *Dancing*, Grove writes: "Mr. J. G. Frazer, the author of 'The Golden Bough,' tells me he believes that the more closely savage dances are looked into, the more prominent will appear their magical character" (72). In her argumentation, she drew from Frazer's idea that "magical dancing was a sign of the moral and intellectual inferiority of the 'primitive' humans compared to the individual of science or religion" (Scolieri 87). Thus, Haggard's descriptions resemble notes of the anthropologist, on the basis of which theories on magic, religion, and ritual in "savage tribes" could be developed.

Interestingly, both dances are meant to result in death. The ritualistic dance of the witch-hunt is a way of eliminating culprits—a punishment. Even though the dancers do not kill themselves, it is them who condemn the warriors. In the dance of the girls on the other hand, the roles change, and the dancers are the one to be executed. Thus, the ritual becomes ultimately a form of a sacrifice, in which the dance does not protect the dancer nor bestows them with knowledge but is the very reason for their death.

Lilly Grove noted, "that the notion of death has had at all periods, among a great number of races, a place of its own in connection with the dance in one form or another" (*Dancing* 76). She claimed, however, that death dances are unusual among "savage tribes" as "it is inconsistent with their nature to represent in pantomime abstract ideas" (*Dancing* 76). Grove further stated that "there must be a practical meaning attached to their custom," for instance "hoping to drive death away by what Mr. Frazer so aptly called 'sympathetic magic'" (*Dancing*, 76). The theories presented in *Dancing* agree with the image described by Haggard: the two dances in *The King's Solomon Mines* are connected to death but they are not its mere representations. However paradoxical it may seem, both rituals are performed in order to prevent evil: the goal of the hunt is preventing evil-doers from spreading more harm, whereas the sacrificial dance of the girls fulfils requirements of the ancient prophecy.

The Kukuanas' dances in the novel seem to be syncretic in character. In the ritual of witch-hunting, the dance itself is being preceded, and in a way introduced, by a chant from the whole group.

> Then from a far point of the circle a solitary voice began a wailing song, of which the refrain ran something as follows: —
> "*What is the lot of man born of woman?*"
> Back came the answer rolling out from every throat in that vast company—
> "*Death!*" (Haggard 161)

After a while the words started to be indistinguishable from each other, becoming one wail (Haggard 161-162). The warriors who seem to introduce the dance with the song are also the ones which will be killed. A few lines further the description of the proper dance starts:

> With a wild yell the weird party broke away in every direction, like fragments from a shell, the dry bones round their waists rattling as they ran, and headed for various points of the dense human circle. We could not watch them all, so we fixed our eyes upon the Isanusi nearest to us. When she came to within a few paces of the warriors she halted and began to dance wildly, turning round and round with an almost incredible rapidity, and shrieking out sentences such as "I smell him, the evil-doer!" "He is near, he who poisoned his mother!" "I hear the thoughts of him who thought evil of the king!" (Haggard 163)

The bones that Gagool and her female helpers carry are not only elements of clothing but eventually become props in the dance with which the "evil-doers" are condemned. Thus, the moving body finds its extension in a form of an object. It is also important to note that the dance is accompanied not by music, but by the rhythmical exclamations of the dancers. Body movement seems to be merged with the narration. Also, in the annual 'dance of girls' the participants are both dancers and singers:

> 'Let the dance begin,' he cried, and next second the flower-crowned girls sprang forward in companies, singing a sweet song and waving the delicate palms and white flowers. On they danced, now whirling round and round, now meeting in mimic warfare, swaying, eddying here and there, coming forward, falling back in an ordered confusion delightful to witness. (Haggard 179)

In a striking parallel, both the witch-hunter women and "flower-crowned girls" are using their own voices as background music for their steps. The shrieks are substituted by 'sweet song' and dried bones are exchanged for white flowers. In both fragments, dance is a syncretic proceeding.

The merging of dance and music in the tribal dance seems to be an important aspect in Grove's description, as she called dance and music "a married pair" (*Dancing* 4). She noted that these two disciplines were regarded as two separate categories in the West, whereas in other continents, including Africa, "dancing and song are still one single art expressive of concord and peace" (*Dancing* 87). Grove also mentions costumes in her book on multiple occasions. She quotes histories of costume among her sources, which highlights their importance for dance and its meaning (*Dancing* 13).

The dance scenes in *The King Solomon's Mines* include particular descriptions of the way in which dancers moved. Interestingly, in both the witch-hunt and the dance of the girls the prevalent dance step seems to be whirling. Gagool is described as "turning round" with increased speed, as to enter the trance:

> When she came to within a few paces of the warriors she halted and began to dance wildly, *turning round and round with an almost incredible rapidity*, and shrieking out sentences such as "I smell him, the evil-doer!" "He is near, he who poisoned his mother!" "I hear the thoughts of him who thought evil of the king!" Quicker and quicker she danced, till she lashed herself into such a *frenzy of excitement* that the foam flew in specks from her gnashing jaws, her eyes seemed to start from her head, and her flesh to quiver visibly. Suddenly she stopped dead and stiffened all over, like a pointer dog when he scents game […]. (Haggard 163-164, emphasis mine)

Haggards description puts body in the centre of interest. Gagool, entering into frenzy, seems not to be in control of her limbs, moving in spasms.
The circular movement of Gagool finds its reflection in the dance of the girls: "At last they paused, and a beautiful young woman sprang out of the ranks and began to pirouette in front of us with a grace and vigour which would have put most ballet girls to shame" (179). Though seemingly unimportant, the description of the way in which dancing women moved gives the reader important information about the tribe and its culture.

When Lilly Grove writes about frantic spinning in the "primitive dances", she describes the movement in terms which could be easily borrowed from Haggard:

> Next in order to the dances of love, hunting, and war come those used as exorcism-that is to say, for the purpose of warding off death, sickness, or sorcery. The votaries of such rites, similar in that respect to the Shakers of the Lebanon or to the followers of the Koran, *whirl round until their movements graduate into frenzy*. Foaming at the mouth, the dancers deem themselves inspired and gifted with powers of prophecy, of curing disease, or of dismissing evil spirits. All these dances are full of mysterious meanings (*Dancing* 76, emphasis added).

Grove's description of a performance which is carried out as a form of a purging seems to follow closely steps and movements of Gagool during the witch-hunt. Wild turning, then, was associated by Grove with "savage dances".

It is interesting to note the terms which are used to describe dance steps are specifically characteristic for the Western culture. Haggard borrows directly from the late Victorian dance parlance to narrate the scene for the English reader. Thus, Gagool is not only whirling but waltzing: "Nearer and nearer waltzed Gagool, looking for all the world like an animated crooked stick or comma, her horrid eyes gleaming and glowing with a most unholy lustre" (Haggard 166). The women from the dance of maidens are not performing turns, but pirouettes (Haggard 179). This kind of narration presents dance as something universal, that can be understood and described in the same terms in Europe and Africa. Thus, it is an example of cultural appropriation, common in the Victorian period; the Western writer is looking at the colonial dance through the prism of his own, European understanding.

Lilly Grove, similarly to the contemporaneous anthropologists, treated dance in very similar categories. As Susan Foote notes, Grove drew parallels between dances from various points in history and various cultures (40). In *Dancing*, Grove expressed a belief also visible in Haggard's novel—dance universalism:

> The dance has its literature; it plays an important part in folk-lore, and from the sayings
> and proverbs of many countries can be culled sentences and references which prove that the dance is a universal art, that its adepts are the men and women of all the world, and that it is not lightly to be set aside as the pastime of an idle hour. (11)

The view that dance is governed by universal rules has been challenged in modern anthropology (Kaeppler 117) but it was still very much in place when both Haggard and Grove were publishing.

To conclude, H. Rider Haggard's *The King Solomon's Mines* meticulously describes African tribal dance ten years before the publication of the first elaborate work on the topic. The fact that Haggard's novel came before Grove's book shows that in the late Victorian period the social sciences were of interest to both creative writers and scientists alike. The two last decades of the nineteenth century also gave rise to the more theoretical, anthropological

approach towards dance, which is reflected in H. Rider Haggard's *The King Solomon's Mines* and Lilly Grove's *Dancing* alike.

Works Cited

A Guide to the Ball Room. Mitchell, 1842.

Buckland, Theresa. "Dance and Evolutionary Thought in Late Victorian Discourse." *Evolution and Victorian Culture*, edited by Bernard V. Lightman and Bennett Zon, Cambridge UP, 2014, pp. 173-195.

Buzard, James. *Disorienting Fiction*. Princeton UP, 2009.

Foote, Susan Leann. "Lilly Grove Frazer and her book *Dancing*." MFA thesis, York University, 1986.

Frazer, James. "To A. W. Howitt." 24 Jul. 1899, *Selected Letters of Sir J. G. Frazer*, edited by Robert Ackerman, Oxford UP, 2005, pp. 150–151.

Frazer, James. "To Edmund Gosse." 15 Dec. 1899, *Selected Letters of Sir J. G. Frazer*, edited by Robert Ackerman, Oxford UP, 2005, pp. 154–155.

Frazer, James. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion* (Vols. 1-2). Macmillan and Co., 1890.

Gosse, Edmund. "My Dear Haggard." 2 Jan. 1887, *The Days of My Life An Autobiography*, vol. I, by H. Rider Haggard, Longman, Green and Co., 1926, p. 250.

Grove, Lilly. *Dancing*. 3rd ed., Longmans, Green and Co., 1907 (first publication 1895).

Grove, Lilly. "On the Ethnographic Aspect of Dancing". *Report of the Sixty-Third Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1894, p. 895, Abstract.

Haggard, H. Rider. *The King Solomon's Mines*. Cassel & Company Ltd., 1885.

Kaeppler, Adrienne L. "Dance Ethnology and the Anthropology of Dance." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2000, pp. 116-125.

Lang, Andrew, and Frazer, James. "The Youth of Achilles." *The Classical Review*, vol.7, no.7, 1893, pp. 292-295.

Lorimer, Douglas. "Science and the Secularization of Victorian Image of Race." *Victorian Science in Context*, edited by Bernard Lightman, Chicago UP, 1997, pp. 212-235.

Lorimer, Douglas. "Theoretical Racism in Late-Victorian Anthropology, 1870-1900." *Victorian Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1988, pp. 405-430.

Lubbock, John. *The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man*. Longmans, Green, and Co., 1870.

MacClancy, Jeremy. *Anthropology in the Public Arena: Historical and Contemporary Contexts*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

McCabe, Joseph. *Edward Clodd. A Memoir*. John Lane, The Bodley Head Limted, 1932.

Otis, Laura. Introduction. *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*. Oxford UP, 2002.

Radestock, Rudolph. *The Royal Ball-Room Guide*. William Walker and Sons, 1877.

Scolieri, Paul A. *Dancing the New World: Aztecs, Spaniards, and the Choreography of Conquest*. Texas UP, 2013.

Spencer, Herbert. *The Principles of Sociology* (Vols. 1-2). Williams and Norgate, 1876.

Steibel, Linda. *Imagining Africa: Landscape in H. Rider Haggard's African Romances*. Praeger, 2001.

Tylor, Edward. *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*. John Murray, 1865.

Wilson, Thomas. *A Companion to the Ball Room*. Button, Whittaker & Co., 1816.

Anees Ratheestharan
BA student

A Journey

Time has certainly squeezed and,
Distant shortened to reach the further.
Memories elaborated bore heavy,
Remembrance had some dispensed.

Speed has intensified but,
Events gyred again and again.
Vision now refuses to be boggled
Eschew from solace melancholy
Numb is was all of it has turned into.

Should the Ripples be blamed?
Should Complacency be blamed?
Should Curiosity be blamed?
How to Rejuvenate?

Strolled through valleys
except for the one ordained.
No road nor destination
Dispersed chaotically. Just for the Self.
Even flocks that wanders prioritise.

Every good road is left with traits
Some littered and some ornamented it.
What was once travelled in mass, Now
Left abandoned, yet waiting to be Revived.

All it takes is Consideration, Effort and Care.
And the woods will hence be spared.

Natallia Valadzko
BA student

Blossom

I was walking past a grim exhibition only I
was invited to. The urban setting dulls the senses.
Brushing against the glass heads of stationary titans,
the sight doesn't go higher than their knees,

carefully steering among the breathing moving targets.
Don't look too closely nor too long. Long are the strides
one takes to cross, to overcome. Put in the headphones
and move across the realm, where your mission is not to

stop or look around, question; to dash, to trot, to trudge
through all of it. It was a pigeon.
On the crossing, its body was reaching towards the patches
of the sky, unobstructed. The wings were clinging to the

torso, stiff. The poppy blooming on its chest seemed morbid. How
I wished it to be a poppy sticking out of his jacket pocket. Maybe
then the violent crow, instead, would try to mug you, were you
alive, were you in that navy blue jacket with a poppy in the pocket.

But I saw a mighty coal-black crow brutally hitting it with its beak,
and another idly standing by. Like a predator, it moved to surround.
(Like darkness surrounds you and me) A step to the side, a wing to the air,
a solid smack — the still body moved an inch. An inch. An inch. An inch.

As if by pinching, they drag it off the road, out of danger, out of the spotlight.
Were you preying or saving dignity? Were you testing the flesh long gone or
showing solidarity? Were you dark hungry souls or tired of standing still?
Who was the culprit, the ultimate evildoer? Who is to blame?

The pigeon, reckless, or sick, or unlucky; the vicious crows, angry
and the last at the lonely funeral; the wheels that touched the pigeon
last; the car that does not know how to caress but rushes, rushes;
the driver that does not look, nor does he see, and rushes, rushes;

the rain that made him late; the job that pays only so much; the rent
that almost steals it all; the narrow roads; unpopularity of public
transportation; urban migration; a gust of wind; the inventors of
the automobile, the engine, the wheel. Will we ever grow dead tired

of seeing deadly blossom? Will we ever stop raging against the dying
of the light? I was walking past a grim exhibition only I was invited to.
The title was death, but the label did not elaborate further.

Soup Poem

At 2 in the afternoon my ears,
my mind are hijacked by someone
reading poems by Frank O'Hara
about Frank O'Hara reading
someone's poems. This is what
Tuesdays are like. Yet today is Monday.
I come to eat to a place where loudly
purple flowers at the solitary tables
and the Lamb of God on the wall
are silent — naleśniki zapraszam —
I sit at the table facing the wall
and the wall of silence, listening to
a podcast of someone reading poems
by Frank O'Hara about Frank O'Hara
reading someone's poems. This is what
I choose my Tuesdays to be. What did you say it was —
Monday?

And then with a spoonful of soup suddenly,
too soon, it dawns on me: perhaps this is what it
must have felt like
writing Lunch Poems.

Mine would be Tuesday Poems but today is
Monday?

I Know a Woman

(after Robert Creeley)

As I stepped into the
old house, which is only
somewhat home, I heard

her talk, because she is
always talking & yet her
hands painted more

stories & the clothes were laid
out & the candle was
out, how much misery can be tole-

rate-it, I thought, until
yk, we won't, she sd, *get*
apples this year; eat up!

Michał Klata
Dimensions of the Romantic Relationships in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in the Light of Sternberg's Theory of Love

Geoffrey Chaucer
prof. dr hab. Barbara Kowalik

Mateusz Godlewski
A Lie That Ends the Story: The Conclusions of *Heart of Darkness* and *The House at Pooh Corner*

Content and Language Integrated Learning: British Literature and Culture
dr hab. Klaudia Łączyńska

Sara Górna
The Tragedy of Anakin, a Jedi Knight: *Star Wars*' Anakin Skywalker as a Shakespearean Tragic Hero

Content and Language Integrated Learning: British Literature and Culture
dr Katarzyna Kociołek

Anna Jaworska
The Canadian Graphic Novel *The Country of Wolves*: History, Cultural Context, Analysis and Intersemiotic Translation

Word, Text and Power (Polish Youth/Adult Comics in English Translation)
dr hab. Barry Keane

The Warsaw Literary Meetings Rising Stars conference 20 April 2018

Editorial Board

Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw

ISSN 2450-5064