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IMAGES OF THE OTHER IN LITERARY COMMUNICATION

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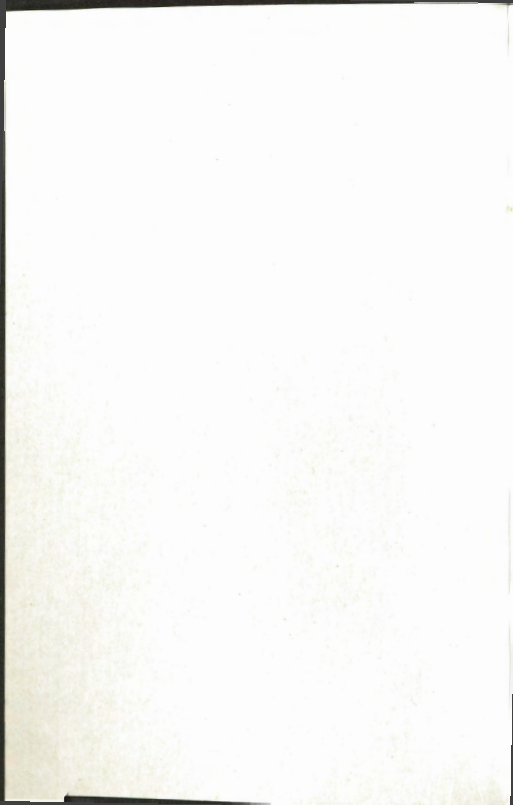
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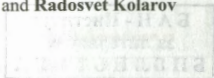
БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ
ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ЛИТЕРАТУРА

IMAGES OF THE OTHER IN LITERARY COMMUNICATION

(2)

Edited
by

Péter Hajdu and Radosvet Kolarov



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PÉTER HAJDU

PREFACE

The fruitful cooperation of the Institutes of Literary Studies of the Bulgarian and Hungarian Academies of Sciences dates back to 1981.¹ Initially it was a contact between the departments for literary theories of two socialist academies; later it comprehended whole institutes in countries that both became members of the European Union. The context has changed immensely, but the intense intellectual climate of the encounters of groups of Bulgarian and Hungarian literary scholars did not. Workshops, conferences, academic visits, and joint publications characterise the cooperation, which resulted in the foundation of a book series in English called *Images of the Other in Literary Communication*. The first volume was published in 2006, and it has taken six years to prepare this second one. What we are offering here is not a usual volume of conference proceedings, but rather a selection of papers representing the achievement of two research institutes of literature and their cooperation. Some articles based on presentations in two Bulgarian-Hungarian conferences make up a part of this book. The first of those conferences was entitled *Images of the Other in Literary Communication: Dialogues, Interferences*, the second *Literature and Literary Criticism*. Six papers from this volume were presented in those meetings – some of them in abbreviated or in a “work in progress” form to provoke scholarly discussion. Five other papers were submitted directly to this volume. Angel Angelov and Maurice N. Fadel presented

¹ See Radosvet Kolarov, “Preface” in Radosvet Kolarov & György C. Kálmán (ed.), *Images of the Other in Literary Communication*. Sofia: Penev, 2006, 10–17.

other papers in the conferences, while József Szili, György C. Kálmán and Gábor Bezecsky could not attend. All these colleagues have played very important roles in the history of the cooperation of our institutes, therefore their contribution is characteristic of the joint research in the realm of dialogue as an approach to literary communication, literary criticism, and otherness.

The editors decided to open the book with Nikola Georgiev's paper, which – in its title – simply puts a question mark at the end of the title of one of the conferences, to emphasise his doubts about the concept. The article discusses the problem of notions travelling from one discipline to the other. Literary criticism is always looking for new sources of inspiration, and dialogue with other disciplines sometimes fertilises the ground, yet sometimes it does not. Let me refer to the wider context of this problem in the discourse on language – first of all, academic language. Capturing a notion of any discipline and putting it in the context of literary scholarship is *metaphor*, both in the original meaning of the Greek word (*metaphora* – transposition, bringing something somewhere else) and as a rhetorical term. Metaphors play a central role not only in explaining concepts, but also in inventing them by creating connections between different areas of discourse.² Professor Georgiev is happy to embrace the metaphors of “literary communication” and “dialogue,” but very sceptical about the usefulness of “interference,” a notion of physics, in literary studies.

József Szili scrutinizes a case where philology, literature, and philosophy seem to interact. In *Der Anfang der Philosophie*, Hans-Georg Gadamer attributed a constitutive trait of Plato's philosophy to the literary qualities of the dialogues, and claimed that in the transition of Greek philosophy from mythological appreciation to conceptualization (from *mythos* to *logos*) fictionalization ranked high as a genuine structural element of philosophical speculation. Meanwhile Gadamer's reconstruction of pre-Socratic philosophy in view of its Platonic reception seems to be subordinate to his conviction that Heidegger's revolution was unprecedented in the history of philosophy. In Szili's representation,

² The literature that can be quoted here is immense, therefore I refer only to two important items: Jacques Derrida, “White Mythology”, transl. F.C.T. Moore, *New Literary History* 6 (1974): 1, 5–74; Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, transl. Robert Czerny, London: Routledge, 1977.

philology also appears as a sort of literature, creating various fictions of Plato's intellectual development and life history based on and/or resulted in various possible chronologies of the dialogues.

The interaction of literary and anthropological studies is discussed by Alexander Panov. The fertilizing influence of anthropology on literary studies is immense, from the problems of communication, through the organization of discourse and the construction of text to its perception and its impact on society and the individual. Panov's paper offers a wide survey of these possible aspects. Where he finds the real focus of the anthropological approach to literature is the concepts of literary genres, where all those aspects intertwine. He convincingly argues that anthropological approaches logically (or necessarily) result in generic discussions, since the focus on the communicative situation and social embeddedness leads towards genres primarily determined by those issues. Genre does not seem such a fashionable notion nowadays when the post-modern prefers to mix up different genres and challenge generic presuppositions. However, a previous (possibly pre-theoretic) knowledge may be necessary both to the production of a piece literature that breaks up with generic traditions, and its appreciation on the part of the audience.

The subsequent papers turn to literary history, although they also have very solid theoretical bases for their approach. Byron had an immense influence on 19th century Hungarian literature. Orsolya Rákai analyses the academic aspect of this influence, and the various theories Hungarian literary historians elaborated to understand why Byron of all British poets was so important for the Hungarians. The purpose of the paper is not to reach the correct answer to that 19th century question, but to understand the ways those scholars tried to reach an answer. It is interesting to see how much they focused on the biography of the author, and a supposed correspondence between personal life and literary production.

The Avant-Garde movement in Hungary received double criticism, both from the literary circles of conservatism and classical modernism. György C. Kálmán offers a broad survey of arguments which were made use of in the discussions to discredit the Avant-Garde. The circles using those arguments were not allies (despite the fact that they had a common enemy) and they were not involved in any kind of dialogue with each other about the common topic. Their discourses, however,

interact with each other, and the locus of that interference is very probably the discourse of literary history, where new connections are created between parties that from many other viewpoints (including their own self-representations) used to be antagonistic.

Radosvet Kolarov is interested in the inner dialogue of the human being, especially the literary author or their creative self. Three cases of self-discrepancy seem especially intriguing from his viewpoint: self-revision, self-criticism, and self-destruction. William Wordsworth, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Nikolai Gogol respectively are the analysed examples. Even in those extreme cases of broken lines of life (which provoked rather radical, confronting ways of self-dialogue) literary history tends to find a solution to create a coherent life story for the authors. In other cases, the authors themselves do anxiously bridge the gap between their alienated selves.

A secret in a literary text initiates a delicate interplay between narrators and readers, since the latter must be informed of existence, or even of the content of the secret. Péter Hajdu's paper analyses various samples from this viewpoint, starting with Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Ion*, where—due to the absence of any narrator—the interplay of secrecy develops between the agents, the chorus, the gods, and the audience. The other samples are taken from European novels (Thackeray's *The History of Henry Esmond*, Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, and Jókai's *Friedrich Trenck* and *Franz Trenck*). Secrecy often functions as a hint at a secret order or a hidden entity that guarantees order. The order, or rather the impression of arrangement, may function as a suggestion of a secret sense. The meaning can be described as the secret of literary texts, which is always present in the form of a promise.³

It is difficult to tell if Gábor Bezeczky offers a critique of Stanley Fish from the angle of linguistic heterogeneity or he discusses the topic of linguistic heterogeneity departing from a critique of Fish. What is sure is that the interference of linguistics and literary studies proves particularly fruitful in this case. He does not simply describe some basic contradictions in Fish's theories, but also explains that literary criticism

³ We would like to express our gratitude towards Akadémiai Kiadó for their permission to re-publish the papers by József Szili and Péter Hajdu that appeared in the journal *Neohelicon* (volumes 34/2: 167–189 and 35/2: 203–213, respectively).

cannot get rid of this kind of contradiction without challenging the concept of linguistic uniformity.

Angel Angelov investigates how Erich Auerbach developed his idea of a European philology. Concepts of literary or cultural geography play an important role in this investigation. As a student of romance philology in Germany, Auerbach already had to cope with issues of looking at the subject either from inside or from outside, and when he was forced to leave the western world and tried to do literary research in an environment where it had no real tradition in the European sense, such problems must have been overwhelming. Exile in Istanbul probably contributed to his commitment to elaborate his concept of Europeaness.

András Kappanyos challenges a narrative of literary history, which seemed to tell a story of interference, as if *The Waste Land* had been the fruit of a shared creative effort of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. A careful analysis of the variations of typed manuscripts and biographical data, which give the paper the air of a detective story, results in undermining the inherited (and quite attractive) story of the genesis of the poem.

It is rather a commonplace that happiness cannot be a tempting topic for literature. ("Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way," begins Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina*). Maurice N. Fadel approaches the theme of happiness from a different angle through the concept of time. If "happiness comes as a sudden occurrence, without being expected or wished for," if it "breaks the sequence of past, present and future," if it is actually not time-bound, then it is highly problematic to represent happiness in narrative, which is more or less about time. He takes the example of *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras to show how the uncatchable nature of happiness can be represented – as an exception of rare moments in the general unhappiness represented as the rule. The analysis of this novel, however, is naturally connected to the main topic of this book; the encounter of a poor European girl with a rich Chinese man creates the opportunity to refer to many types of tension (as in gender, class, race). Since the lovers become speechless towards each other (and can communicate only with their bodies), and it is the girl (or rather a woman who used to be that girl) that speaks, Fadel's discussion can focus on the representation of the other, and the possibilities of communication.

NIKOLA GEORGIEV

THE IMAGES OF THE OTHER IN LITERARY
COMMUNICATION:
DIALOGUES, INTERFERENCES?

Some of the key concepts we are dealing with, such as literary communication and interference, might enjoy unanimously acceptance but they may also produce hesitation or even resistance. And we can well understand why literature seems to be the most contradictory creation of human thought and language – so contradictory that literary concepts are doomed to be vulnerable, contestable, insufficient, no matter whether they are ancient or modern, whether they are as familiar as 'mimesis' or 'structure'.

Side by side with the feeling of hesitation or resistance, 'literary interference' may cause something more: a slight bewilderment. The Bulgarian speech practice confines the word 'ИНТЕРФЕРЕНЦИЯ' to the field of physics and nothing but physics. As far as I know, it is the same case with 'INTERFERENCIA' in Hungarian. In English the words 'interfere' and 'interference' have at least ten synonyms, most of them with negative and pejorative meanings.

This situation calls attention to at least two problems concerning the terminology of literary criticism. The first one is the translatability or untranslatability of literary concepts from one language into another. (Note that there are two main terminological zones in Europe: Germanic-Slavic and Romanic-English.) The difficulties and the risks of their translation are a black spot for most literary critics.

The second problem resides in the willingness of literary criticism to borrow ideas, images and metaphors from other fields of knowledge,

be they adjacent or remote. In the 20th century physics became one of the most generous donors. The swing of the pendulum was an old problem which had troubled many physicists, Galileo among them. At the beginning of the 20th century Heinrich Wölflin, der Kunsthistoriker, applied the image and the metaphor of the swinging pendulum ('das Pendelverfahren') in order to visualize his audacious ideas on development. Volkelt in Germany used the word 'Abbruch' and Slonimski in Russia the word 'срыв' to present their views on the grotesque.

Or take another example. Let us consider the following words: AZ ANYAG ELLENÁLLÁSA and ANYAGELLENÁLLÁS. Most Bulgarians, I am sure, will find them rather difficult to pronounce but quite easy to understand. Joking apart, in Bulgarian they mean 'съпротивление на материала.' This is a discipline taught at technological universities and causing many a poor student to go to the examination with a sinking heart. It raised, however, no fears in the Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky, who recruited the physical concept СОПРОТИВЛЕНИЕ МАТЕРИАЛА in his vocabulary. For Shklovsky, himself a fiery car driver, the metaphor was well suited to his technological idea that the work of literature is a machine which is put together by means of devices (ПРИЁМЫ) and which the literary analyst could dismantle. Here, however, we run into another linguistic difficulty. The English-speaking world, I have been told, prefers the expression 'strength of materials' while Shklovsky's idea needs 'resistance'. What could have happened if Shklovsky had been thinking and/or writing in English? In short, one does not need to be a Humboldtian in order to admit that what we think and say about literature depends to some extent on the language we use (Hungarian, Russian, French etc. And that extent, I believe, is greater than we are ready to admit).

I have strayed into a digression full of banalities and far from our topic but I could not help it. Otherwise I would be unable to swallow the combination of literature and ИНТЕРФЕРЕНЦИЯ. To be frank, I do not understand it but that is nothing much to complain about. The hazier, the more nebulous the vocabulary of literary criticism, the stronger its effect might be. The writings of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida have given enough proof of this.

The other combination, that of communication and literature, information and literature, sounds reasonable and even predictable, especially after the brave borrowings from physics, neurology, botany (for instance

'literature and etiolization'), sociology, etc. etc. The liaison between literature, information and communication seems so relevant that it might be difficult to discern the dangers hidden under the surface of that relevance. I have chosen some of these dangers as the subject of my paper.

It so happened that structuralism on the one hand and the theory of information, communication and cybernetics on the other moved side by side towards their intellectual and social rise. They went through a connubial honeymoon - whether happy or not, I do not know. For a good number of structuralists, the high level of organization of the literary text means a high level of information, respectively low entropy and redundancy. Some of them reached a point which I would call semantic absolutism. In Prague, Jan Mukařovský declared "Everything in the literary work is meaningful" (Vše v díle je význam), in Mosow and Tartu Yurii Lotman insisted that there is no constituent part of the work, minor or major, which is not a bearer of meaning.

The structuralist views were one-sided and narrow-minded, as is any other idea or concept about literature. As structuralism's heirs, deconstruction and postmodernism made the best rhetorical use of that one-sidedness and swung the pendulum to the opposite end. Methinks this kind of movement is very characteristic of the history of literary criticism.

Now, witnessing the decline of Deconstructivism I would prefer another approach, that of Reconstructivism. Literature, Reconstructivism says, is a mixture of diametrically opposed or contradictory characteristics. As any attempt to enumerate them is hopeless, let us return to our subject. Phrased as it is, the topic '*Images of the other in literary communication: dialogues, interferences*' does not question the presence of communication and interference in literature. I do not either. What I would like to do is to recall the outworn and often evaded observation that literature is at the same time non- and/or anti-communication, non- and/or anti-interference. It would be a mistake to treat the members of these pairs isolated from each other.

The contradiction or the opposition is to be found on the levels of content and of expression. On the level of content, literature overflows with situations of impossible, difficult or denied communication. The examples are too numerous to list. I shall only remark that the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, if it is indeed a tragedy, would look different if there were mobile phones in Verona. It would be better to turn to some

already systematized material, such as Elizabeth Frenzel's highly instructive book *Motive der Weltliteratur* (third edition 1988). It presents fifty-seven of the most popular literary motifs, among them *verfeindete Brüder*, *Doppelgänger*, *Inseldasein*, *Hahnrei*. Twenty-seven out of these fifty-seven speak about impossibility or unwillingness to commune, about solitude, covering up the truth, about lies, alienation, mistrust and many other precious good manifestations of human nature. The other thirty motifs are predominantly ambiguous and only a small number of them clearly bring out the meanings of communicativity, understanding and good will among people. If we put our trust in literature, we must admit that the human race is not the domain of these virtues. Literature, of course, exaggerates in both directions, the communicative and the non-communicative. In literature the world is not only split, it is also intensely exaggerated.

We could find the same form of split and polarization on the level of expression, that is of language *in* literature (I do not accept that there is a language *of* literature). A modest dose of imagination could encourage us to look for some link between the two levels, one which Charles Peirce would call *iconic*.

Language in literature: there is hardly any other place where language is so crucified between admiration and mistrust. Literature has the old habit of speaking explicitly about language. One trend is that of glorification. If, according to Heidegger, language is the home which people inhabit, literature would add that this is its cosiest home, one where it feels most at ease. Literature is even more enthusiastic when speaking about specific national languages. The story began perhaps with Dante and his 'De vulgare eloquentio', continued with 'Defense et illustration de la langue française' by Ronsard and Bellay, with Martin Opitz in Germany and reached its peak with verses like these:

De lobogsz még
szél kaszabolta magyar nyelv
(Koszorú-Wreath)

Or:

Oh jól vigyázz, mert anyád nyelvét bízták
Rád a századok / s azt meg vell védened
(A magyarokhoz)

The Bulgarian equivalent of these verses is "Език свещен на монте деди..." by Ivan Vazov or „Езикът ни е дивен..." by Pencho Slaveikov. We speak of language myths: the French language, they say, is logical, Italian is beautiful, German is coarse and Russian ... Oh, Russian is великий, могучий русский язык. Literature is among the most zealous creators and propagators of language myths, and only a few of its myths are negative.

Literature can express its homage to language openly, explicitly but can also do so silently by revealing, intensifying and demonstrating the capacities of the language. All conceptions in criticism have stressed this feature and Neohumboldtians like Leo Weisgerber and Hermann Siedler bluntly call literature "eine Blüthe der menschlichen Sprache". This flourishing, however, reaches a point where information and communication turn against themselves. There we can find something of what we call literariness ("литературность", in the jargon of the Russian formalists). It is necessary, it is possible but also very perilous to speak about information and communication in general. The various speech types and genres require approaches and measures of their own. And while speaking of literary communication, we put the logical stress on 'literary' and not on 'communication'.

The contradictory and oppositional nature of literature spreads to its attitude towards language. Literature weaves garlands of glory round language but literature also rebels against language. This split attitude is as old as human culture. For some people language is our snug home, while for others, say Nietzsche, it is a Kerkerhouse, a prison-house. This is how matters stood and still stand in philosophy, religion, theology (for instance Meister Eckhardt), ethics, psychology (for instance Lacan) and elsewhere. And what does literature do? It makes use of this old conflict, intensifies and manipulates it, bringing it to the edge of literary convention. This is a centuries-long process which did not begin with Mallarmé, as Julia Kristeva argues.

Literature suggests or gives expression to what can be termed its *linguistic dissatisfaction* in many varieties of ways. It can press even more the unstable combinatory frame of language and create what Noam Chomsky called *semi-grammatical expressions*. It can press the unstable frame of the vocabulary and coin semi-languages like the *zaum* of the Russian futurists. It can speak in a totally shaman language.

It can pointedly fall silent and thus give ground to George Steiner and Ihab Hassan to promote the idea of an aesthetic of silence.

And one more sway in literature. It can speak with self-confidence, purposefully, or it can speak hesitantly, searching for expression. We in Bulgaria call the first type *poetics of the found discourse* and the other one *poetics of the seeking discourse*.

The voice of the speaker in literature is also caught in the swing between self-confidence and hesitance in literary discourse. Sometimes the voice can trace curves in the history of a national literature. Thus, Bulgarian poetry from about the middle of the 19th century speaks with a strong, loud manly voice which often turns into a cry in the poetry of Hristo Botev (born 1848, killed in the uprising of 1876; some people in Bulgaria call Petöfi the Hungarian Botev, some people in Hungary call Botev the Bulgarian Sándor Petöfi). Towards the end of the 19th century, the pitch of the voice falls to the level of normal speech. The curve of the pitch falls headlong down during the first two decades of the 20th century, passes through the whisper and reaches silence. I have in mind the so called Symbolism. Parallel with this curve, the trust in language also goes down sharply. The poetry of Peyo Yavorov begins to speak about the ineffable, the inexpressible.

Here I would like to add a few words on interference. Physics textbooks tell me that interference is "a construction in space of two or more waves with equal periods as a result of which the amplitudes of the resultant waves..." and so on. I did my best to decipher the formula

$$A = \sqrt{A_1^2 + A_2^2 + 2A_1A_2 \cos \varphi}.$$

I do not understand why but at the end of all my efforts I knew even less than before about interference in literature. Whatever it may be, I shall follow once again the principles of Reconstructivist thinking and shall put without delay 'non-' or 'anti-' before 'interference'. Whenever we say something about literature, we could immediately say or think the opposite, the contradictory or at least something different. Each will have a grounding of its own, each will be one-sided and insufficient. If there are dictionaries of antonyms (big – little, rich – poor), there could be dictionaries of antonymous concepts of literary criticism. The ideas and the concepts of criticism work in close interconnection, based mainly on the principle of negation.

For the sake of clarity let me replace the paired types of interference 'non/anti interference' with 'open/closed'. It is not because open and closed are more unambiguous but simply because they are more fundamental and more popular; we find them even in clichés like the American *close reading* or the German *geschlossene Struktur*.

Literature is a combination of 'open' and 'closed'. The opposition acts within the frame of the literary work, among its elements. This kind of opposition seems to be the one most neglected by literary criticism. The next kind is intertextual, the presence or the absence of relations among the literary works. Is the work a unit enclosed in itself or not? If this question is at all asked, different ages and conceptions offer different answers. We hear from 18th-century Germany that the work is an organic whole (the so called *Organismusästhetik*) and that the Germans have developed *Gefühl für das Ganze*, a Feeling for the Whole. In short, the work is a closed monadic unit. The American New Criticism was frankly and in some sense childishy isolationist. Structuralism, more flexibly indeed, leaned to the same idea. Benedetto Croce ... but enough of these well known examples.

This is one of the poles. At the other pole, various approaches open the work in different directions. *La littérature comparée* worked on the ground of Influence (author – author), *Rezeptionsästhetik* opened the work to the reader, dialogism and intertextuality paved the way among the works. All of them, however, were surpassed by Deconstruction which denied the right of the separate work to be separate. At the third stage literature was opened to its near or remote neighbours – though indeed only in the imagination of the deconstructivists.

Each of these poles has its own grounds, its own truth, the equally good reason to be accepted or rejected, as Reconstructivism would say.

I began my paper by adding a question mark after the title and then tried to explain my reasons for doing so. I now conclude with a verbal question mark: if we speak about communication in literature, could we not discuss communication, language and terminology in the field of literary criticism?

GADAMER'S PLATO

"...Platon, der ein ganz großer Schriftsteller vom Range eines Sophokles beziehungsweise eines Shakespeare war..." (Gadamer: *Der Anfang der Philosophie.*)

"...Daß der Platonische Dialog, diese entsetzlich selbstgefällige und kindliche Art Dialektik, als Reiz wirken könne, dazu muß man nie gute Französer gelesen haben – Fontanelle zum Beispiel. Plato ist langweilig." (Nietzsche: *Götzen-Dämmerung oder wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert.*)

Plato's oeuvre as we have it raises the problem of "literariness", "literarization", "poetization" or "fictionalization" in several ways. Any encounter with the traditional Platonic corpus compels the student to posit a "whole" and this cannot be done without forming an idea of what a *whole* is and, consequently, without fictionalization. Any work attributed to Plato involves a distinction between a canon of "authentic" works and the "apocrypha".¹ Any discussion of Plato's works involves conjectures on their sequence and chronology. *Fiction One* is the Canon

¹ Works mentioned by Aristotle (*Politeia*, *Timaeus*, *Nomoi*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Hippias Minor*, *Theaetetus*, *Philebus*, *Sophistes*, *Politicus*, *Apology*, *Protagoras*, and *Crito*) are accepted as authentic. *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Cratylus*, *Hippias Maior*, *Euthydemus*, *Menexenus* are also generally approved as authentic). As to the rest, opinions vary. *Alcibiades I*, *Cleitophos*, *Ion* and *Anteros* appear more acceptable than *Alcibiades II*, *Theagenes*, *Epinomis*, *Hypparchus* and *Minos*. Of the thirteen *Epistulae*, the authenticity of *Epistulae VI-VIII* is less disputed.

of an Authentic Corpus and *Fiction Two* is a Logic or System enabling the student to arrange the works in an acceptable sequential order and a tentative chronological scheme. A further fictional dimension (*Fiction Three*) is created when the student unravels a "Socrates" and a "Socratic philosophy" from the Platonic texts distinct from "Plato" as a reliable or unreliable narrator and from "Platonic philosophy". *Fiction Three* engenders further *Fictions*. One of them is memorable: *the Fiction of Necessary Evolution*. Such is the inevitable supposition that Plato's philosophy is more advanced than that of Socrates or of their predecessors. (N. B. The word "predecessor" carries both a temporal and an evolutionary reference.) Another *Fiction* could be the (necessary) development of Plato's philosophy with its specific sequential and temporal phases. Further *Fictions* would appoint to Plato a place in the evolutionary phases from pre-Socratic to Aristotelian philosophy. Another dimension of the inevitable fictionalization is inherent in the historical evolution of philology and hermeneutics with a change or improvement in the methods of de- and re-fictionalization.

Attention is, as a rule, diverted from the paradoxical fact that Socrates' philosophy, personality and biography² are more or less fictional constructs. His philosophy was worded by Plato, and it is hard to determine how close his interpretations are to the original utterances. The rendering is certainly not verbatim, and the characterization of the historical person is a monument to Plato's poetic talent.

Classical scholars, absorbed in the problem of the authenticity of Plato's oeuvre, are cited by others as authorities on the subject. That they certainly are, but what they initially stated as hypotheses would then circulate as a settled issue, a lasting solution. In the history of philosophy, authority is double-rooted: it stems from either the philological or the philosophical merits of the solution. Either will grant full authenticity. The rhetoric of age and authority confers convincing habitual authority to texts initially referred to with caution and reserve.

Certain assumptions seem to have no apparent need of evidence. Such is the idea that in his long career Plato performed a steady progress

² Perhaps including the description of his mortal agony. According to Paul Woodruff ("Aristotle on Mimesis", in A. O. Rorty [ed.], *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. 73-96) modern medicine knows no precedent of the gradual cooling process caused by hemlock [*Conium maculatum*] as described by Plato in *Phaedo*.

to full maturity. It is unthinkable that his mental progress was at times whimsical, contradictory, or that he advanced by haphazard itineraries or resorted to a game of hit or miss. Friedrich Schleiermacher was convinced that right from the beginning Plato followed a preconceived scheme in the array or evolution of his philosophy. As a great teacher of mankind, he drew up a didactic plan in which the elementary stage was followed by an intermediate stage and concluded in a constructive one, displaying progress from a simple order to a complex system.

Other conceptions connect Plato's theoretical progress to biographical detail. This procedure doubles our Archimedean fixed point. On the one hand, we witness the systematic advance in the philosopher's conceptual framework, changes in the form and content of his philosophy. On the other, the biographical aspect "as such" is at work: the adaptation of traditional and inferential biographical data and the dating of texts³ contribute, or are subordinated, to a scheme of intellectual ripening. (The two aspects are interchangeable, sometimes they are mingled; the harder to disentangle them, the more impressive they are.)

One such conception is buttressed up with a tale about the disciple's gradual growth into independence. In this process, Plato gets rid of Socrates' influence and develops his own genuine conception, especially his doctrine of ideas. A classical model of this approach is the chronological arrangement of Plato's works by Eduard Zeller. In the first phase Plato is a close follower of Socrates (*Hippias Minor*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Lysis*, *Laches*, *Carmides*, *Protagoras*). His departure is exemplified by the second phase (*Phaedrus*, *Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, *Menon*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophistes*, *Politicus*, *Parmenides*, *Cratylus*). The last phase is that of full-fledged independence (*Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Philebus*, *Politeia*, *Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Nomoi*).

In his *Der Anfang der Philosophie* Hans-Georg Gadamer adopted a conception of Plato's mental development based on a conceptual and rational frame of reference. He thought that Zeller's procedure followed a Hegelian scheme of evolution.

³ For a critical study of Plato's biography see Jeno Platthy, *Plato: A Critical Biography*. Santa Claus: Federation of International Poetry Associations of Unesco, 1990. (I am indebted to Dr. László Ferenczi for calling my attention to this important attempt to confront all available sources and suggestions.)

Sein Grundkonzept ist ein gemäßigter Hegelianismus. Das hat ihn dazu geführt, in der Entwicklung des philosophischen Denkens – und zumal des griechischen Denkens – einen bestimmten Sinn zu erkennen. Er sieht darin Sinn, aber nicht gemäß der Auffassung Hegels die Notwendigkeit einer Entwicklung. Im übrigen ist die Deutung der philosophischen Überlieferung mittels des Hegelschen Schemas nunmehr eine Konstante unserer Denkweise, auch wenn man den vollkommenen Parallelismus zwischen der logischen Entwicklung der Ideen und ihrem Fortgang in der Philosophiegeschichte nicht ohne Einschränkungen gelten läßt.⁴

Obviously the extant texts help attribute a coherent conceptual system to the philosopher. (Partial "coherence" is equal to non-coherence but partial fictionalization may have a beneficial function in the mediation of perfect coherence.) Biographical fictions are welcome for the concoction of a compact story like the traditional one: at an early stage of the chronological sequence Plato had not yet slipped from beneath Socrates' cloak, and as an ardent follower he was fictionalizing the life and character of his master; as the distance grew, he tended towards abstraction, and instead of the occasional appeal to Socratic myths, he developed a clear-cut conceptual scheme and systemic coherence.

The traditionally accepted writings – thirty-four dialogues, the *Apology* and the letters – are arranged in nine equal groups.⁵ The majority of the *Epistulae* belong to the class of less authoritative works. The authority of the frequently cited *Letter Seven* is not indisputable either, although it is taken by many as creditable biographical source.

A Hungarian scholar, Róbert Falus, refers to a stylistic evolution in the sequence of Plato's works. The first phase is represented by *Apology* and several brief inductive works with intimate reminiscences of the personality of Socrates and ending in inconclusive *aporias*; the second phase by the *Politeia* and dialogues of sophisticated literary forms on fundamental issues of epistemology and dialectics; the third phase

⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang der Philosophie. Aufgrund der Übersetzung aus dem Italienischen von Joachim Schulte vom Autor revidierte Fassung*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 1996, 26.

⁵ Cf. Róbert Falus, *Az antik világ irodalmai* (The Literatures of the Ancient World). Budapest: Gondolat, 304.

is characterized by a stiff deductive style, large-scale compositions of lengthy monologues, constrained reliance on the dialogue form, and an improved doctrine of *ideas*.⁶

This would mean that the arrangement starts with a running commentary on the death of the Master and an *Apology* taken down in shorthand. As to the rest, the solution depends on what is accepted as a formal criterion of philosophical achievement, the dialogue form with an open, aporetic "conclusion", or a deductive, stiff-styled, constrained exposition. Should one accept the portraiture of a Plato surrendering open-ended literary approaches for a strictly methodical way of philosophical thought? Or does stiff-styled ponderousness and ambitious grandeur characterize a less mature age, while maturity is revealed in elaborate literary composition, constant progress "on the road," a philosophy of open-ended teleology?

The literary character of the texts suggests an implied author somewhat different from the traditional portraiture of Plato. The implied author incarnates an anachronistic union of the four evangelists and a philosophically inclined but religiously tempered Paulus. The story is a more or less profane salvation story in which the protagonist is the "soul", an immortal traveler in this and the other world, wandering through aeons of existence towards final justice and judgement.

The actual hero, the human figure in the salvation story, is a pious though somewhat ridiculous man (his leg was pulled by contemporary comedy writers) who slighted officialdom, rank, gains, position, fortune, and had a sense of mission or obsession with telling the truth to all and sundry. He died as a just man convicted by unjust law or lawyers, adhered to the principle of justice to his last minute, and turned aside plans of escape. Alluding to his "daimon" ("guardian angel", "the still small voice"), he relied on his own conception or inner sense of honour and justice and ignored commonplace, socially accepted utilitarian interpretations. His disciples stood by him to the end and afterwards flew to Megara. In the sequel of these events Athens repented and set up a statue of him.

One of the disciples devoted his life-work to immortalizing the memory of the Master. He slipped into Socrates' spiritual skin and attempted perfect intellectual identification in order to bring him back to

⁶ Ibid.

life. An inspired union of their intellects and ideas resulted in genuine spiritual resurrection. What had once been seen as a speculation about the recreated Socrates now came true. In a passage of *Cratylus* Socrates asks Cratylus to consider what would be the case if some god created not only a resemblance, an imitation of Cratylus's complexion and shape but also his inward organization with the necessary warmth and softness, infusing in it soul, mobility and intellect. Was that merely an image of him or himself in a new edition? Cratylus agreed that it would be himself reconstituted as if there were two Cratyluses.

This intellectual cloning, spiritual resurrection or resuscitation has reached a point at which it is impossible to distinguish Socrates' and Plato's share in a common heritage. The materialization of an intellectual union recalls *Symposium*, the theses on love and the perfect intellectual union achieved in (homosexual) love. Or it may recall the Old Testament: God created man based on his own resemblance and similitude. Or the motif of resurrection in the Christian redemption myth.

The ethical contexts of this profane redemption story reveal a parallelism between "eros" and "charis" and between "charis" and "agape". They lend a new emphasis to the paradoxical conclusion of the contemplation on "justice" in *Politeia* 10, to an ironic parallelism between the principle of the eternal life of the Soul (whose vital inward truth is justice for justice's sake) and the utilitarian aspects of the state or the doctrines of organized religion. There is a definite parallelism between the protagonists' radicalism: their opposition to official politics, the Establishment, wealth, self-conceit and pharisaic speculation.

The basic strain in the Socratic and Platonic sense of mission was a kind of spiritual humanism. It preceded the birth of Christianity by centuries. It had, however, several distinctive features: its extreme profanity, provocative intellectualism, relentless individualism and an inherent resistance to institutionalization in the form of state order or established religion. (The *Politeia* and Plato's political ambitions do not contradict this vein.) Its logical paroxysm combined with a kind of realistic sophism and fundamentalist scepticism works as an aggressive corrosion on its eventual religious disposition.

This is rooted not simply in Socrates' dictum that myths are pleasant tales. We should consider such instances as the ominous move, made in the *Politeia*, towards radical censorship in order to preserve the reputation of the deities: the necessity of this dictatorial measure in-

dicates the substantial incompatibility of statehood and justice. Another ontological paradox is present in the conclusive section of the *Politeia*. Here the solution of the individual and spiritual problem of justice is slipped over to a myth attested by reference to Er of Pamphylia, son of Armenios, i. e. to second hand information from a man who was rumoured to have returned from death. Here the rational core is the same as that of the religion of *agape*: the irrational is transcended by a belief whose reality lies in its power to change the unreal to real and the irrational to rational.

Gadamer's "wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein" and the Problem of Priority (Heidegger v. Parmenides)

An important aspect of the various parachronological and parasystematic arrangements of Plato's life-work is that they imply a totality, a philosophical perfection or at least an innate tendency towards perfection. This aspect seems to be beyond argument, it does not need, apparently, any explanation. Psychological factors are effective in the rhetoric of this procedure. Its theses are, as a first step, usually adopted as a working hypothesis but in the final account they acquire a kind of absolute validity – with undoubted retroactive appeal. Considering Gadamer's canon of Plato's oeuvre, we should regard it as embodying a twofold conception, one concerning the totality of Plato's biographical rapprochement to *full maturity* and another on the evolution of Western philosophy *as a whole*.

According to this view, Heidegger's philosophical revolution represents the summit in the world history of philosophy. In other words: if Heidegger set the ultimate boundaries of metaphysics at Hegel's or (in certain respects) at Nietzsche's achievement, the beginning (*der Anfang*) of the new (non metaphysical) metaphysics was introduced by Heidegger. It remains a problem to judge if there was, or could at all have existed, a similar beginning, a similar tendency earlier, i. e. in antiquity, or Heidegger's move is a radically new, unprecedented, final and crowning achievement. The solution is presented in *Der Anfang der Philosophie*: Gadamer disapproves of Heidegger's exiguous position that Parmenides anticipated his new metaphysics (the Heideggerian *non-metaphysics*).

In other words, this series of lectures is not about what its title suggests – the beginning of philosophy, but about the end of philosophy. The end of the “logos-philosophy” – “metaphysics” – the beginning of which was, in Gadamer’s opinion, the beginning of philosophy as such, i. e. in both meanings of “philosophy”: a discipline and a distinct system of philosophical thought. *Der Anfang der Philosophie* recalls a conversation with Heidegger, an attempt to convince Heidegger that his philosophical revolution was unprecedented, that his assumption that Parmenides anticipated it was mistaken and therefore Heidegger was entitled to the merit of first commencement. Gadamer mentions with complete satisfaction that in his last studies Heidegger seemed to have acknowledged the priority of his discovery:

Diese von mir vorgeschlagene Interpretation des 3. Fragments war, wie ich mich erinnere, Gegenstand einer Auseinandersetzung mit Heidegger. Dieser war mit meiner Auffassung des einleuchtenden Sinns des Gedichtes insgesamt nicht einverstanden. Warum Heidegger daran festhalten wollte, daß die Identität (τὸ αὐτό) das Hauptthema des Parmenides sei, kann ich gut verstehen. Das hatte in Heideggers Augen geheißen, daß Parmenides selbst über jede metaphysische Sichtweise hinausgegangen wäre und dabei eine These vorweggenommen hätte, die dann später in der abendländischen Philosophie metaphysisch interpretiert und erst in der Philosophie Heideggers zu ihrem Recht gekommen sei. Heidegger selbst hat jedoch in seinen letzten Aufsätzen eingesehen, daß dies ein Irrtum war und daß sich die These nicht halten läßt, Parmenides habe Heideggers eigene Philosophie zum Teil vorweggenommen.⁷

Accordingly, in this series of lectures Gadamer’s precognition enabled him to undertake as a task not the solution of a historicist’s problem (with whom, how and when philosophy began, or toiling with pre-Socratic fragments, etc., etc.) but the clarification of an eschatological issue involved in the process of the total history of philosophy (a totality not only of its past but its future too). If the solution is correct, the ideal progress of philosophy was not disturbed by an incidental occurrence, such as the anti-metaphysical criticism of Parmenides (or of one of Plato’s mouthpieces named “Parmenides”).

⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, op. cit., 155.

Thus, in Gadamer's conviction, an unbalanced conception of evolution was refuted and the two and a half millennia of metaphysical philosophy should not any more be conceived as the extended denial of a short-lived thesis whose creation was risked at the very beginning.

Gadamer's discerning correction was the result of a life-time study of early Greek philosophy. The correction epitomizes the substance of his conception of the history of philosophy. It underlines the idea that Heidegger's revolution in philosophy was more than an important historical event: it represents a new (or true) beginning in the history of philosophy. Its significance is global as it has a contextual framework encompassing the history of mankind. As a transformation it is comparable to transubstantiations which occur in salvation stories. Gadamer's thesis is that this change had absolutely no precedent or prefiguration in antiquity. (In my opinion it could not have had any as it is presented as a unique whole, a real "grand récit".) At this point the two and half millennia of the pre-history of philosophy (philosophy restricted to Western canonicity) reached its conclusion. The next phase, a new beginning (or the "Beginning") is Heidegger's metaphysics:

Jedenfalls können wir erkennen, wie Heidegger ein wahrhaft radikaler Denker ist, wenn er behauptet, die Metaphysik habe sich gewandelt und sei vom gemeinsamen Horizont der abendländischen Kultur in eine neue Metaphysik übergegangen, die er als 'Seinsvergessenheit' bezeichnet und im Blick auf die Vorherrschaft der Technik in allen Bereichen der menschlichen Kultur beschreibt, und zwar nicht nur Europa, sondern in der ganzen Welt.⁸

A prominent feature of Gadamer's lectures on early Greek philosophy is a pertinacious interest in chronology. His references to Plato's works nearly always include a statement on dating. At the end of the chapter "Fester Boden. Platon und Aristoteles" he declares,

Natürlich entspricht die Wissenschaftsauffassung, auf die Platon im *Phaedo* anspielt, noch nicht einmal der, die zur Zeit von Sokrates' Tod galt. Niemand zweifelt heute, daß dieser Dialog nicht bald nach Sokrates' Tod, sondern weit später geschrie-

⁸ Op. cit., 174-175.

ben wurde, vielleicht zwanzig Jahre danach. Platon greift die Figur des sterbenden Sokrates offenbar wieder auf, als er die Hauptpunkte seiner Ideenlehre zu umreißen beginnt und eine Art von Schule gründet, eben die Akademie, die man eher eine wirkliche Schule nennen kann – im Gegensatz zu den sogenannten Schulen der Sophisten, der Atomisten oder der Eleaten usw., die keine Institutionen waren.⁹

The rhetoric of substantiation is, to my taste, overdramatized ("natürlich", "Niemand zweifelt heute", "offenbar"). But would not the dating of *Phaedo* depend on a hypothesis concerning Plato's elaboration of a positive, organized "doctrine of ideas"? That the elaboration of the doctrine was a pendant of the foundation of an institutionalized school is self-evident. The wording, "Niemand zweifelt heute," suggests a comprehensive insight in the most recent phase of research.

We are informed about another no less important *fact*. It too is derived from the hypothesis on Plato's intellectual evolution. The item helps Gadamer define an important phase in Plato's spiritual biography:

Die Erörterung des Problems der Seele findet ihren krönenden Abschluß mit der – natürlich von Platon stammenden – langen autobiographischen Erzählung des Sokrates, in der er seine Erfahrungen mit den damaligen Wissenschaftlern und seine eigene Neuorientierung schildert. Platon will aber in diesem Bericht – wie ebenso in anderen seiner Dialoge – nicht 'vorsokratische' Lehren schildern, sondern seine eigene Wendung zur 'Idee'.¹⁰

In Gadamer's opinion the elaboration of the "doctrine of ideas" dates later than the writing of *Phaedo* in which, however, we find an anticipation: "Somit [i. e. with the differentiation between the status of 'Ideen' and that of 'Merkmale'] bietet der *Phaedo*, wie mir scheint, eine Vorwegnahme der Kritik an der pythagoreischen Gleichsetzung des Seins mit der Mathematik, die später in der Ideenlehre ausgearbeitet wird und dann besonders in der 'dritten Gattung' des *Philebus* eine

⁹ Op. cit., 53.

¹⁰ Ibid.

deutliche Bestätigung findet."¹¹ (In Gadamer's "Die Idee des Gutes zwischen Plato und Aristoteles" the *Phaedo* is mentioned as the first dialogue in which the hypothesis of the "ideas" occurs: "Daß allein in diesem ἀποβλέπειν πρὸς, in diesem Hinausblick auf es, das Gute erblickt werden kann, wird nicht nur indirekt, durch den negativen Ausgang der sokratische Gespräche, suggeriert, sondern in dem ersten Dialog, in dem die Ideenannahme wirklich vorgetragen wird, im 'Phaidon', geradezu ausgesprochen. Zwischen den elenktischen Dialogen, die man der Frühzeit Platos wird zurechnen müssen, und der Schrift vom idealen Staate steht so der 'Phaidon' als ein bemerkenswertes Zwischenglied."¹²)

Gadamer mentions that the earliest reference to the concept of the "idea" is in *Euthyphro*.¹³ We may ponder over the rhetoric of this kind of resolute *foreknowledge*. To the above list ("natürlich", "Niemand zweifelt heute", "offenbar") we may add the epithet "wirkliche" in the definition of Plato's Academy as "die Akademie, die man eher eine wirkliche Schule nennen kann", and the information that Socrates' autobiographical narrative is "natürlich" Plato's creation ("die – natürlich von Platon stammende – lange autobiographischen Erzählung des Sokrates"), or the assertion that the intention in Plato's dialogues was not to expose pre-Socratic doctrines ("nicht 'vorsokratische' Lehren schildern"). The phrase, "natürlich von Platon stammende", conveys firm conviction: it is improbable to come across an authentic source proving that the autobiographical story related by Socrates is indeed *von Sokrates stammende*. This "natürlich" seems to have an equal status with the other uses of the word in the phrase but in a specific context: it lends the rest of the assertions the power to suggest that they too refer to commonplace evidence. Thus they support the conception of a chronologically steady evolution to the "doctrine of ideas", providing Gadamer with an apparently solid basis for his determination to put aside chronologies alien to his preferences.

Another questionable function is attached to his distinction between *wirkliche* (real, true, genuine) and not or less *wirkliche* schools

¹¹ Op. cit., 76.

¹² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Die Idee des Guten zwischen Plato und Aristoteles*. Gesammelte Werke, Band 7, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991. 141.

¹³ Op. cit., 134.

of philosophy. A kind of inertia supports the rhetorical efficiency of the procedure: with our attention fixed on the artificial dichotomy set up by the author we may forget to ask how the institutionalization of a "real" school like the Academy could make *obvious* ("offenbar") the timing of Plato's return to the theme of his master's death and the elaboration of his "doctrine of ideas". (N. B. after a delay of two decades.)

The temporal succession of the dialogues is based, admittedly, on the conception of the gradual perfection of the "doctrine of ideas". From this it follows (?) that the chronology of the dialogues substantiates the same concept of intellectual evolution. Gadamer suggests that the first phase of the development of Plato's concept of the *soul* is to be detected in *Phaedo* and that another step is taken towards the distinction of a vitalist and a spiritualist concept of the soul in *Theaethetus*: "Auf dem Weg, der vom Begriff der Seele als Ursprung des Lebens zu der neuen sokratisch-platonischen Orientierung an Erkenntnis und Mathematik führt, ist der *Phaidon*, wie wir sahen, ein erster Schritt. Der *Theätet* versucht in gewissem Sinne das Problem des Gegensatzes zwischen dem vitalistischen und dem spiritualistischen Seelenbegriff weiter aufzuklären."¹⁴ A further phase of development is discernible in *Theaethetus*: "Der *Theätet* endet also mit einem Thema, dem Logos, dessen angemessene Bestimmung im *Theätet* nicht gelingt und das dann später im Mittelpunkt des *Sophistes* steht. In diesem Sinne ist der Schluß des *Theätet* eigentlich eine Einleitung in den *Sophistes*."¹⁵ By the same token, "Im Grunde zieht sich das Thema durch den *Phaidon*, den *Theätet* und den *Sophistes* hindurch und findet sich auch in dem im *Parmenides* untersuchten Problem des Augenblicks wieder."¹⁶

It follows from this approach that exact information is available, as it seems, the sequence of five dialogues (starting with *Euthyphro*). But meanwhile we should agree with Gadamer that the chronologies, at least the earliest ones, are "Hellenistic constructions." This statement is however not concerned with the chronological sequence of the dialogues but exclusively with pre-Socratic fragments and biographical information: "Die Chronologien sind Konstruktionen von Gelehrten des hellenistischen Zeitalters, und die Lebensberichte, etwa von Diogenes

¹⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang*, 82.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, 85.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 93.

Laertios, sind ein Konglomerat aus Legenden und indirekter Überlieferung."¹⁷

It is instructive to see Gadamer's firm critical attitudes towards constructions based on evolutionary concepts of Plato's philosophy. In *Die Idee des Guten zwischen Plato und Aristoteles* he discarded chronological constructions based on the idea of evolution towards "maturity" in Aristotle's writings on ethics:

Die angebliche Entwicklung von einer 'Ideenpolitik' (im 'Protreptikos') über die noch zögernde Ablösung von Plato in der Eudemischen Ethik bis zur 'reifen' und selbstsicheren Position der Nikomachischen Ethik ist eine wirkliche und widerspruchsvolle Konstruktion. Insbesondere, wenn man die Spätdialoge Platos mit heranzieht, verliert die Jaegersche Konstruktion ihre Überzeugungskraft. Denn der 'Philebos' und der aristotelischen Ethik hinaus fortgeschritten, daß man sich förmlich fragen kann, wer hier wen kritisiert.¹⁸

This is our question too: who criticizes whom? Gadamer criticized Jaeger on account of a theorem built on Aristotle's philosophical development towards a "»ripe« and self-assured position", and Jaeger with his ghostly finger pointed to Gadamer's self-assured position about the date and evolutionary phase of Plato's dialogues. "Ripeness is all" in Gadamer's estimation of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle: "Am Anfang des *Philebos* sagt Sokrates – und zwar ein überaus reifer Sokrates –, es gebe vier Gattungen: Die eine ist das Unbegrenzte, die zweite ist die Grenze, die dritte das Begrenzte und die vierte der Geist, der die Begrenzung leistet."¹⁹ Gadamer is critical of Aristotle's inability to understand the development of Plato's "doctrine of ideas": "Aristoteles zitiert den 'Phaidon' so gut wie den 'Parmenides' oder den 'Timaios' und scheint es überhaupt nicht bemerkt zu haben, daß Plato seine dogmatische Theorie der Ideen je selber in Zweifel zog."²⁰

Gadamer criticized Werner Jaeger's *simple scheme*, "Bei Werner Jaeger herrschte noch ein einfaches Schema, das die Entwicklung des

¹⁷ Op. cit., 98.

¹⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 7, 132.

¹⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang*, 114.

²⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 7, loc. cit.

Aristoteles vom Platoniker zum Kritiker der platonischen Ideenlehre uns schliesslich zum Empiriker zeichnete."²¹ This simple scheme of evolution toward a "mature" Aristotle increased Gadamer's doubts in the historical-genetic approach. (N. B. Werner Jaeger's hypothesis, too, is based on a presumed direction of the evolution of Aristotle's philosophy.) His doubts imply the uncertain character of the chronologies of Plato's works. His duly skeptical when he alludes to the problems of authenticating a scheme of evolution, and defines it as an historical-genetic approach, though in this regard Jaeger's scheme is not a pure type, and in the sequel Gadamer, too, accepts the historical-genetic reality of philosophical evolution:

Wenn in Falle des Aristoteles unsere Zuversichtlichkeit, Entwicklungsphasen seines Denkens in seinem Schriften wiedererkennen zu können, weitgehend geschwunden ist, so drängt sich die Frage auf, ob es nicht bei Plato ähnlich steht und ob die herrschende historisch-genetische Betrachtung der platonischen Schriften ihrerseits überhaupt genügend fundiert ist.²²

What is not satisfactorily grounded by the historical-genetic approach appears fully authentic if one applies, as Gadamer does, retrospective linguistic and conceptual criticism based on a full-blown (hypothetical) state of a theoretical and terminological development. He points out that from a set of terms which Plato used to denote the relations between *idea* and *phenomenon*, an ambiguous word (*μήθεξις*) finally came out the winner.

Es fällt jedenfalls auf, daß in den Dialogen die Terminologie für das Verhältnis von Idee und Erscheinung durchweg von extremer Liberalität ist: *παρουσία, συμπλοκή, κοινωνία, μέθεξις, μίμησις, μίξις* stehen nebeneinander. Unter diesen Ausdrücken wurde am Ende *μήθεξις* besonders ausgezeichnet, sowohl durch den Parmenides-Dialog wie durch die aristotelische Kritik: Das Wort ist, wie es scheint, eine platonische Neuprägung für die 'Teilhabe' des Einzelnen am Allgemeinen, deren Problematik insbesondere der Parmenides entfaltet.²³

²¹ Op. cit., 131.

²² Op. cit., 132.

²³ Op. cit., 133.

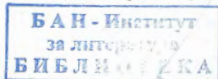
This procedure is, after all, a plain reversal of the "genetic" sequence. The succession of the phases is turned around: the end is the beginning and the beginning is the end. This double ended teleology works as a perfect logical formula as long as no suspicions of *petitio principii* arise.

In Gadamer's opinion, this was Plato's final verdict. The development of the "doctrine of ideas" is best characterized by the double meaning of *μήθεξις*. As "participation" it includes the meaning of "taking out a part from a whole" and "taking part in a whole" which, according to Gadamer's acute observation, also connects the participants, i. e. all who take one part from the whole.

Aber die Paradoxie einer Teilhabe, die nicht einen Teil nimmt, sonder am Ganzen teilhat – wie der Tag am Licht der Sonne –, ist Plato offenbar voll bewußt gewesen, wie die Stelle aus dem 'Parmenides' (131af.) zeigt und wie die Synonymenreihe, die ich oben aufzählte, indirekt bestätigt. Die Aporie des Ganzen und der Teile lauert ja, wie ich ehemals gezeigt habe [Vgl. meinen Beitrag 'Zur Vorgeschichte der Metaphysik', jetzt in Bd. 6 der. Ges. Werke, S. 9–29.], immer hinter der Dialektik von Idee und Erscheinung, Einheit und Vielheit.²⁴

At any rate, the "new word" (*μήθεξις*) is ambiguous. This fact should not be disregarded. One word stands for two words and its use as a single word with a single meaning may be deceptive. According to Parmenides's poem, *mortals* resort to such means. And how could a truly dialectic solution (such as Gadamer arrived at) comply with the use of an ambiguous word? The logic of Parmenides's poem excludes such usage as its generic principle is the absolute self-identity of the concepts. It does not favour the implication of correlative contents or loosely definable connotations. *A whole is a whole is a whole... Or: a part is a part is a part...* As the positing of totality includes the tacit approval of partiality, the positing of *one* cannot take place without positing a system of *ones*. By positing their "identical" plurality ("*ones*", possibly by means of the idea of "oneness") the positing of the twofold, threefold varieties (a numerical system) also takes place and so does the implication of fractional versions. The poem is a play on the inevitable

²⁴ Op. cit., 134.



duality (or manifold character) of (human) concepts. They could not exist as such in a system which excludes the (albeit *tacit*) presence of their correlative "otherness". Nor can they exist without their "antagonists". The concept of the "mortals" cannot exist in its verbal universe unless it allows some span of (albeit "temporary") life for the entities which fall within its scope. This implies that the happily motionless universe of the Goddess is the inert *worldless* world of the *Ideas*...

If our play of fancy with and without the *Parmenides* fragments represents a type of empathy different from what Gadamer's analysis displays, the message will be that they are not didactic poetry but a romantic encounter with the then arising unfathomed universe, *the universe of the Logos* with all its ahuman threats, the deadly divine despotism of abstraction and the ineffable exuberance of Being and the incapacity of human words and ideas to disclose their own true being, their dependence on absolute verbalism. It is the spasm between the concept and the ideas, or the word and the concept, or the idea and the world, or the idea and a twofold universe: that of concepts and that of factual entities (and non-entities), and in addition to them a fuller universe which comprises all of them and, in endless rows, also their definitive ideas...

Gadamer does not go so far as that but the actual philological achievements of *Der Anfang der Philosophie* and the *Idee des Guten zwischen Plato und Aristoteles* are thought-provoking indeed. The reader is seized by Gadamer's comprehensive logical constructions. If they were not linked with possibly ungrounded chronological assumptions, my attempt at the critical interpretation of his text (the text of an author incomparably better versed in Greek, philosophy, the history of philosophy and in modern hermeneutics than I am) would be merely an alarming case of ostentatious pedantry.

His procedures bear evidence of exceptional erudition, competence and circumspection. Here is for instance the concept of "Entwicklung". He was not content with vulgar interpretations and customary definitions. He discussed it in terms of word usage and the full exposure of word meanings. He arrived at the conclusion that "Entwicklung" was not a historical term. "Entwicklung ist, strenggenommen, die Negation des Geschichte. Entwicklung heißt ja, daß alles schon im Anfang gegeben – in den Anfang eingewickelt – ist."²⁵

²⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang*, 18–19.

But the "beginning" or "der Anfang" is double-faced: "Klar ist zum Beispiel, daß das griechische Wort ἀρχή zwei Bedeutungen von Principium hat, nämlich Principium im zeitlichen Sinne von Ursprung und Anfang sowie Principium im spekulativen, logisch-philosophischen Sinne."²⁶ In retrospect Gadamer points out,

Im Zuge dieser Betrachtung habe ich hervorgehoben, daß 'Anfang' oder 'Principium' hier nicht im zeitlichen Sinne, sondern im 'logischen' Sinne gemeint ist. Das Principium ist das, auf dessen Grundlage alles übrige strukturiert ist, wie wir etwa im Bereich der Zahlen die Zwei als erste Zahl und das $n+1$ kennen. Dabei hat sich deutlich herausgestellt, daß dieser Anfang auch für Plato recht im dunkeln liegt, was beispielweise aus der Art und Weise hervorgeht, in der Xenophanes von Platon genannt wird, nämlich nachgerade als Botschafter einer weit zurückliegenden Vorgeschichte.²⁷

It is indeed a point of interest how perfectly the logical and the historical aspects coincide in Gadamer's conception. On the one hand there is the (quasi?) algorithm of "entwicklung" (evolution, development, growth, working up to a climax) and on the other the materialization of "entwicklung" (the actual history or the life and fate of an individual entity). The aspects in which Gadamer elaborates the textually itemized sequels suggest that in his interpretation the external and internal motions (the actual historical process and the systematic structuration) of philosophy create an impression of total identity. And it cannot be otherwise: in this theoretical procedure the historical sequel is reduced from the phases of the theoretical progress as they appear in Gadamer's perception. The *petitio principii* (implied in the interaction of pre-cognizance and cognizance) lends the whole structure the illusion of faultless operation, and turns it into a theoretical *perpetuum mobile* with unpredictable sources of energy. An invisible source is that the erudition of the author and the impressive elegance of his analysis suggest perfect insight and magisterial intellectual hegemony. It is pointless to enter into a debate or to express dissatisfaction with the achievement. The elevating intellectual guidance and the ingenious

²⁶ Op. cit., 14.

²⁷ Op.cit., 97-98.

company we enjoy endow us with a charismatic experience. It confers on us safe knowledge in a labyrinth of riddles and guesses, and it is capable of suggesting that we are sufficiently prepared to follow such expert guidance. Perhaps next time we shall be ready for the trip quite on our own. We are made aware of how the terrain is ploughed up with uncommon heights and depths. For the guide it is not an easy task either to leave the beaten path for fresh discoveries. We have our due share in his success as he is able to impress an absolute authority of the field, and achieve a real change. He could defend the absolute priority of Heidegger's philosophy *against* Heidegger.

Using close linguistic analysis, Gadamer, revealed why he adopted Mansonner's position that the author of Fragment No. 3 was Plato and not Parmenides. Consequently the fragment has a Platonic interpretation: the unbroken unity between perception-thinking and being. He underlined this as the inspiring idea of the course of lectures published as *Der Anfang der Philosophie*. This is the entity which, at the beginning of philosophy, stands in need of *unfolding*, i. e. development, evolution or progress from sensory perception to logico-philosophical ordering, and to the hegemony (or tyranny) of logical thought. On the other hand, this initial state which, according to Gadamer, Plato endeavoured to preserve by all means (among them extra- or metaphilosophical ones such as literary devices, myths and even deliberate paralogisms²⁸) on the level of the perfection or plenitude attained by philosophy. And this was not the endeavour of Plato alone: in his discussion of the *ethical* Gadamer's point is that the great systematist, Aristotle, also followed this path. (We must add that he dispensed with myth and logical inconsequence.)

Gadamer's study of the Greek texts contributes greatly to the clarity and authority of the analysis. In matters of philology his superior approach takes the upper hand over former philological achievements, and occasionally, on such issues, he corrects Heidegger's assumptions. (In a chapter in his *Heideggers Wege* entitled "Die Griechen," there are several such points.²⁹ One of the footnotes concludes in the statement

²⁸ "Das Argument findet sich in der gesamten Überlieferung, die vielleicht ein wenig weiser gewesen ist und verstanden hat, daß gerade dieser Mangel an logischer Folgerichtigkeit in der Absicht Platons lag." Op.cit., 56.

²⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege*, Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983. 117-128.

that "In diesem Falle dachte selbst Heidegger einmal nicht griechisch genug."³⁰)

The universe of linguistic philosophy is *the jailhouse of language*. Its principle is a kind of cabalism, though not a mystical scheme of numerals or letters but that of the word, the word-order, the syllable and the items of phonology. Gadamer offers his reflections on the point where all these factors coexist, a kind of *origo*, the Greek language itself, and especially two of its characteristics which helped the genesis of philosophy.

Die erste ist als eines der ersprießlichsten Merkmale der griechischen Sprache wohl bekannt (das ihr übrigens mit der deutschen Sprache gemeinsam ist), nämlich der Gebrauch des Neutrums, der es gestattet, das, was intentionaler Gegenstand des Denkens ist, als Subjekt hinzustellen." (...) "Es handelt sich nicht um die Eigenschaft eines ganzen Raums, 'das Sein', in dem alles Seiende erscheint. – Das zweite Kennzeichen ist damit ebenfalls offensichtlich. Es ist das Vorhandensein der Kopula, der Gebrauch des Verbs 'sein' zur Verknüpfung von Subjekt und Prädikat, welche die Struktur des Satzes ausmacht."³¹

The suitability of the Greek alphabet was also due to the extension of denotation from consonants to vowels as well.

German linguistic philosophers – among them Heidegger and Gadamer – often work on the assumption that German is the *origo* of modern philosophy just as was Greek in antiquity. They define concepts by German etymology. We may add that with Derrida, French too entered the club of the fundamental languages of philosophy. N. B. in French there is no neutral gender but copulation is the same as in any Indo-German languages. Etymology was extended to language as *écriture* and as *Typography*. (Sic!)

Etymology for Gadamer is rarely more than a means of illustration, a way to connect the word as phenomenon and meaning to ordinary linguistic experience ("*Entwicklung*" – "*eingewickelt*"³²). Usually there is no effort for doctrinaire genetic argumentation. He is

³⁰ Op.cit., 124.

³¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang*, 16.

³² Op. cit., 188.

ill at ease when he is faced with the radicalism of Heidegger's Greek etymology. The philosopher takes cognizance, produces an explanation if need be, but the philologist has no relish for it. His intimate knowledge of the language obliges him to signal, though tactfully, his independence.

In *Heideggers Wege* he described the difference between the demeanour of Heidegger and of Nicolai Hartmann. Hartmann's manners were conservative. Occasionally Heidegger entered the lecture hall in skiing attire. Gadamer's impression of that philosopher's glorious Greek etymologies might have been similar to Hartmann's when he saw the young lecturer, seven years his junior, dressed for ski training on grass after the lecture.³³

A closing remark to *Der Anfang der Philosophie* is that "wie Platon kein Platoniker war, auch Heidegger nicht für die Heideggerianer verantwortlich gemacht werden darf."³⁴ Gadamer is of course not responsible for the Gadamerists. Yet something in his writing reminds us of the attitudes of the latter – though not of those who cannot write three lines without "horizon", "Verschmelzung", "Dabeinsein", "Instanz", "Applikation", "Wirkungsgeschichte" and other shibboleths which bear evidence of their trendy affiliation. There is a spot where Gadamer proceeds as a true Gadamerist.

In three passages in *Der Anfang der Philosophie* he advertises the methodology of "Wirkungsgeschichte" and "wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein" with the implication that it served as a base for his own scholarly achievements.³⁵ The merits of this methodology exceed those of the doxography of antiquity, of the 18th century, as well as that of 19th century German *Historicism*. History should be a *history of problems* (Problemgeschichte)³⁶ and its scope should not be restricted to dating the emergence of texts, the establishment of their sequence and the structure of their chronology. Examples are cited as evidence that doxography and Historicism are anachronistic and mistaken from a logico-philosophical point of view and the "wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein" provides a technique to rectify them.

³³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heideggers Wege*, 97.

³⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang*, 175.

³⁵ Op. cit., 25, 36, 97.

³⁶ Op. cit., 31.

Here and there simple explanations are offered, less closely linked to the methodological discoveries of *Wahrheit und Methode*. A wise proposition is that in addition to expert methodology, a creative approach is also needed:

Ich bewundere die großen Philologe des 19. Jahrhunderts, ihre Beherrschung der Forschungsmethoden, ihre ganz umfassende Bildung. Aber es ist doch auch eine Form von überlegener Kreativität, wenn man imstande ist, die Dinge unter dem Einfluß der eigenen Sachkenntnis zu sehn und dabei Augen und Ohren aufzusperren.³⁷

For this open-eyed and open-eared attitude Hegel is the exemplary case with the opening of his *Logik*, the exposition of Being, Nothing and Development (das Sein, das Nichts, das Werden) in the tradition of the categories introduced by Kant and Fichte. Gadamer belongs to the same class for he recognized this capacity in others, and, "unter dem Einfluß der eigenen Sachkenntnis" (the influence of an expert knowledge of Greek also included) could expose the misuse of categorical concepts, for instance in the discussion of Value Ethics: "Ein weiteres bezeichnendes Beispiel des Irrtums, den man begeht, wenn man in historisch unterschiedlichen Begriffen um jeden Preis dasselbe Problem zu finden sucht, läßt sich der Wertethik entnehmen."³⁸

A discussion of the concept of freedom and a historical review of value ethics is followed by a lesson on "wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein" and on methodology in general. The meanings of the terms "Wirkungsgeschichtliche" and "wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein" become clearer when the method functions not as a verification of the chronology of pre-Socratic fragments but as their interpretation based on Plato and Aristotle:

Im Rahmen der von mir als 'Wirkungsgeschichte' bezeichneten Perspektive haben wir gut erhaltene und nicht rekonstruierte Texte zum Gegenstand unserer Untersuchung gemacht, nämlich die Schriften von Plato und Aristoteles. Dabei sind wir

³⁷ Op. cit., 171.

³⁸ Op. cit., 35.

von der Überzeugung ausgegangen, daß der Anfang der griechischen Wissenschaft und Philosophie von der Antwort her erfaßt werden muß, welche die großen Denker – wie etwa Platon und Aristoteles – auf die von diesem Anfang aufgeworfenen Fragen gegeben haben.³⁹

The direction of development is undoubtedly a *reconstructed* tendency defined by Plato's and Aristotle's answers to questions raised by their predecessors.

This type of approach had already appeared in Aristotle's *Poetics*. The beginnings or the early forms of the tragedy could be deduced only from its fully developed form, a form in full accord with the *concept* of tragedy. In its inception philosophy was unrecognizable as a distinct phenomenon. In its faceless early phase it was concealed in the shell of other forms, in myths and epics. Aristotle started out from the fully developed form of tragedy, from the classics of the type. His retrospective estimation of the earlier forms was based mainly on tradition and less on conjectures based on the nature of the fully developed form.

A retrospective estimation based on the fully fledged forms of philosophy is not entitled to deal with the dating of philosophical texts or to theorize on the subject of their sequence. If its scope is extended to such tasks, we may suspect that the "wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein" is responsible for the extinction of sober critical attitudes. A survey of Gadamer's chronologies betrays their subordination to his hypotheses. Then the "wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein" is suited to set up reciprocal causality, making cause and effect interchangeable.

We saw that Gadamer's speculations on "Anfang und Ende" guided him to a close analysis of the word "Entwicklung". Fortunately he did not peg down at a pure model of disentanglement, as suggested by the etymology of the German word and which may be the case with models of evolution based on the growth of plants from seeds, the work of the genes, the algorithm of given processes or creation combined with predestination. This would be, as he mentioned, a denial of history. "Entwicklung ist, strenggenommen, die Negation der Geschichte. Entwicklung heißt ja, daß alles schon im Anfang gegeben – in den Anfang

³⁹ Op. cit., 97.

eingewickelt – ist.”⁴⁰ Less satisfactory is, so far as “Entwicklung” is concerned, his arbitrary differentiation between nature and human life: “Der Entwicklungsbegriff bringt daher die Grundverschiedenheit zum Ausdruck, die zwischen der Prozeßhaftigkeit der Natur und dem von Zufall und Einfall Schwanken des menschlichen Lebens besteht. Hier kommt ein Urgegensatz zwischen Natur und Geist zum Ausdruck.”⁴¹ The assumption of absolute difference or antagonism between “Natur und Geist” is characteristic of Gadamer’s traditionalist way of thought. This differentiation and its corroboration by the etymology of “Entwicklung” exclude the possibility of a non-teleological type of evolution in nature. Even a Darwinist conception of natural evolution is based on the function of “Zufall und Einfall” and does not exclude dead ends in the processes of natural selection. The dichotomy posited by Gadamer is based on the implication that human life is radically different from life as a natural process. At the same time he is fully aware of the one-sided bias of a concept of evolution based on the etymology of “Entwicklung” and resorts to a special concept of “Anfang” to describe the evolution of philosophy:

Es gibt aber noch eine weitere Bedeutung von ‘Anfang’, und diese ist, wie mir scheint, die Evolution für unseren Zweck ergiebigste und am meisten angemessene. Diese Bedeutung bringe ich zum Ausdruck, indem ich nicht vom Anfangenden, sondern von Anfänglichkeit spreche. Anfänglichkeit meint etwas, das noch nicht in diesem oder jenem Sinne, noch nicht in Richtung auf dieses oder jenes Ende und noch nicht gemäß dieser oder jener Darstellung bestimmt ist. Das bedeutet, daß viele Fortsetzungen – mit Maßen freilich – noch möglich sind. Vielleicht ist dies und sonst nichts der wahre Sinn von ‘Anfang’.⁴²

If this way of thinking is a precondition or an outcome of “wirkungs-geschichtliche Bewußtsein”, one should keep in mind that it involves the acceptance of the principle of *petitio principii* both as a cognitive principle of phronesis and as a law of logic. The rest depends on what sources of creativity we have, what our expert knowledge is like, how

⁴⁰ Op. cit., 18–19.

⁴¹ Op. cit., 19.

⁴² Op. cit., 21.

its innate slants influence our impression of the thing dealt with, how wide we open our eyes and ears ("die Dinge unter dem Einfluß der eigenen Sachkenntnis zu sehn und dabei Augen und Ohren aufzusperren") and with what personal creativity we introduce as posterior knowledge – *quod erat demonstrandum* – the precognition or *preconception* suitable to such application.

Nowadays some protagonists of linguistic philosophies are not embarrassed by obsolete 19th-century demands of system, order, logical consistence and coherence in philosophy. It is instructive to consider, sentence by sentence, the closing passage of *Der Anfang der Philosophie*. After a reference to a *Götterdämmerung* of metaphysics, the closing remark underlines Heideggers radicalism as a thinker. "Die Synthese Hegels ist in gewissem Sinne nicht zu über treffen. Der Niedergang des in der Philosophie des 19. Jahrhunderts erreichten begrifflichen Niveaus beginnt mit dem genialsten Denker des späteren Jahrhunderts, mit Nietzsche. Gewiß, er war in vielem fast ein Dilettant, der von der neuzzeitlichen Philosophie nicht viel verstand und nicht einmal Kant gelesen hatte, sondern bloß Kuno Fischer."⁴³ Yet his merit was the breaking of consistent and systematic exposition.

Im 19. Jahrhundert galt es als Point d'honneur – und in unserem eigenen Jahrhundert war es anfangs nicht anders –, daß das System eine notwendige Voraussetzung der Philosophie sei. Jedenfalls können wir erkennen, wie Heidegger ein wahrhaft radikaler Denker ist, wenn er behauptet, die Metaphysik habe sich gewandelt und sei vom gemeinsamen Horizont der abendländischen Kultur in eine neue Metaphysik übergegangen, die er als 'Seinsvergessenheit' bezeichnet und im Blick auf die Vorherrschaft der Technik in allen Bereichen der menschlichen Kultur beschreibt, und zwar nicht nur in Europa, sondern in der ganzen Welt. Heidegger hat so viele Dinge neu gesehen, die uns neue Denkmöglichkeiten eröffnet haben sowie Möglichkeiten, die überlieferten Texte der Philosophie – und die Sprache der Kunst – zum Sprechen zu bringen. Es ist, als wäre mit ihm eine neue Atmosphäre entstanden.⁴⁴

⁴³ Op. cit., 174.

⁴⁴ Op. cit., 175.

The Heideggerian revolution began, as it seems, with the break-up of 19th-century conceptual standards. Despite its rhetorical sonority, Gadamer's text does not reveal how the elements of literariness and poetization (eliminated by Aristotle and reestablished for a unified hermeneutic procedure under the name of *Logos* by Gadamer) can be rehabilitated and assimilated to a new metaphysic so that the one-time beginning (the progress from myth to logos) should not be repeated.

Literariness as an antecedent,
a component and an aftermath of logos-philosophy

We might be misunderstanding the situation if we reduced the problem to the relativization of the logos-character of philosophy.

There is doubtless a "new atmosphere" in philosophy. "Literariness" is an organic element of the philosophical revolution and a co-efficient of Heidegger's texts. Gadamer takes Plato and Aristotle as a point of departure at the "beginning" thanks to their conceptual and systematic way of thinking, yet in *Der Anfang der Philosophie* the "literariness" of ancient philosophy is given the whole burden of its most fundamental conjectures. We are given the impression that only literary forms were able to carry out this function. Gadamer pointed to this at the beginning of *Idee des Guten zwischen Plato und Aristoteles*, "Weder die mimetische Mitteilungsform der Dialoge noch die protokollarische der aristotelischen Papiere kann gegenüber der Sachinterpretation, die sich auf sie stützt, Authentizität beanspruchen."⁴⁵

Meanwhile in Gadamer's interpretation the non-philosophical forms supersede the potentials of the conceptual expression of systematic philosophy. They help overcome the *aporia*, and in Gadamer's commentary on *Parmenides* this approach acquires universal epistemological foundations. The myths, as Plato hints at the end of the *Phaedo*, are more effective means than concepts and reflections:

Auf Fragen nach der Beschaffenheit der auf dem Prinzip
des Guten basierenden Welt kann man eigentlich gar nicht mit

⁴⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 7, 129–130.

befriedigenden Argumentum antworten. Vielmehr geschieht es, daß die Mythen mit ihrer besonderen Eindringlichkeit zum Zuge kommen. Platon selbst versucht den mahnenden Hinweis zu geben, daß es sich nicht um bloße Erzählungen handle, sondern daß auch Begriffe und Reflexionen hineingewoben seien. Daher gleichen sie einer Verlängerung der dialektischen Argumentation – in eine Richtung, in der Begriffe und logische Begründungen nicht zu Gebore stehen.⁴⁶

The Socratic procedure depicted by Plato is dramatic action:

“Auch die Sokratische Unwissenheit ist eine literarische Figur. Sie ist die Form, mit deren Hilfe Sokrates den Gesprächspartner dahin führt, die eigene Unwissenheit zum Vergleich heranzuziehen.”⁴⁷ Talking of the *Phaedo* Gadamer stressed that “...in dieser Schrift gibt es lebensnahe Schilderungen, und es kommt zur völligen Verschmelzung von theoretischer Argumentation und dramatischer Handlung.”⁴⁸ The cardinal argument of belief in immortality is expressed not by logical proofs but by dramatic action: “So ist das stärkste Argument, das im *Phaidon* für die Unsterblichkeit der Seele vorgebracht wird, eigentlich überhaupt kein Argument, sondern das Faktum, daß Sokrates bis zum Schluß an seinen Überzeugungen festhält und sie durch sein Leben und Sterben besätigt.”⁴⁹

The *Politeia* is a regular utopia, but according to Gadamer, Ethos has an extraordinary utopian element in it:

Zur Erscheinung kommt dieses Ethos in der Platonischen *Politeia* so, daß dort alles geregelt ist. Da ist es beinahe unmöglich, etwas Böses oder Regelwidriges zu tun, ein Gedanke, der dem Menschen der Neuzeit unbegreiflich erscheint. Um die Utopie auf die Spitze zu treiben, wird nur ein Rechenfehler auf seiten des ‘Planungskomitees’, wie man sagen könnte, dieser Idealstadt den Untergang bringen.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang*, 63–64.

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, 64.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, 63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, 65.

Gadamer refers to a passage in *Theaetetus* in which Plato creates the impression that his predecessors held that all things were in continuous change ("das allgemeine Fließen der Dinge"), although, as Gadamer puts it,

...im Zuge dieses Gedankengangs bringt Platon seine Vorgänger von Heraklit bis zu Empedokles und Protagoras ins Spiel, aber er nennt auch Homer und Epicharm, wobei sie alle als Verfechter des allgemeinen Fließens der Dinge hingestellt werden, als hätten sie allesamt nie etwas von Parmenides gehört. In dieser Hinsicht muß deutlich sein, daß es sich um Ironie, um Einbildungskraft und um eine dem Geiste Platons entstammende Konstruktion handelt.⁵¹

I have nothing against Gadamer's argumentation in general but it is evident that his statements about the ideal system of Plato's philosophical sobriety are founded less on his frankly logical steps towards the *logos* than the *literariness* of Platonic texts. The literary and the philosophical ambitions coincide with the religious components of the myths or of such notions as the *divine*, the *soul* or *soul transmigration*. The irony of the situation is that, as likely as not, they are confronted as equals under the aegis of LOGOS.

Gadamer's general attitude to linguistic or poetizing philosophization resembles that of Hartmann to Heidegger's sportswear. *Der Anfang der Philosophie* seems to reason out the pre-Socratic and Platonic route to professional philosophizing, the approaches to a conceptual and logical language, even though this road is paved with literariness. The Heideggerian revolution – metaphysicalism hither or thither – opens the contrary aspect. It is however true that Gadamer legalizes literariness for philosophizing as a factor with conceptual eminence when he renders unequivocal achievement to poetical signs. (Polysemy too may be an unequivocal outcome of interpretation.) It is after all this kind of latent didacticism which creates awareness of the necessity of polysemy for philosophical thinking.

For the philosophical frame, consistency appears to be a categorical imperative, but the intellectual frame to which Gadamer appeals, the "tradition", is just as wide and shoreless a flood as the one from which Plato pulled ashore – to the shores of the isle of conceptual-log-

⁵¹ Op. cit., 83–84.

to being institutionally clerical rather than *reflecting the spirit of the people*; their political function is dangerously intertwined with Byzantine imperial interests. Doubtless, Balan is well aware of this all. Still, he does not use his erudition to pose problems disconcerting to "the Bulgarian"; nor does he do so even as he tackles his favorite topic of the language of these records.

Balan is fully acquainted with all the details of this issue: he knows that the term "Bulgarian language" began to be applied to the Slavic dialects long after (in fact centuries after) the "Golden" 9th century A.D.; that the legitimacy of the concept "Old Bulgarian" was subject to a heated argument among his contemporary Slavic scholars and linguists and that some of them were trying to replace it with "Old Slavonic", "Church Slavonic" or other such terms. He does occasionally admit that "ours" is in fact "common": "*Many of our and of the Serbian manuscripts,*" he writes, "*were taken to Russia, while Russian works came from the north. The common religious faith of the brethren by language and the identical form and purpose of the manuscripts led to the opinion that they belonged to all Slavs and not to any one tribe* (75). But in spite of such admissions, for Balan, as well as for his patriotically-minded implied readers, it becomes somehow self-evident that Cyril and Methodius's works are ... Bulgarian, as is the subsequent Christian liturgical and exegetic literature in its Old and Middle Bulgarian versions. The text does not expunge knowledge and facts but they carry no argumentative weight when the unquestionable functioning of institutional classes such as "ours" is at stake. The implication is that one cannot ask *when* Bulgarian literature came into being (which for Balan and for the whole academic institution is the really important issue) and at the same time doubt that what is accepted as *its beginning* may not be *its* beginning, that is, "Bulgarian". And if such questions happen to be formulated outside Bulgaria and its scientific community, there is a rhetorical remedy for this too: "ours" becomes a readily shared conventional notion, presumed by science and imposed by pedagogy: "*In those days the language of the Macedonian Slavs was not used by the other Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula who were related to them; nevertheless this language and that of the Slavs within the Bulgarian Kingdom belonged to the same entity which was later called Bulgarian language; in the same way the Macedonian vernaculars form one whole with those used in Bulgaria along the Danube coast and in Thrace. On the basis*

centuries. The historical descent of hermeneutics is interlocked with religious needs. In modern hermeneutics this inclination characterizes "tradition" as an amorphous, unstructured base of reference. It is understandable that tradition is not for listing or systematization. As Gadamer put it, "Die Tradition ist nichts Starres, sie liegt nicht ein für allemal fest. Es gibt da keine Gesetze. Auch der Kirche geht es um eine lebendige Tradition und um das fortwährende Gespräch mit dieser Tradition."⁵⁴

This tradition seems to be "more traditional" than what Plato and Aristotle had to deal with. An offhand example of a model approach to it is that of the church. Perhaps the real thing is a universal *Great Tradition*, a kind of (or all kinds of) perennial philosophy. And only in a sacral interpretation.

As to Gadamer's personal attitude, we should not think that his literary philosophy and the religious inspiration of his method is simply an opportunity to replace logisms with paralogisms, and let the Pietist tradition of the interpretation of texts serve zealous Pietist purposes. Here his interest lay in proving that "the great drama of Western thought, the fall in the spasm of metaphysics"⁵⁵ began *at the beginning of philosophy*, with the pre-Socratic thinkers, especially with Parmenides and his presentiment of the workings of the "ontological difference". As I pointed out above, *Der Anfang der Philosophie* as a whole is basically a semi-latent debate with Heidegger in which Gadamer stands for Heidegger's primacy in the discovery of the "fall" in metaphysics of Western philosophy. In this regard he recalled a discussion with Heidegger on the application of the category of "ontological difference":

Eines Tages, als ich zusammen mit Gerhard Krüger Heidegger nach Hause begleitete, stellte einer von uns beiden die Frage, was es denn mit diesem ontologischen Unterschied auf sich habe, wie und wann man ihn machen müsse. Heideggers Antwort ist mir unvergessen: Machen? Ist der ontologische Unterschied etwas, was gemacht werden muß? Das ist ein Mißverständnis. Diese Differenz wird nicht durch das Denken des Philosophers eingeführt, um zwischen Sein und Seienden zu unterscheiden.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Op. cit., 66.

⁵⁵ "...das große Drama des abendländischen Denkens, den Sturz in den Abgrund der Metaphysik..." Op. cit., 173.

⁵⁶ Op. cit., 172.

Gadamer's statement on Greek epic poetry is hopefully valid also for his own attitude: "... die epische Dichtung schon sehr weit von der Mythologie der Frühzeit entfernt war und etwas ganz anderes darstellte als eine religiöse Verkündigung des Göttlichen. Homer und Hesiod waren eher aufgeklärte Intellektuelle und große Psychologen."⁵⁷ And by this *Verlängerung der dialektischen Argumentation* of their poetry, they were great philosophers too.

If Aristotle knew more about Plato's
Pythagoreanism than Gadamer...

For curiosity's sake: an alternative chronology of the Platonic dialogues produces an anticipation of the history of philosophy radically different from the prospects envisaged by Gadamer.

If Aristotle did not misplace Plato's Pythagoreanism in the evolution of the philosopher's thought, we may accept his point that Pythagoreanism contributed to the mathematical foundation of the "idea concept." (N. B. In Gadamer's interpretation this concept serves as proof of Plato's philosophical maturity.) Then we may realize that Plato's logos technique (or a kind of logico-mathematical way of thinking) anticipated certain important trends in modern scientific knowledge and interpretation of the world.

Recalling ideas exposed by Paul Friedländer, István Jánosy sketched this prospect in 1980: "In opposition to the two extremes – the absolute validity of causality and the absolutism of contingency – *Timaeus* points to what Planck and Heisenberg refer to as the simultaneous validity of both principles in nature."⁵⁸ This conjecture is based on Aristotle's chronology of Plato's work.

If we accept the information given by Aristotle that in his
last period Plato identified the ideas with numerals and mathe-

⁵⁷ Op. cit., 173.

⁵⁸ "A két véglettel – az okság kizárólagos érvényét állítókkal szemben és a véletlen kizárólagosságát erősítőkkal szemben: a *Timaios*z épp arra mutat rá, amire Planck és Heisenberg, vagyis, hogy a természetben mindkét elv egyszerre érvényesül" István Jánosy, "Platón ma" (Plato today), in *Platón, Az állam*, Szeged: LAZI Bt., 2001., 377.

mathematical laws, we might then be stimulated to reflect on the subject because this procedure is the basis of all natural sciences. Above the nascent and transient world, another world is set as an archetype or a perfect model – this should be taken as a beautiful poetic simile because metaphysically it is nonexistent. The laws of nature which make us visualize the changes of the transient world in a rational order and fix them in mathematical formulae do exist somehow: they are valid, and their validity is eternal indeed.⁵⁹

Jánosy arrives at the idea of a kind of *philosophia perennis*: "One and the same view finds expression in the old Indian idea of *Sanata Dharma* (eternal law) and in Plato's ideas."⁶⁰

The prospect offered by Aristotle's chronology of Plato's work is radically different from Gadamer's, though both retain contact with the perennial tradition which, in an elementary degree, merges philosophical, scientific and poetic insight and cognition. But Gadamer's chronology could hardly concur with an interpretation similar to what Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker offered on how greatly modern natural science is indebted to or runs parallel with the philosophical tradition of Parmenides and Plato.⁶¹

It is a pity that in Gadamer's interpretation no exact definitions are

⁵⁹ „Ha elfogadjuk Arisztotelész tudósítását, hogy utolsó korszakában Platon az ideákat a számokban, a matematikai törvényszerűségekből látta, akkor ezen már elgondolkozhatunk. Hiszen éppen ezen épül fel az egész modern természettudomány. A keletkező és elmúló, változó világ fölé emelt másik világot, amely valami ősképe, tökéletes modellje az előbbinek, méltán tekinthetjük szép költői hasonlatnak, mert metafizikailag tényleg nem létezik. De azok a törvényszerűségeik, amelyek az alakuló világ változásait ésszerű rendben láttatják, és matematikai képletekben fejezik ki: e törvényszerűségeik valahogy mégis léteznek: érvényben vannak, mégpedig örök érvényben.” Op. cit, 383.

⁶⁰ „Pontosan ezt fejezi ki az óhinduk *Sanátana Dharma* (Örök Törvény) fogalma, és ezzel azonosíthatjuk Platon ideáit is.” Ibid.

⁶¹ Cf. Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, *Ein Blick auf Platon: Ideenlehre, Logik und Physik*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1981. – Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang des Wissens*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 1999. – See esp. their partly parallel ideas on *Timaeus*. (Weizsäcker, 121–123; Gadamer, 124–126.

given to the non-literary Logos and its literary counterpart. After all, a crucial problem of the post-Heideggerian era is the lack of the means for distinguishing between the literariness of literature and the literariness of philosophy. Is Gadamer's *bon mot* ("...Platon, der ein ganz großer Schriftsteller vom Range eines Sophokles beziehungsweise eines Shakespeare war..."⁶²) reversible? *Waren Sophokles und Shakespeare ganz große Philosophen vom Range eines Platons?*

Here again we confront the problem of "grand récit". The "grands récits" themselves (as deceptive means of rhetoric) stand on close terms with salvation stories. In contemporary criticism the term "grand récit" is applied primarily to the historical teleology of political, economic and cultural utopias. Philosophy, unlike religion, does not judge or promise anything; at its best, it promises a novel type of speculation and a new judgement on the quality of speculation. The promise of a new type of speculation and judgement cannot be final or infinite.

In Gadamer's interpretation the history of philosophy is presented as a single "grand récit." His conclusive remarks assume a coincidence between its evolutionary scheme and the global "Entwicklung" of *actual* human history.

Does a speculative system need confirmation by any kind of salvation story? Or is it a mythos by its nature, a crystallized *Logos*-instance of literariness?

These are rhetorical questions. The real problem is the dependence of literary theory (or "theory") on this promise of salvation at the present post-metaphysical (or post-theoretical) moment in the history of philosophy.

⁶² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Der Anfang*, 64.

ALEXANDER PANOV

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH IN LITERARY STUDIES

What does it mean to read a text of verbal art anthropologically? Is the interference between the tasks of anthropology and literary science possible at all? What exactly would the object of study be, as it is clear that its very definition depends largely on the analytical methodology? Text or discourse cannot be objects in themselves, if it is not clear what their interpretation is needed for.

The history of literary science in the last century shows that modern literary theory was the product of a process of opposition. The previously dominant biographism, positivism, speculative philosophy and Marxist socio-historical determinism were replaced by methods of research that seek the specifics of literature mainly in objective laws of its own, ones that construct the fictional text and make it function, as well as in the specific laws that determine its historical development. It is not accidental that the main problem faced by Russian Formalists was that of 'literariness' – the property that makes a text a work of special quality, different from all other manifestations of linguistic activity.

It is true that, parallel to the 'inward' oriented texts (Russian Formalism, Prague Structuralism, the Russian and German morphological schools and, later on, French Structuralism, New Criticism with its 'close reading', phenomenology and hermeneutics), researchers have never left out of their focus the relationships of the literary 'order' and extra-literary reality. Some of these efforts are doomed, as they fail to build a platform solid enough to be able to unify in a single and non-contradictory whole the different aspects of the artistic phenomena – their structure,

embedded contents and meanings, their relationship with the cultural and social context, as well as the potential means for their perception and impact. This is why, for example, the efforts of the so-called 'forsotz' group in the Soviet Union failed – they were brought down by their very ambition to unify the formal and the social aspects of the cultural development.

The dichotomy between form and content is one of the toughest challenges facing the development of artistic theory. Whole new scientific movements such as Structuralism emerged with the main goal to overcome this counterproductive tension. The Structuralists' point of departure is clear: the opposition between form and content presupposes the existence of something external to the verbal text, something that lends itself to imitation or reflection, by whose means it becomes a part of the text. Structuralist research and analysis shows that the construction of a particular expression itself can create meaning and thus the contradiction between form and content can be put aside. Yet in so far as the construction of an expression is primarily tied to the structures of language and its various realizations, the main object of research proves to be the text – that coherent whole made up of a combination of signs on different levels that can form specific meanings. The problem of the relationship between verbal texts and the so-called objective reality remains irrelevant to Structuralist theory, which rejects the primitive concept that the function of artistic text is to propagate certain ideas among the society. Nevertheless, Structuralist theory fails to offer a positive resolution to this problem.

Avoiding the issue will not resolve it, though. That is why in its further development literary science turned towards the links between structure and social context. Two problems are fundamental to this endeavour: firstly, the various ways of perceiving artistic phenomena and their influence; and secondly, the relationship between the fictional content of the text and the so-called objective reality. These are problems that stand at the very centre of all the scientific movements that study the nature of artistic communication: the "aesthetics of reception" which later developed into an aesthetics of impact, literary sociology, the so-called cultural studies and the like. Eventually, all these movements came to the same conclusion: that the much-desired new complexity of research methods can be attained through the methods of general anthropology.

In this case, the point of departure is also quite clear: since human verbal art has emerged and functions in its three main hypostases – mythology, folklore and literature – it must by necessity influence and somehow shape the human world. That is why the approach adequate to the study of verbal phenomena should be sought in the various ways in which they are embedded in the general human complex. But this premise also leads to difficulties, raising a number of questions, such as:

What should the specific object of research be?

Should the study be restricted only to the sphere of specific interactions between the world of literature and the reader's real world? Or should it also extend over phenomena that have so far been perceived only as elements of its content, such as: humanitarian conflicts, ideologies, meditations over the essence of humanity, etc.?

How will the methods of general anthropology and those of literary science combine?

Where should we seek the connections between the various aspects of the study? These aspects include, among others, the models of communication and impact which determine the function of artistic texts and the structural regularities and constructs present during the creation of the text. We should also take into consideration the different levels at which the various elements of every aspect are arranged. For example, the study of artistic structures requires the differentiation of levels of narratology, prosody, artistic imagery, etc.

The attempt to answer these questions requires that we begin by comparing the tasks, the specific objects and the research methods of the two sciences that have until now developed in parallel – anthropology and literary science.

Like literary science, anthropology has arisen and developed as a result of the attempt to combine many already existing methods of studying the human world – philosophy, sociology, law, political economy, ethnography and folklore studies, history of religions, social history and archaeology, physical, economical and cultural geography, general cultural studies, linguistics and biology. After analyzing the interaction between all these aspects of human existence, scientists have reached the conclusion that the main subject of anthropology, one which unifies all these different approaches, could be the analysis of the ways in which a human group and therefore man and humanity in general, model their

beliefs, feelings and strategies of survival in a particular environment. This complex object of study can be broken down into a string of specific objects, each one of which is manifested in two aspects – the physical, which is related to human biological characteristics and the physical particularities of the environment, and the cultural, which studies the ways in which human interaction with the environment transforms into cultural norms, values and dispositions which prescribe various models of behaviour in the myriad situations of human life. Here are some of the most important aspects of these studies:

- physical survival. The objects of analysis are the methods through which people acquire the means needed to sustain their life, such as food, housing and clothing suitable for a particular habitat, the means of production, exchange and consumption, as well as the ways in which these means become cultural norms and dispositions;
- biological reproduction. The objects of study are kinship systems and their transformation into norms of cultural behaviour and shared values;
- social reproduction. The objects of analysis are the ways in which characteristically different communities and social systems are formed, as well as their structure and functional models. The focus is also on the specific cultural and legislative norms that form the link between different individuals in the community, as well as the transitions from one type of formation to another.
- communication. The objects of study are the models of informational exchange by means of natural and artificial languages, models and channels of communication, as well as their relationship with the environment, the lifestyle, the culture and the image of the world, characteristic of a particular community.
- image of the world. The objects of study are the ways in which people create their own image of a reasonably ordered world, subject to definite laws. This is achieved by means of mythology, folklore, literature, philosophy, religion and science which enable the rationalization and transformation of the world by different means of influence, such as magic, religious and civil rituals, social movements and technological intervention.

It is obvious even at first glance that, without exception, each of

these aspects is somehow connected to the phenomena of human verbal creativity. This is so at least because the latter plays a major role in the transformation of the different survival and developmental strategies into cultural norms, dispositions and values. Thus the links between the anthropological object and the object of literary science become more than obvious. The problem lies in the fact that their mechanical interchange is impossible. The reason for this can be stated as follows: if we study the role of verbal creativity in the realization of each of the aforementioned processes, as a whole or separately, we will remain in the field of anthropology without being able to penetrate the specifics of verbal art itself. Anthropology will perceive verbal creativity as a factor in the creation and maintenance of ideologies, dispositions and values (aesthetic, moral and social), but will not have much to say about verbal art itself. Much less will it do so about the specifics of artistic structures or the history of artistic development. And this is precisely the main task of literary science.

The object of anthropology, as outlined above, can therefore be viewed only as a prerequisite for the definition of one specific object of literary science and the analysis of verbal art in general. In order to move outside the purely anthropological field and find that specific object of literary analysis, we must pose the question differently. It will now be as follows: what role does verbal creativity play in the formation and regulation of culture and the whole human lifestyle?

When regarded from this functional viewpoint, the object of literary research could now unify all the elements of artistic activity. These elements include:

- the problems related to the image of the world, the ideology, the beliefs, the humanitarian problems and conflicts, man's self-knowledge and communication with the Other, the ideal of human personality. Added to these are the models of prestigious or rejected behaviour, usually viewed as the main ingredient of the artistic work's content. These models find their realization in plots and motifs, in dramatic conflict, in lyrical confessions, messages, glorifications, etc. Even here we can see the role played by the viewpoint and the relationships between the Ego and the Other in the literary creation. In other words, even at this level we can distinguish aspects that are usually viewed as belonging to other levels of artistic activity, such as the problem

regarding the relationship between author, character and reader, the problem of intention and its realization in the act of reception, the differentiation between declared and implicit intention and between declared and implicit ideological positions, etc. The possibility to achieve impact upon the beliefs, dispositions and values of the society and the individual is inherent in the very mechanism of the creation of artistic images, plots and motifs, as well as in the specific mechanism of their apprehension, decoding and rationalization. That is to say, we can speak not of some autonomous 'content', presented by means of an equally autonomous 'form', but of a specific process of interaction between different human consciousnesses, realized by means of specific structures whose mechanism of creation offers the possibility for a particular mode of impact. Hence the deduction that a crucial point in the analysis of verbal art is the issue of the relationship between the fictional world of the work of art and the so-called factual reality.

As we know, the links between the real, the fictional and the imaginary form the basis of the famous project of literary anthropology of Wolfgang Iser (Iser, 1993). According to him, the fictional nature of the literary image is a precondition for the movement outside the boundaries of daily existence and into an environment of otherness, where the individual can check and rethink his or her habitual concepts, beliefs, values and behavioural models. This ability to transgress borders is, according to Iser, not a function specific to literature, but also an essential characteristic of human nature. The concept of the imaginary is introduced for its special function to mark the forms of construction of the artistic world that we usually call imaginary, fantastic etc. The concept of the 'imaginary' serves Iser in his attempt to restrain the lateral meanings of words such as 'imagination', 'fantasy', etc., all of which point to the psychology of the creative act. His ultimate aim is to focus the researchers' attention upon the essential role of the imaginary as a means of symbolic assimilation of reality through specific images (*Bilderwelt*).

As I see it, the main problem of Iser's model lies in its self-restriction to the framework of modern literature. Through the act of 'fictionalizing', that is inventing, the author grounds the conscious apprehension of fiction and the imaginary in the communication between the author and the reader through the text and the world of artistic imagery. At the

basis of every artistic act is the 'Als ob' convention. This was actually formulated by Erich Kaestner more than half a century ago in terms, understandable even to children: "If this story had really happened, it would have happened exactly like this." The very fact that Kaestner found it necessary to explain the nature of artistic conventionality suggests that, apart from the joy of transgressing one's own boundaries achieved by the fictional and the imaginary, human beings feel another instinctive aspiration as well – to believe in the truthfulness of the artistic world that is depicted. Ever since ancient times many manifestations of verbal art have consciously sought to confirm their 'truthfulness', that is, their complete concurrence with the factual conditions of the so-called objective reality. For some of these verbal forms this concurrence is even a founding constructive principle – these are the myth, the legend, the exemplum, the passionate, and, in our day, the so-called literature of fact or the forms of creating a personal image. All of these would collapse if the belief in their 'truthfulness' were to be destroyed and they were suddenly perceived as acts of fictionalizing.

Does this mean that, in order to avoid the contradiction of Iser's model, we should accept the existence of two types of verbal creativity – fictional and non-fictional? Here is exactly where anthropology comes to our help and demonstrates that the juxtaposition and comparison of different human cultures crystallizes in one main conclusion: what the members of a group perceive as 'real', that is, independent from the perceiving consciousness, is oftentimes also the result of cultural conventions made up for the interpretation of the sensory and experiential content. This interpretation precipitates as an image of the world that is adopted and approved by the group and is treated as a factual reality. The main achievement of anthropology is that, by transgressing the cultural borders, it shows how much of what we perceive as 'real' is actually fictional. In that sense fiction, whose task is to make us transgress our own boundaries (Iser's 'fictionalising' or Bakhtin's 'outsider's look') and thus to make us know ourselves and put ourselves through trials, is not a non-reality, but a provocation of the mainstream convention which aims to interpret the sensory content. In that sense, the opposition fictional vs. non-fictional and their derivatives such as imagination, social inapplicability and aesthetic function (fictional) and memory, social applicability, cathartic function (non-fictional) – is also put into question.

Certainly, there are differences. Some verbal acts are obviously fictional and have a markedly imaginary imagery. Others utterly resemble the fictional reality and hide in every possible way the fictional nature of their artistic discourse. They even affirm their 'historical accuracy', 'factuality' and 'authenticity'. Others still, whose most distinguished representative is mythology, are markedly imaginary in their symbolic imagery, which does not stop them from claiming full and factual truthfulness, that is, their non-fictional character. Something more – they would be eradicated as a factor in human culture if they were not perceived as unquestionably truthful.

In that sense, the correct conclusion could be stated in the following terms: Human experience contains different modes and levels of fiction, as well as different functions and models of social apprehension of fiction. The task of an anthropological literary science would be to describe and study these various modes and functions in order to complete an adequate picture of the artistic phenomena in question, which often belong to different systems of functioning of the fictional. Often-times, especially in modern cultures, they somehow work with previous modes of perception of the fictional and the imaginary. In other words, fiction itself can become an artistic vehicle of expression.

An attempt in this direction was made by a research group with the Institute for World Literature in Moscow within the project on Historical Poetics. In their foreword to the collection of essays entitled *Historical Poetics. Literary Epochs and Types of Artistic Consciousness* (Аверинцев, 1994), the authors Averintzev, Andreyev, Gasparov, Grintzer and Mikhaylov propose the idea that there are three main types of artistic consciousness in the development of human verbal art. Their difference lies mainly in the role that each of them ascribes to functionality and its application in verbal artistic acts. Hence the major changes in the function of some basic forms of poetics, such as authorship, genre and style.

Here, however, we should make one stipulation. In our practice we are used to speaking about literature, literary science and literary theory. At the same time we often study and base our arguments on phenomena that are not properly literary – that is to say, they do not exclusively comprise written texts that are meant especially for a special kind of artistic reading and perform a predominantly aesthetic function. What is commonly denoted as "European literature" is a relatively late phenom-

enon that arose during the Hellenic ages and did not undergo any real development until post-Renaissance modernity. At the same time various manifestations of verbal creativity have accompanied humanity for nearly all of its earthly existence. Some of these still exist today, but are not included in the sphere of literature. At the same time, by performing their characteristic functions, they keep influencing the formation of beliefs, dispositions and values of humankind. In other words, we should look for a diversity of phenomena with various characteristics, all of which fall within the very boundaries of our object. That is why I prefer to use the term 'verbal art', and try to apply the term 'literature' only where I talk about the phenomenon proper.

The importance of this specification is even more obvious in the case of the third aspect of the anthropological study of artistic phenomena – the organization of artistic discourse. For the majority of the immanently oriented schools of literary studies the main field of research used to be the text. This is quite understandable – after all, it was precisely the coherence of the symbolic structures where the scholars in the field sought the main support for their definition of the specificity of art in its various aspects and levels. The problem, however, arises when we attempt to shift our interest to the function of artistic texts in a social environment. At this point, text-oriented studies reveal their helplessness. This explains why Hans Robert Jauss felt the need to challenge the development of literary science, which he did in a famous speech that later was developed into a book – "Literary History as a Provocation to Literary Theory" (Jauss, 1967). In this book and in the ones that followed, Jauss demonstrated how important it is for students of literature to familiarize themselves with the details not merely of the text of the work under research, but also with the particular way in which it is perceived and in which it casts its influence on society. Emerging in this way, the aesthetics of reception was later transformed into an aesthetics of effect. At the centre of its interests are the issues of artistic communication. Several different aspects and levels can be distinguished within its problematics:

1. The problem of the speech bearer. Textually oriented literary science is focused mainly on the issue of the author of the text and his or her projections in the textual structure. Even the polemic about the death of the author, stirred up by Roland Barthes, does not in principle

depart from this framework, because the question it actually poses is not about real speech bearers and real communication, but about different strategies of reading written texts. The actual speech bearer in the limits of a human community remains an unknown territory for this line of scholarship. Yet A. N. Vesselovsky (Веселовский, 1894) had already posed the problem with the necessary explicitness. His article 'From the Singer to the Poet' ("От певца к поэту") is probably the first serious attempt of contemporary literary science to apply an anthropological approach to the study of verbal phenomena. Vesselovsky clearly demonstrates that the speech bearer's status is a key factor for the achievement of the prestige of that speech. At certain moments, Vesselovsky points out, the speech bearer becomes more important even than the characters he glorifies, because the preservation of its memories and the creation of glory is what the community needs more than the actual act of heroism. Using the example of Demodocus, who sings about the heroic deeds of the participants in the Trojan War in the presence of one of the most illustrious heroes of that war – Odysseus, Vesselovsky proves that the singer is the figure that determines the status of speech in a given community. In the same study Vesselovsky also defines the specific role speech will play in the creation and maintenance of the beliefs, dispositions, values and emotions of the members of this community. But even though modern literary science accepts the importance of these phenomena, there are still no in-depth studies of this issue. Even folklore studies, which hold it as one of their most important problems, have not produced any persuasive research, at least not since Perry and Lord's work on the epic singer. It was once again Jauss who brought notice to the importance of this problem in his famous table of medieval moralistic genres. Jauss pointed to the speech bearer as one of the factors that link the two main fields of literary interest – the role of the artistic act in its effect on the community's values on one hand, and its role in the organization of the narrative perspective and the overall structure of the text on the other.

2. The problem of the organization of the artistic act. In the last decades this has become the object of study for the so-called sociology of literature and reading. Research in this discipline, however, has been limited only to the literary field whereas, as I have already pointed out, human verbal creativity has much wider dimensions. The participation

of speech in various types of rituals is a problem that extends to the later, purely literary organization of the artistic act, even though it does so at a secondary level, as one of the vehicles of expression in literature. Nevertheless, the very fact that this vehicle is crucial for the construction of the overall meaning and the impact of the work highlights the need for more serious efforts in the studies of this aspect of artistic activity. It is also no less essential to investigate symbolic acts of communication, such as narrative, telling, singing, etc., as well as symbolic acts linked to the attitude of the subject of artistic discourse to his or her task – glorification, lamentation, idyllic idealization, etc. In the same field we can find the 'simple forms', proposed by Andre Jolles, which are based on some fundamental cultural mechanisms for creating of the image of the world – myth, legend, saga, fairy-tale, etc.

3. The above is also valid for the study of relationships in the social and artistic communicative space. The most important ones among them are linked to the distinction between oral and written discourse. This distinction, as shown by Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1978), predetermines some of the most significant differences in the function and effect of speech. They depend on the closeness or distance of the subject of communication in space and time, the need for interpretation of the meanings embedded in the declaration and their interpretation by correlating them to particular social and cultural contexts, etc.

4. All of these aspects inevitably have an impact on the compositional and structural principles of building the artistic discourse. In the case of written fictional discourse, as Reiner Warning's research shows (Warning, 1983), we can even speak of a staged discourse, that is, of a discourse where the very structure of the text encodes possibilities for its secondary realization in a fictional communicative space. Along with the discursive characteristics, the structure of artistic texts must also create the full potential for the meaning of the fictional world depicted in the work of art. All of these enable textual structures to fit in an unified complex of factors that create the entire structure of the artistic act.

5. Finally, attention needs to be paid to the aspects of perception and identification between the different subjects of the artistic act. Bakhtin relegates these to three main characters – author, literary character and perceiver. This is an area where the impact of the artistic act on society and the individual also comes into focus. As we know, research of per-

ception and the impact of the artistic phenomena has resulted in some valuable publications on this subject by the representatives of the aesthetics of reception and the aesthetics of impact. Central among them is the work of Hans Robert Jauss *Aesthetic Experience and the Problems of Literary Hermeneutics* (Jauss, 1972) and Wolfgang Iser's *The Act of Reading* (Iser, 1994) and *The Fictive and the Imaginary. Perspectives of Literary Anthropology* (Iser 1993). The methodology proposed in these fundamental works is applicable to the study of various phenomena in the field of artistic culture.

One question arises naturally at this point: isn't there a specific artistic phenomenon that serves as an 'entrance' to the analysis of each artistic act, that also unifies all aforementioned aspects of anthropological reading? I believe that there is such a possibility and that it is based on the research of genre. If we study genre not as a guide to the compilation of the poetic text in accordance with a set of established rules or as a reading program that enables the building of various meanings, but as a norm for the development of the whole artistic discourse, we will see that the genre covers all of the aspects of artistic activity.

Firstly, the genre keeps account of the communicative character of the discourse: Who is speaking? And to whom? What is the mode of speaking (*modus dicendi*)? All these questions determine both the intertextual character of the speech and the peculiarities of the artistic communication that actually takes place in the social space. The way in which the work will influence the perceiver, the model for his or her identification and the flow of shared experience and rationalization depend a great deal on the communicative model – whether the work is performed by an *aoidos*, a rhapsode, a juggler or a *cantastorie*, whether it is recited in the palace halls or in front of an enthusiastic crowd in the market square or the stadium, whether it is sung as a song or read in solitude. If we analyze the text alone, these questions will not only remain unanswered, but will not be posed at all. Consequently, we deprive our interpretation of some very crucial aspects.

Secondly, the genre directs the speech in time and space, both intertextual and real. The emergence of meaning and the mode of impact also depend on whether the action is depicted as taking place at a particular time and place or in an ideal, unspecified reality. Some artistic phenomena, drama and songs, for example, take place always 'here and now,' re-

ardless of whether they tell of past or present events and regardless of the difference between the narrative and declarative time and space. The reference to the absolute past is a structurally defining factor for other genres, such as the classical epic. For others still, timelessness and some special ambiguity are a crucial characteristic: these include the haiku, the lyrical miniature, the epigram and the proverb. In his well-known theory of the chronotope, Mikhail Bakhtin focuses mainly on the differences between the epic and the novel, yet he clearly demonstrates that every verbal artistic genre develops its own chronotopical model, specific only to itself. These characteristics are no less important to the studies of the mechanisms that build meaning in the work of art and its actual effect on the perceiver than the communicative orientation of the discourse.

Thirdly, the model of communicative situations includes the nomenclature of characters. The way in which the human being is depicted, as well as the idea of what is human, both embedded in every character, is also strictly generically oriented. The tragic hero is presented in one way, the comic – in another. The epic hero is one thing, and the balladic – another. The depiction of a model character, specific to the legend, the passional or the ode would be completely inappropriate for the comic short story or for the love lyric. And we also know that for the perceiver, the characters in a work of art are the main object of identification. This also defines the different different manners and models of identification and hence the work's impact on the public.

In the fourth place, there is the action model. Sometimes it is merely an illustration of a given moral imperative, as in the exemplum. In other cases it is a conspicuous illustration of the idea that worthy of reward is only he who can overcome the obstacles in life due to his good heart which rewards the hero with an overnight hierarchical upswing, as happens in the fairy-tale. In other cases still, the action is subject to the model of the epic duel, etc. There is no existing genre where the model of action is not clearly defined and always adhered to. This in turn guarantees that the work will follow the correct strategy of impact, one that builds the desired models of conduct, beliefs, values and dispositions.

All these characteristics of the artistic act combine within the construction of the image of the world that is characteristic of every genre, as well as in the message that every genre usually seeks to convey to the audience. How to be virtuous? Legend gives the answer to this question.

What would happen if our wishes could come true? To learn this, we need to turn to the fairy-tale. According to what norm can we evaluate the event we are being told about? The answer lies in the novella, etc.

On the other hand, the study of genres can clarify the relationship between the texts that are perceived as artistic and those characteristic of "normal" speech, as well as the relationships between artistic texts proper. Furthermore, the juxtaposition may flow both in a synchronic and in a diachronic order. These juxtapositions give rise to many interesting observations related to the functions of the discursive levels. If, for example, we are studying a text that we spontaneously perceive as an ode, we could subject it to a synchronic juxtaposition both in terms of similarity and of contrast, in order to see how the reader would decipher it in the framework of the binary oppositions of the synchronic system of genres. In this case elegy, humour, fairy-tale and the like would stand in mutual contrast, while laudatory speech and the ceremonial march would show similarity. From the diachronic perspective, matters look even more interesting. If we juxtapose the way in which odes construct the image of their characters, we will find that it largely resembles the way of depicting the perfect legendary hero and the characters in the passionals of saints. Some interesting parallels – for instance, with the generic function of the ode – could also emerge when we compare the social functions of different genres in their respective contexts.

Actually, the problem of the generic function is a problem of the centre where all aspects of the artistic act converge. In this function, which Jauss calls "the place in life" (*Sitz im Leben*), the factual reception of artistic phenomena (a problem of literary sociology) combines with the ideological functions – the way in which a genre helps the formation and consolidation of a particular type of beliefs, dispositions and values. It also works on the purely pragmatic level to form commendable models of social conduct.

As can therefore be seen, the study of generic problems covers all the aspects of the artistic act and offers the opportunity for linking the different levels of its structure and function – from the level of ideal meanings and the problems of communication, through the organization of discourse, the construction and perception of the text to its impact on society and the individual. It is not surprising therefore that the authors who, throughout history, have spontaneously embraced the

anthropological approach, have in one way or another tackled precisely the problems of genre.

The most telling example is that of Aristotle – the author of the first work that was specifically meant to serve the purposes of analysis of the artistic phenomena. His *Ars Poetica* (Aristotle, 1975) analyzes the tragic genre and combines the various levels of the work – the character type of the protagonist (who has a higher status than the spectator but carries a tragic guilt), the construction of a specific image of the world (imitation of action, serious and complete), narrative devices (obstacles and realizations), types of reception and impact (wrong opinion, compassion and fear, catharsis), and the problem of the relation between fiction and truth. In a sense, Aristotle's complex approach remains to this day an example of rigorous anthropological analysis of a particular artistic pursuit.

For centuries, the studies of artistic speech have been limited either to the creation of practical rules for the construction of different types of texts, or to some sort of speculative philosophical theorizations. Even in its first manifestations – the works of the Positivistic school – modern literary science turned its research focus to the anthropological, respectively generic problems. The most characteristic examples of this are A. N. Vesselovsky's *Three Chapters on Historical Poetics* (1899) and *Poetics of Genre* (1897–1906). In these works the distinguished scholar's attention falls mainly on the ways in which the phenomena of human speech arise spontaneously from the needs for social development, on the ways in which typical approaches of impact are formed, on the ways in which different artistic figures come into being and develop ('from the singer to the poet') and the manner in which various strategies for the construction of plots and motifs emerge.

The anthropological approach to genre is not uncommon even in approaches usually perceived as markedly formalistic, such as the works of the so-called Morphological school, especially W. Y. Propp's *Morphology of the Fairy-Tale* (*Морфология сказки*) (Пропп, 1928) and *The Historical Roots of the Magical Tale* (Пропп, 1946). We must also mention Andre Jolles and his *Simple Forms* (Jolles, 1930).

The fact that the works of the Positivists, as well as those of the followers of the Morphological school, examine phenomena that are more characteristic of oral art, is not surprising. After all, it is precisely in oral art that the links between the fictional world of the work and the

social contexts of its creation and function are more noticeable and even define their structure. Even today, the branch of philology that deals mainly with folkloric phenomena transforms most quickly and painlessly into a part of general cultural anthropology.

The distinction between written and oral speech, between folklore and literature proper has resulted in two major scientific fallacies. According to one belief, typical of the early 20th century, folklore and literature are phenomena of the same kind. Folklore is analyzed predominantly from the viewpoint of its recorded texts, which differ from the literary ones only in some purely structural features, such as the use of variations, stable motifs and plots, specific vocabulary and vehicles of expression. This equalization, especially where the modes of functioning of folkloric and literary phenomena are concerned, has bred many misconceptions, especially in the interpretation of artistic phenomena that differ in time and character.

By contrast, the other approach perceives folklore and literature as completely different phenomena. The upholders of this theory believe that one can understand folklore adequately only with the help of a purely cultural or anthropological analysis. Literature, on the other hand, is considered to be a field which is free from any direct dependence on the objective reality and which exerts its influence mainly through the free play of the reader's imagination. Such is, for example, Wolfgang Iser's approach in his project on literary anthropology.

It is in fact clear that all phenomena of human verbal art, albeit often very different from one another, exist in direct mutual correlation and interdependence. The task of the researcher is to outline both the differences and the similarities between them. That is the approach adopted by M. M. Bakhtin in his attempts to find the links between phenomena of different kinds, such as the Menippean satire and the novel, the epic and the novel, the oral and the written artistic genres, etc. In later years this idea was further developed in the ambitious project 'Historical Poetics' realized mainly by the Institute of World Literature at the Russian Academy of Sciences. The leading principles of this approach are summarized in the abovementioned texts of Averintzev, Gasparov et al. According to them, there are three different artistic epochs, each with a specific way of participating in the social and ideological life. This leads to some marked differences in the function of the fundamental po-

etical categories, such as genre, style and authorship. At the same time, however, there are no insurmountable divides between the phenomena of human oral and written art – they presuppose and determine each other, they may draw upon and manipulate each other and thus turn from characteristic signs of function into vehicles of expression. The most telling example is the case of the so-called 'skaz', where the manner of construction of the oral work of art is perceived as a means towards the realization of a specific strategy of impact.

The approach of Hans Robert Jauss and Elisabeth Frenzel is very interesting in that sense. They have developed an original method of researching the links between phenomena in oral and in written art. Frenzel's two large collections – *Motifs in World Literature* (Frenzel, 1999-a) and *Contents of World Literature* (Frenzel, 1999-b) trace the birth and function of basic motifs, plots, images and characters in human verbal art in different cultural contexts by describing their typological similarities.

In conclusion, we can say that the anthropological approach in literary science opens new opportunities for the creation of a complex research methodology that could combine the achievements of the various schools of literary scholarship and could create a new object of scientific study. It places at the centre of attention not the structure of the text, not even merely discourse analysis, but the entire complex of artistic activity directed towards the formation, maintenance and transformation of human beliefs, images and views of the world, the dispositions, feelings and values that are fundamental to the very idea of humanity. In that sense, literary science can be simultaneously conceived as a specific scientific discipline with its own object and methodology of research, as well as a part of the general cultural anthropology. In any case, the interpretation of a particular artistic phenomenon that has been subjected to an anthropological reading can reveal many new and unexpected aspects.

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BLACK ON LINGUISTIC HOMOGENEITY AND HETEROGENEITY

The discussion of linguistic problems is absolutely natural in the philosophical tradition to which Black belongs. This tradition has quite a few fundamental and subtle differences within itself, but if there is one thing in common among its representatives, then it must be the belief that the analysis of linguistic problems can, in one way or another, contribute to philosophical knowledge: "they agreed on the importance of language, though their views differ widely as to what this importance is. Some of them insist that common usage should serve as a touchstone of meaning and truth; some of them, on the contrary, find the roots of philosophic confusion in taking common usage too seriously; some of them exercise their patience and ingenuity in trying to construct an ideal language."⁴⁰ Black said that "[philosophical linguistics may be expected to provide nothing less than a pathway to the nature of that reality which is the metaphysician's goal. To this very day the hope persists that '...with sufficient caution, *the properties of language may help us to understand the structure of the world.*'"⁴¹ Russell also thought that "[t]he study of grammar, in my opinion, is capable of throwing far more light on philosophical questions than is commonly supposed by philosophers. Although a grammatical distinction cannot be uncritically assumed to correspond to a genuine philosophical distinction, yet the one is *prima facie* evidence of the other, and may often be most usefully employed as the source of the other."⁴² This program immediately lead to the quest for an "ideal language" which is free from the defects of ordinary language, and which can prevent logical mistakes by corresponding to the facts of the world through the correlation of elements and the identity of structure. Black adds that it is by no means certain that Russell "ever seriously supposed that the ideal language could be

⁴⁰ Brand Blanshard *Reason and Analysis*. La Salle: Open Court. 1962. pp. 94-95.

⁴¹ Max Black "Russell's Philosophy of Language" in Paul A. Schilpp (ed.) *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*. Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press. 1944. 229-255. p. 230. Black's italics. Black quotes Bertrand Russell *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*. London: George Allen and Unwin. 1940. p. 341.

⁴² Bertrand Russell *The Principles of Mathematics*. London: George Allen and Unwin. 1903. p. 42.

realized."⁴³ It is, however, absolutely certain that he always mistrusted ordinary language. He said there was a fundamental disagreement between him and some other philosophers, including P. F. Strawson: "They are persuaded that common speech is good enough not only for daily life, but also for philosophy. I, on the contrary, am persuaded that common speech is full of vagueness and inaccuracy, and that any attempt to be precise and accurate requires modification of common speech both as regards vocabulary and as regards syntax."⁴⁴

In similar vein, Gilbert Ryle discussed the "systematically misleading expressions" which are "couched in a syntactical form improper to the facts recorded."⁴⁵ A. J. Ayer said that the purpose of philosophy is to "dispel those confusions which arise from our imperfect understanding of certain types of sentence in our language."⁴⁶ But it is perhaps even more important that through the investigation of the alleged defects of language, the study of ordinary language became respectable. George E. Moore's strategy was different from that of Russell. He usually pointed out that some of the supposedly "philosophical" puzzles are meaningless because they conflict with ordinary language: "The philosophizing of most of the more important philosophers has consisted in their more or less subtly repudiating ordinary language. Moore's philosophizing has consisted mostly in his refuting the repudiators of ordinary language."⁴⁷ In one way or another, what was supposed to be ordinary language, meaning and the conditions of meaningfulness were part and parcel of the philosopher's investigation. Thus, when Max Black decided to discuss metaphor, he only extended the investigation to a field which was relatively neglected by other philosophers. And we should not forget that when he wrote his essay, topics like translation, synonymy and paraphrase were widely discussed by philosophers. The only thing that may have shocked the fellow-analytic-philosophers like

⁴³ Black "Russell's Philosophy of Language" p. 253.

⁴⁴ "Mr. Strawson on Referring". *Mind* 66 (1957) 385-389. p. 387.

⁴⁵ Gilbert Ryle "Systematically Misleading Expressions". *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 32 (1932) 139-170. p. 143.

⁴⁶ Alfred Jules Ayer *Language, Truth and Logic*. London: Victor Gollancz. 1936. p. 62.

⁴⁷ Norman Malcolm "Moore and Ordinary Language" in Paul A. Schilpp (ed.) *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*. Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press. 1942. 345-368. p. 365.

was a trend newly encouraged at the beginning of the 20th century by the emerging discipline of English studies.

Jenő Péterfy, for example, in his essay on József Eötvös' novelistic method and technique, analyzes the similarities between Byron's *Manfred* and Eötvös' novel, *A Karthauzi* [*The Carthausian*], written in 1839. Frigyes Riedl points to a thematic resemblance between Byron's *The Siege of Corinth* and Mihály Vörösmarty's small heroic poem *Eger*. Győző Morvay finds even more Byronic features in Vörösmarty's works and similarities, such as in his battle and landscape descriptions, on the grounds that the poet's attention was drawn to Byron by the Greek War of Independence and that he had already read several of Byron's works by the early 1820's (in German translations, possibly in that of Schumann, issued in Zwickau). Morvay discovers exact correspondences between *Délsziget* [Isle of South] and *The Giaour*. He also mentions that the similarities between the two poets derives from the fact that they had both read the same works, such as the *Arabian Nights*, as well as those by Moore, Tasso and Ariosto. Morvay also finds similarities between Byron and his admirer, Miklós Jósika, in the latter's short stories. Jósika's works *Helione* and *Herculanum* display parallels with Byron's *Sky and Earth*, but the Hungarian writer also had a draft called *Diamante*, which would have taken place in Albania, and whose main character would have been Ali Tepeleni. Imre Madách's drama, *Az ember tragédiája* [*The Tragedy of Man*], which combines the features of the Faustian dramatic verse and the *poème d'humanité*, owes, according to several of its critics, a lot to many of Byron's works, especially to *Manfred* and *Cain*. Sándor Fest, one of the pioneers of the English Studies in Hungary, deals with the Byronian heritage in Hungarian literature.

It is interesting (though not surprising at all, in view of the traditions in 19th-century Hungarian literary theory) that while in the case of Byron's epic works, the essays dealing with the poet's effect include detailed textual comparisons³, the influence of his lyrical works was hardly ever analyzed, apart from some rare examples. The analysis of his lyrical poetry was restricted to comparisons of the use of color and of prevailing moods; the "grave magic," the spleen, the sickness, misanthropy, sickness of life or the never-satisfied eagerness to act – all

³ Naturally, they are too extensive to be included here.

these became Byron's "trademarks". The so-called "Byron-phenomenon" itself is much more complicated than this: it becomes a part of the problem captivating the attention of 19th-century Hungarian literary critics. What therefore is the cause of his influence, how and why does literary and cultural reception happen, how does it affect society, what role can it possibly play in its development – or, in short, how can it be that the 19th century for example could "find its voice in Byron," as Gergely Czuczor puts it? At the end of this short review I would like to say a few words on these issues.

2. Byron-phenomenon or Byron-syndrome? (Attempts at identification)

The reception-historical study of Győző Morvay begins with a strange "Byron-definition." As if to identify a scientific subject, he devotes several pages to the "essence" of Byron and to what this name really means: according to the recent scientific opinion, "Byron epitomises the concept of the suffering personality, the pain caused by the imperfection of the ever-changing world".⁴ From the historical point of view of the 19th century, says Morvay, this far-reaching phenomenon is an expression of the belief that the great ideas which had emerged in the 18th century on a theoretical level and marked with the names of Rousseau, Young, Voltaire and Kant could be put to life. These include the adoration of nature, the lyrical consciousness, scepticism, the desire for freedom, the scathing irony, the restless urge to discover the final questions of existence. On a logical level, adoration of nature is in perfect harmony with the emotional and intellectual superiority of art, if the latter is regarded as a part of life. One of its important elements is the subversive radicalism which idolizes freedom and (with an aristocratic conviction) wants a republic instead of limitless despotism and unbending tyranny. The realization of this idea is moreover of a heroic type in which the Christian, the pagan and the primitive are united, while its failure proves that the world order lacks harmony.⁵

⁴ Győző Morvay: *Byron Magyarországon* (Byron in Hungary). In: Emil Koeppel: *Byron*. Budapest, 1913. p. 295.

⁵ Morvay p. 295–296.

Morvay was not the first to try to describe the most important features of this Byron-phenomenon. Some authors before him tried to answer the question in what circumstances it emerges and what consequences it could bring about. In their view it is such a complex phenomenon with an extremely great influence that it cannot be simply rejected on the grounds that it is morally harmful. As an ideological trend, a syndrome of the ages, one which can emerge as if by the force of nature, it is not certain at all that one can avoid becoming involved in it. Others, on the other hand, think that it might not be necessary to do so: a thorough examination of the phenomenon reveals certain positive features which should be welcomed. However, the question is how could positive features prevail without the disadvantages? In the context of this dilemma, these 19th century Hungarian essays look most edifying, since they attempt to map the preconditions of being Byronic by placing Byron on the English intellectual horizon.

An article published in 1828 in the journal titled *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* [Scientific Collection] compares English and German poetry – or more precisely, it does not compare as much as explain the differences between them by describing the different characters of the two nations. Byron takes a unique place in this comparison: "He is German by his fantasy, but he is English by necessity." It is interesting that the essay's author finds those features which are regarded by others as the peculiarities of his personality to be general and the typical expressions of the English national character. According to his opinion, Byron's aspiring spirit, his stubbornness, his "not feeling comfortable where fate has placed him, his striving for the unusual," his fearlessness before any obstacles – all these show the English national spirit best. It is revealed in the fact that "one cannot find the pedantic, cloistered type of scholar in any of his works but only the man in the poet who sailed amidst danger in the Lac Léman, swam across the Hellespontus, and went to Missolonghi searching for death."⁶ English literature corresponds to the English national character best when, as the article suggests, the border-

⁶ Gyula Fenyéry: „Az Angol és a Német Poésisről. Kivonat a Le Globbe című Francz Folyóirásból; Gleich Fridriktől Lipcsében kiadott Eremit 1827-40-d. száma szerint.” [“On English and German Poetry. Summary of an article from a French journal titled 'Le Globe', after a German variant by Friedrich Gleich's Eremit issued in Leipzig, 1827 No. 40.] In: *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (Scientific Collection) 1828/2.

line between life and poetry ceases to exist, or more precisely when life becomes poetry and poetry transforms into life.

However, according to others, Byron is entirely alien to the English character. An author writing in the *Magyar Szépirodalmi Szemle* [*Hungarian Literary Review*] states that Byron and Shelley had a much greater influence on the continent than on their homeland, as spleen and Weltschmerz are not typical of the pragmatic and rational English nation at all. The mechanism of influence is again "sympathetic": it can prevail where character exists. By his national spirit the Englishman is practical and quick-witted, "he gets along on his way in a manly fashion, shapes strangers as it suits his interests best, is deeply attached to his ancient institutions until he meets the opposite necessity, and then he'd rather improve its spirit and soul than struggle with empty forms and the splendour of words, which clearly shows his lively character." These characteristics are the ones traditionally identified with the features of the Hungarian nation (in the rhetoric of the Hungarian nobility). National characteristics played a great part in England's becoming a model country from the end of the 18th century. The English example could be efficient just because the two nations' characters are much alike, the similar descriptions suggest.

This notion of the English character can function as an example for a literature which intends to serve and orient the nation since "this kind of English character can, in the field of literature, make a nation original and influential in life, as it springs from life, and life can only spring in a living thing." According to this article, the "true" embodiment of English literature is Dickens, whose works have such a great effect on the reader that they arouse the reader's "social consciousness" and manage to influence economics and politics in a peaceful way, making them realize the necessity of reform and development.⁷

An argument based on national character can also be found in Morvay's essay. He explains Byron's great influence in Eastern Europe with the fact that the nations living there could often recognize themselves in his work's exotic features and locations. Hungarians were attracted by the described nations' "warlike and proud character, the mentioning of a glorious name, the poet's splendid fantasy rich in oriental images,

⁷ "Az angol költészet." [English Poetry.] In: *Magyar Szépirodalmi Szemle* [*Hungarian Literary Review*] 1847. p. 34-35.

his poem's rhetorical grandeur, his melancholic and revolting pain, his love of freedom, legendary heroism, his aristocratic emotions that stand in permanent contrast with all his democratism, ruthlessly scouring the authority with sarcasm, and his hate of the Austrian despotism."⁸

Life-likeness, the ambivalent relation between word and action being one of the most important problems of 19th-century literary theory, it occurs many times in connection with Byron as well. As Ferenc Pulszky puts it: "The word wipes the golden dust off the thought's butterfly wings, consumes its most gentle scent, weakens its giant strength, and if it saves its beauty, then it kills its goodness." Thought has only one progeny: action, word is only a stepchild (...). Byron, this titan, longing for action, felt this well: who could be so hard, who could not pity him when he exclaims amidst the inner dispute of his never-realized passions: "Actions, actions, said Demosthenes, actions, actions I say, and not writing, least at all rhyme."⁹

Another important element of the Byron-phenomenon is its up-to-dateness, its modernity. In the abovequoted travel diary Pulszky, personalizing the era's ambiguity, tension, changeability and unpredictability, compares it to Byron's heroes, taking him as the era's dramatist, or at least as its most perfect means of expression: "our time is similar to Byron's heroes, silence outside, storms inside, the river's clean ice covers the foam's giant congestion."¹⁰

One could almost say that Byron epitomized the peak of English literary history, as presented in Gergely Czuczor's summary: we can apprehend in Byron's figure the great change setting apart the old and the modern and proceeding in European history and societies, and in relation to this in English literature as well.¹¹ "Lord Byron is one of those men who won't be disowned by our age: for (since he is conceived in this age's marrow) he is praised, glorified, his principles are admired and his genius is praised by the contemporaries. He is one of the pas-

⁸ Morvay p. 298.

⁹ Ferenc Pulszky: „Úti vázlatok 1836-ból.” (“Travel Sketches from 1836.”) In: Pulszky Ferenc kisebb dolgozatai. Ed. Antal Lábán. Budapest, 1914. p. 45.

¹⁰ L.c.

¹¹ Gergely Czuczor: „Szellemi mozgás Angliában s annak haladása, tekintettel más európai nemzetekre.” [“Intellectual movements in England and its development, considering the other European nations.”] *Tudománytár* [*Scientific Magazine*] 1835/5.

not fail to draw. His statement means that the speakers of a language can only accept what is "determined" by the rules of the language. In other words, it is impossible for the speakers to change the literal or metaphorical status of sentences. But if the speakers cannot change the meaning of words, who or what can? Black was both aware of the vulnerability of meanings to changes and was at the same time wary of these unpredictable changes. He implies that the "rules of our language" constitute an impersonal force that "determines" the way certain expressions must be interpreted. It is the "rules" and not by any means the individual speakers that determine whether or not a certain context has changed the meaning of words, whether or not a sentence should be regarded as metaphorical or as literal. Black's essay is built on two not very obvious assumptions:

- (i) individual speakers cannot change the meaning of words;
- (ii) meaning can still change – according to its own rules.

It will be noted that the first assumption is related to linguistic homogeneity while the second can be related to heterogeneity. In the first essay, Black found both assumptions equally appealing and without either (i) or (ii) his essay would be entirely different. Without assumption (i), "human communication would be a more chancy, a less tightly organized, affair than it is."⁵⁸ Without assumption (ii), without the possibility of change, Black would have to give up the interaction view of metaphor. In order to describe language as a tightly organized affair, Black is willing to sacrifice some of the variability of language. On the other hand, Black is undoubtedly aware of both linguistic and ideological heterogeneity. Although he says it is the rules that "determine that some expressions must count as metaphors," he shows how to undo metaphors. With respect to the example "Man is a wolf," he makes three devastating remarks:

- (iv) "the metaphorical sentence in question will not convey its intended meaning to a reader sufficiently ignorant about wolves;"
- (v) "From the expert's standpoint, the system of commonplaces may include half-truths or downright mistakes;"
- (vi) "Men who take wolves to be reincarnations of dead humans

⁵⁸ Black *Labyrinth* p. 56.

programmatically popular/folk trend which regarded literature as a medium of a wide ranging influence that can at the same time ensure the viability and modernity of the national idea. At the end of the 18th century English literature “also declined to the feebleness of senility” (as did the Hungarian, the text suggests). It was due to Walter Scott’s method that English literature succeeded in “rejuvenating itself, once again regaining its youth’s strength and flame,” since Scott used “the most popular, national sources,” “the literature of democracy, legends and ballads and so his poetry, originating in these sources, could be liked by all social classes and its voice sounded familiar for every ear.” Two other elements further encouraged the rebirth of English literature: Wordsworth democratized “the high religiosity and philosophy with its refined sense” by using “the common sources of the sentiment and deep emotion;” and Byron, in spite of his apparent misanthropy, displayed “intimate sympathy for the whole humanity” (which is another democratizing trait) and for all “that interested his age”. The article suggests that if Hungarian literature followed the English example (since there is a close relationship between the Hungarian and the English spirit), and returned to its “original principles”, that is to the people, to the poetry of the people, composing in this way a new, national poetry, then it would rejuvenate itself and gain in strength like the phoenix (to borrow a popular metaphor of the rhetoric on national revival).

But the so frequently damned “modern”, individual readers, who want only to *enjoy*, and not to *make* literature, will be overcome by Byron’s “sombre but irresistible magic” and will follow their “unequalled and even in his faults lovable” guide wherever the latter wants them to go, and when the poet-guide disappears, the reader “returns, as if after a magical phenomenon, to the sober and rational life.”¹³ Even if examined with a more critical view/eyes, and discovered to have created “only one man and one woman, the man, should he be called Harold, Conrad, Lara, Manfred or Cain, is proud, sullen, cynical, lustful and the woman, Zuleika as much as Julia, Haidée, Gulnare or Medora, is gentle, kind and wants to love and being loved, but is frightening in her passion. The man is Byron himself and the woman is the one his pride

¹³ József Bajza: “Lord Byron.” In: Kisebb történelmi írások. Bajza József összegyűjtött munkái. [*Minor historical works. Collected works of József Bajza.*] Ed. Badics Ferenc. t. 3. Budapest, 1899. p. 259.

desires."¹⁴ And if readers should still prefer to read his diaries and letters saying that here stands before our eyes "a truly great man with all his everyday pettiness," when "we see how he intensifies his incredible irritability further by starving, being so much afraid of gaining weight; we see what a devoted friend and lover he can be, but also how he yawns, without the smallest trace of the Byronian pose, in the middle of the greatest love; we see his true loneliness free from any pathos, and above all, we see how honestly his heart could ache for the sufferers and the oppressed, that the idea of freedom is not just an empty literary theme for him, but a central reality penetrating all his being."¹⁵

But the critical history of this "individual reader" could be discussed in another essay.

¹⁴ Tamás Szana: "Byron. Irodalmi tanulmány." ("Byron. A study on literature.") In: *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág*. [Hungary and the World.] 1966. No. 4. and 5., p. 87.

¹⁵ Antal Szerb; quoted by the editor of the Hungarian translation of Byron's diaries and letters. (*Byron: Naplók, levelek*. Ed. Ágnes Péter. Budapest, 1978.)

GYÖRGY C. KÁLMÁN

STRANGE INTERFERENCES:
MODERNISM AND CONSERVATIVISM VS. AVANT-
GARDE, HUNGARY, CIRCA 1910

(Introduction)

It is a highly peculiar phenomenon in Hungarian – and perhaps in East and Central European – literature of the early 20th century that Avant-Garde tendencies started to gain some (weak) position parallel to the first wave of Modernism, and when they received – understandably – a rather hostile reaction on the part of Conservative (nationalistic, traditional, anti-Western) literary circles, their reception on the part of the evolving Modernist literature was not much friendlier either. Strangely enough, apart from some signals of solidarity and sympathy, Modernism's criticisms of the Avant-Garde were in harmony with those formulated by the Conservative circles.

However, as the Latin saying goes, „Si duo idem faciunt, saepe non est idem” (that is, if two make the same thing, it is not the same thing) – despite the apparent congruence between criticism aimed by Modernist and Conservative writers against Avant-Garde tendencies, the position of the actors in question was radically different. In what follows, I will give a short account of the Avant-Gardists' debate with their Modernist contemporaries and an even shorter one of their exchange with their Conservative adversaries.

(The Nyugat and Kassák)

It is the name of Lajos Kassák, poet and prose writer, that still represents the Avant-Garde in Hungarian literature. Among the pioneers of the movement, he is the only one who made it into the present-day Hungarian official canon. In addition, he has won international recognition for his (typo)graphical work, and perhaps it is only he, at least outside the professional circles, who comes to mind whenever the Hungarian Avant-Garde is mentioned. Kassák was a great organizer and editor of literary magazines, and he held highly consistent (even stubborn) ideas about the nature and mission of literature and the arts. When in 1915 he launched his first bi-weekly literary journal, *A Tett* ("The Deed" or "The Activity"), an extremely influential (and, later, legendary) magazine and the first really powerful forum for the Modern literature of the age was the *Nyugat* ("West"), published since 1908. *Nyugat's* Modernism was a very special blend: it came largely from one generation and at its focus lay that generation's confrontation with nationalistic-Conservative literature (and with right-wing political ideas); it followed French Symbolist, the English Post-Victorian and early Modernist tendencies and was informed by German Expressionism as well.

Kassák's aim was to represent another approach: a far more overtly political, Socialist oriented worldview, with strong links to what were regarded as the most progressive tendencies abroad (Futurism, Expressionism etc.), a surprising, even astonishing and raw voice, a new poetics which broke with possibly all conventions of the past. *A Tett* was designed to herald this new trend, not primarily directed against the *Nyugat*, but claiming independence in every respect.

Thus, the context of the initial steps of the Avant-Garde proper in Hungarian literature was defined primarily by the *Nyugat*. Whether this context was sympathetic or offensive is hard to judge: Kassák and the *Nyugat's* leading figure of its editor Ernő Osvát were on pretty good terms, and some of the writers of both groups published in one or another period of their career in the journal of "the other side" (as Kassák himself did). Moreover, since the *Nyugat* fostered the idea of the generational nature of the new literature, attracting the young artists and writers of the Avant-Garde was one of its aspirations. However, for Kassák's circle it was one of the main ambitions to show its independence and difference and ultimately its resistance to the *Nyugat*.

The *Nyugat* was, so to speak, much more eclectic, more "liberal", more permissive – in the sense that it pursued a policy of giving a forum to several different schools, trends, figures and ideas, whereas Kassák's journals (first *A Tett* and later, as of 1916, *MA* ["Today"]) represented a more or less homogeneous group.

(*Futurism: For and Against*)

The authors writing for the *Nyugat* were well educated, erudite intellectuals who had a wide knowledge of what was going on among Western literary circles; thus, one of their ambitions was to draw their readers' attention to the most important progressive movements abroad and to publish surveys of their contemporaries' works. As early as in 1910, Futurism was thematized in an article by Mihály Babits (an excellent poet and one of the *Nyugat*'s editors), with a remarkable ambiguity. Professing to speak with the *Nyugat* voice, he refuses any "intellectual kinship" with Italian Futurism, adding that all that the Futurists were merely experimenting with had long been transcended in Hungarian poetry – in the Hungarian context it now appeared only as a sort of parody. However, he hastens to add that "we are also Futurists," and that the fog will soon disappear as the sun begins to shine; moreover, at the close of his survey article he repeats that "we are Futurist" – suggesting that the *Nyugat* will always hail new tendencies. While Babits was, so to speak, rather cautious in 1910, his reservations later overcame his optimistic expectations: a comment of his from 1918 suggests that in presenting the scene of poetry, one should ignore "the voluntaristic Futurisms" (thus expelling Futurism from the realm of poetry altogether).

The most important poet of the age, Endre Ady, who served as a hallmark for the *Nyugat* as well as for modern Hungarian poetry as a whole, formulated, in 1911, a very negative opinion on Futurism. The reason for Ady's condemnation of Futurism is just the same as that of Balázs's praise – the presence of a conscious and deliberate program which he regards as an ideology surmounting art. "So I hate Futurists", he claims, and he alludes to the business-like nature of this literary fashion.

Babits's anxiety was much more serious than that of Frigyes Karinthy (an outstanding prose writer, famous for his humorous works and

his parodies) and Ernő Bresztovszky (an influential representative of the Socialist-oriented but poetically conservative trend) who both underlined the Futurists' attraction to technological novelties and modern life (their writings on the subject appeared in the *Nyugat* in 1909). Both find something ridiculous about the language of the Futurists' manifestos as well as in their highly ambitious aspirations. They underline, however, that the modern world must be incorporated into the literature of the day and find it legitimate that a group of young artists should wish to make a radical turn from the entrenched course of literary tradition. There is, in both Karinthy's and Bresztovszky's stance, a sort of ambiguity, but, in contrast to Babits's opinion, they more definitely vote for Futurism.

Since the *Nyugat* wished to offer a forum not only to what it regarded as Modernism but as a literary journal designed for a whole generation, being "eclectic" (or, to put it more mildly, more open, more receptive in its nature, more liberal in its taste), it had the ambition to encourage the new poetry in general, independent of any trend or movement. No wonder then that another leading figure of the magazine, Ignotus (an excellent critic and great organizer of the *Nyugat*), refers in 1911 to the "revolutionary transformation" of literature (without any classification or closer definition), of "Hungarian lyrical poetry, even of the theory of Hungarian versification", and is happy to salute the emergence of whole trends as well as their constituent movements, with their own prophets, credos and beliefs. He juxtaposes, then, this transformation to what one of the proponents of the Conservative academicians has to say on the subject, viz. his protest against the "excesses" of the new poetry in the name of originality. It is evident that Ignotus defends the new literature as a whole against this argument of traditionalism (which has ethical overtones as well).

Among the authors showing rather understanding and sympathetic reactions, Béla Balázs (friend of György Lukács, later a widely known film theoretician, author of *Bluebeard's Castle*, which was the text of Bartók's opera) should also be mentioned. In a publication from 1912, Balázs takes the movement very seriously, and the main argument in his reflections is that the strange role of novelty may blur one's aesthetic judgment. Futurists, he adds (very much akin to Ady), know very well what they are doing, Futurism is far more than the nonsensical humbug of insane or mentally ill people; what they in fact produce may not be

art, but its disquieting nature deserves attention because in this way "the sensitivity of our nerves will grow and we will start feeling the corresponding life of forms". Thus, Balázs expects that the new movements will not remain a weird specificity but may shed light on their age and give an impetus to modern literature as a whole.

There was but one figure among the *Nyugat's* authors who manifested a wholehearted enthusiasm for the Futurist movement: it was Dezső Szabó, whose ties with the *Nyugat* hardly survived the First World War, a writer and essayist who began under the apparent influence of Expressionism and later became an exponent of the Nationalist (and anti-Semitic) right wing movements. Szabó was an ardent proponent of Futurism and in 1912 and 1913 proposed that not only Walt Whitman's "Futurism, creating a new era" but all tiny trends and older schools offering novelty in literature should be subsumed under this label. As the basis of the new art which Szabó regards as Futurism (and into which he includes all the trends he classifies here), he underlines three tasks: 1. the past must not only be broken with but should be discarded, as well; 2. the cult of the feminine, since "woman is just a sexual sport for the man of the future", the new art will belong only to the male, and 3. action must be preferred to science and any kind of reflection. No wonder, then, that it was Szabó who in 1915 wrote the introductory essay for the first issue of *A Tett* (remember: it means "The Action", or "The Deed", in harmony with Szabó's 3rd thesis above), Kassák's first Avant-Garde magazine – he hoped that the new generation would realize what he believed were the ideas of Futurism.

(An example of the Conservative reactions)

To bring forth yet another criticism aimed against the Avant-Garde, we need to turn to the voices outside the *Nyugat* and more particularly to an author who probably represents the general sentiment of those with an inclination to traditional conventions of poetry, an idea of literature soon to be surpassed and forgotten. Béla Zolnai (who later became an influential and respected professor of stylistics, a major proponent of *Geistesgeschichte* in Hungary) was one of the very few who took pains to analyze, however briefly, the appearance of the Hungarian Avant-Garde.

In his study of the same year, 1917, Babits characterizes the judgment of the dominant conservative canon expressed on the literature of the *Nyugat* as follows: "today, forty-year old writers who were trained on serious studies, honestly admiring all the noble traditions and well versed in writing techniques, are considered by the official critics as immature revolutionaries..." Thus, the Avant-Garde arrived when the nationalist-conservative critical scene (including all its participants, from schools to publishers) was preoccupied with the reception, integration or rejection of the classical-modern *Nyugat*. No wonder, then, that conservative critics turned their attention much more to the poets and authors of the *Nyugat* (and primarily to Ady, of course) than to the Avant-Garde trends. Zolnai was the only one to publish a thorough and analytical study on the poetry of Kassák's first magazine, only two years after the publication of its first issue.

Zolnai starts his essay with the launching and the program of *A Tett* and *MA*, and in a sober and discursive manner relates the problems of war to the ambitions of literary innovation. He regrets that the authors of *A Tett* are not consistent in their argumentation inasmuch as whereas they preach individualism, they are not individualists in the old sense, since their social commitment cannot be reconciled with their program which aims at „an active, social literature affecting the great community." If the the new magazine's program is to make aristocratism (exotic and subtle beauties) democratic, similar to the ambitions of Petőfi in the 19th century, if at the center of this new poetry there is activity (and not contemplation or reflection), it is against art for art's sake, it is (as Kassák put it) an "aggressive artistic movement." Thus, Zolnai claims, this program "is similar to that of the Futurists," and it is a "logical reaction to the death poetry of the Decadence," but he doubts both whether this reaction would need a „revolution" and also if the older lyrical poetry of impressions and human feelings would have passed away forever.

After these introductory remarks, Zolnai presents his serious objections. His first point is the demolition of all aesthetic barriers, the programmatic dissonance, the denial of the artistic, the relativization of the beauty and the ugly. Quoting Babits, he takes a stand against anarchy and objects to the unrestricted widening of the range of possible poetic themes. "One cannot, after all, make an exclusive 'salon des refusés,'" he notes indignantly. (One should recall that this is exactly

what Avant-Garde was up to: to shun the position of being recognized and accepted, to occupy, instead, the place of the marginal, the refused, the outsider.) Zolnai's second point is internationalism as an offspring of modernity: he even hails the confiscation of the last issue of *A Tett*, since, for him, pacifism and internationalism constitute a "life program which is dangerous for the community." His third point concerns the claim for "infinity" – and, along with this, the visionary mode of representation which, instead of a concrete description, offers the reader a text where "the outlines of the reality are blurred," the images are exaggerated, and the words are no more than surrogates. All these lead to a stance belonging to an extreme form of Expressionism which, for Zolnai, amounts to Futurism (a conceptual confusion somewhat similar to that of the authors of the *Nyugat*). From this point on, Zolnai starts to pour his evaluations and qualifications – all in all, everything he has hitherto tried more calmly to analyze is now condemned as unintelligible hodgepodge, senseless confusion, comic turbulence; it is all nothing else but sheer mannerism, just like free verse, a form degrading verse to prose.

Zolnai's closing sentences contain, besides an obligatory gesture of acknowledging the Avant-Gardists' good faith, still another interesting point. The success of the *Nyugat*, for Zolnai, is not due to the audience's need of a new literature and so the journal does not aim to satisfy the general audience. Rather, it "has had the material instruments to gather some talented people into its own camp, and it could, from the outset, rely politically on a wide stratum of the reading public." What should that mean? First, it implies the sober insight that a literary magazine needs money for its survival, and this money was acquired by the *Nyugat*; second, the statement carries the less friendly implication that the *Nyugat* would not, for that matter, interest anybody; third, it acknowledges that it is the talented people of the generation who joined the camp of the *Nyugat*; and fourth, it suggests that without the political wind of bourgeois radicalism or liberalism behind it, the *Nyugat* could not possibly enjoy a safe passage (and that *A Tett* or the *MA* have an even more suspicious political background, if any).

Zolnai's study is not, however, a typical one; his self-imposed reserved tone, the scholarly attitude, the argumentation, the consideration of the principles and views of the other party make his case rather exceptional. There are very few other texts that illustrate in the same or

similar manner the contemporary reception of the Avant-Garde, since most of them are just scornful or offensive pieces of journalism that indicate sheer incomprehension. The arguments of the conservative camp are to be inferred, rather than being rationally exposed.

(Futurism and Avant-Garde)

It seems that during the period of WWI, the *Nyugat's* authors' interest in Futurism slowly faded away or, rather, was slightly modified. Before the war, the term "Futurism" was mostly used as a *pars pro toto* expression for all sorts of Avant-Gardism (and partly, of course, for Futurism proper). But when in 1915 Dezső Kosztolányi (one of the best novelists and poets of the century) reviewed Kassák's first volume of his poems, he drew a distinction between this poetry and Futurism ("it has no connection whatsoever with the war poetry living in the European common knowledge, old and new, with the poetry of the Futurists"). Rather, Kosztolányi connected it to Expressionism. Since Futurism had become rather suspicious, Kosztolányi felt forced to find another label, Expressionism, for the poetry he found more to his taste. (Incidentally, the label "Expressionism" was for the first time used in the *Nyugat* in a literary context.)

The gesture of naming (or, rather, of re-naming) is highly significant. Giving a name to a movement can be the first step towards canonization, or at least of domestication. If we know of something as what it in fact is (or at least if we can attach a name to it, in order to identify it or classify it within a group of other texts), then we may give it a comfortable place in the succession of well known and favorite texts (i.e., the canon), and supply it with a direction of reading, a strategy of interpretation. What Kosztolányi is doing here is not only giving a name but also making a distinction – a differentiation of that name from all the possible others, formulating an opposition between this name and the name of, say, Futurism (and even Impressionism or anything older, more traditional, more established). It is, however, quite another issue how Kassák reacts to these gestures of classification, appropriation, and acceptance.

There is, however, yet another reason why Kosztolányi wished to create a distance between Kassák and Futurism.

As is well known, Italian Futurists did not oppose the war, to say the least: they regarded it as a manifestation of Modernism and of technology in their purest form, a climax of a progress, a trial of manly virtues. In the circle of the *Nyugat* (and in general, among the Hungarian progressive intellectuals), however, the dominant position was pacifism; even if, for instance, Béla Balázs had a short period when he believed that war might be regarded as a site for common suffering where, though descending to the depths of human misery, one could experience the essential despair of mankind, the general conviction of his generation was that war is useless, absurd, cruel and dangerous for the society in general. Ady and Babits, notably, were devoted Pacifists. It would be very far-fetched to say that the *Nyugat* belonged to the political Left of its age, but it is certain that the orientation of the magazine was liberal, and that it stood against the ruling conservative, nationalistic and pro-war tendency. It even offered a forum for those sympathetic to Socialism.

This ideological constellation, then, may serve as one of the explanations why when WWI broke out, the *Nyugat* started to be very critical towards Futurism. The artistic program of (Italian) Futurism was very closely interwoven with a political engagement with or attraction to the war. Babits's opinion throughout the war is formulated much more sharply and more vigorously, and he implicitly suggests that the militarism of the Futurists cannot be regarded as independent of the war preparations outside the realm of arts or of the subsequent bloodshed, which is also very inartistic. Quoting in 1915 a Futurist manifesto ("...Nous, Futuristes, [...] glorifions l'amour du danger et de la violence..."), he comments: "The Futurist is happy with the war, he is happy with the suffering and death of his brethren: only because it offers him a spectacle, excitement." Kosztolányi, however, prefers to confront Kassák and Futurism, and to ridicule Marinetti – as opposed to Kassák – as somebody who had no idea of the war whatsoever and for whom war is merely an object of enthusiasm and exhilarating impressions. For him, Kassák is superior, just because he is beyond Futurism.

(The Babits-Kassák debate, 1916: Babits)

1916 was the year of a very important debate between Babits and Kassák – a sharp criticism raised by Babits against the new Avant-Garde movement, and a desperate and bitter reaction on Kassák's part.

Babits's article appeared in the *Nyugat* in 1916 (No. 17) under the title "Ma, holnap, és irodalom" ("Today, Tomorrow, and Literature") and was dedicated to one of the journal's founding editors, Aladár Schöpflin. By way of introduction, he declares that his aim is present a whole generation and not one single group, let alone the individual poets themselves. Thus, his approach is quite similar to the generational principle adopted by the *Nyugat* itself.

The younger generation, says Babits, can be characterized by its fight against traditions. The reason for this behavior is for Babits a sociological one – the young were born to a world where the system of literary life is highly hierarchical, where the old still rules, and where young people see no future ahead. To turn the attention to the young generation, then, is an obligation the *Nyugat* must undertake, since when the *Nyugat* was launched, it was first received by a similar silence, antipathy and incomprehension. "*Nyugat* would have turned against its own traditions if it did not heed their call." But the title of the journal *Tett* ("deed" or "action") means for these young people not the creation of something new but rather the destruction of the old, the program of "rejecting traditions:"

Not to keep on creating according to the forms already given, neither to build new forms, but to break the old ones, to get rid of and to deny all that is law and form – this is all that *Tett*'s propaganda means, it is real literary anarchy and, let us not delude ourselves, anarchy must be appealing to today's youth.

This is not, claims Babits, identical with Futurism, since, as opposed to the latter's militarist character, for the generation of *A Tett* "action" does not mean war activity, and the movement is not individualistic but rather of a collective kind or at least has the aspiration to comprehend the Whole, the cosmos, the diversity of the world, "it wishes to extend itself to the simultaneous sentiments of the whole humanity."

The list of Babits's objections starts with his doubts concerning the

program itself – a program for a new movement is, in itself, an obstacle, since “as soon as freedom is transformed into a program, it is not freedom any more but a bond and a strait-jacket.” A recipe means that “poses” and a “strait-jacket” are prescribed to all who subsume themselves to the principles of the movement. It cannot be consistent with Babits’s individualism that the Avant-Garde, living under the spell of the collectivity and communal nature of artistic creativity, formulates principles, instructions and aims for the individual artists. The next – and more serious – objection concerns not the authors’ behavior but rather the text formation: i.e., that the younger generation reckons with the traditions, “the program orders, as an obligation, the completely rejection of traditions and forms.” However, Babits rightly claims, this is doomed to failure: traditions, conventions, forms are like language; no (artistic or intelligible) utterance is possible without them. A poetry which aims at giving up all that preceded it is bound to lose its intelligibility and artistic quality.

The next argument is far more shaky. It goes well beyond theoretical lessons inasmuch as it states that there are no “leaps” in art history, there are no revolutions but only slow building, reverence for and cautious modification of older epochs, artists and conventions, and, moreover, every new development has its predecessor. To be sure, all these are not general truths but observations, and are rather ideological ones, or at least they rely on a number of presuppositions. One could argue, for instance, against Babits that if this were the case, then no surprises or scandals could happen in the history of literature and all sorts of acceptance and reception would be very simple. Still, what is important here is not the historical arguments and counter-arguments but the vision of undisturbed historical continuity embodied in Babits’s line of argumentation. If one sees the history of literature along these lines, under the aegis of respect for tradition, erudition and perfection in the conventions, they will tend to avoid obtrusive novelty and will be averse to any overt breaking of the rules.

The new trend has the ambition to look for something new but it is nevertheless embedded in the traditions, necessarily tied to the past and it must, however reluctantly, respect the conventions. Babits seeks to discover and justify this status of being preceded in that the new poets themselves refer back to their predecessors, although what they canonize are not their ancestors in Hungarian literary history but rather

those in world literature. Babits regards this choice of canonized literature with an apparent resentment, as he does the whole canon created by the Avant-Gardists, and especially objects to the way this canon is formed. He questions the lack or the faulty nature of informedness, understanding, historical knowledge and poetics, which in turn pushes bad, worthless and unknown authors and works right into the center of this canon, and which celebrates a number of texts as modern or brand-new developments, while these texts are in fact old, traditional and there is nothing novel in them.

This interpretation of the Avant-Garde, embedding all that strives to be new, surprising, and discontinuous into the continuity, clearly belongs to a conservative interpretive community. It is moreover still in evidence today and informs the critical and lay thinking ever since the beginning of the Avant-Garde. It is present together with the double-fold accusation that the Avant-Garde breaks with all traditions but that whenever it happens to adopt a tradition (or can be said to assume it), then it is judged to bring no novelty whatsoever. It is a strange situation for Babits as the leading figure of a movement seeking to renew Hungarian literature, viz. the *Nyugat* and is himself aware of this delicate position. Still, it is difficult to differentiate his arguments from those on the side of conservative literary criticism.

Thus, after declaring that "their real kin is Walt Whitman, who has a really cosmic and simultanist vision and sentiment", some lines later Babits withdraws this declaration: "The authors of *A Tett* found in Walt Whitman their relative only because of some mere formal features, just as they tend to find a relative in whoever wrote poetry without regular verse forms". Moreover, "poetry in prose as a modern genre is itself an old and accepted form," but – yet another turn – even if it belongs to the tradition, it is not a fruitful part of the repertoire of poetic creation since it is monotonous, trivial. To refuse forms amounts to just another restriction which will, again, imprison all free creativity.

Ten years later, Dezső Kosztolányi will pose similar arguments in a letter to a very conservative literary critic and literary historian, a revered figure of the old fashioned academy. In order to make him understand the form of free verse, he writes:

But to destroy the closed form was, for me and for several of us, was a heart-felt need. We have no cause to make a parade

of wanting something "new" with this step since this [free verse] is just as old as the bound forms. The Bible is written in free verse, Goethe wrote some free verse as well as Walt Whitman did.

Though it may be arguable whether it was really Kosztolányi's conviction or just a "political" move on his part to use these arguments, it is clear that he repeats what Babits had to say about modern free verse. In his paper Babits extends his argument to the issues of style and composition, too: to refuse something, he suggest, is always to accept something else, so that just as language (or traditions, or genres) cannot be rejected, put aside or avoided, the same is true for style and composition. As to style, Babits here makes a serious gesture of concession to the new trends – this time he admits the legitimacy and forward-pointing power of scandalous, offensive and discontinuous changes. "All conventions change," he says, and "the lack of taste" is often the liberation of new areas of fantasy and poetry – as in the case of Shakespeare, Victor Hugo and Petőfi. But on this point all that Babits can say is just an expression of his misgivings concerning the Avant-Gardist taste, regarding it as a too brave deviation from the old one and thus touching on the ridiculous. He also refers to the erotic element (which he finds unsuccessful), as well as to the unwillingness to speak in a straightforward and simple way (choosing, instead, a complicated and obscure formulation). Finally, Babits advances the thesis that "criticism of a new school of literature is primarily the criticism of its formal instruments" – because, he states, whatever might seem new in its content is not too interesting, "to state ideas or to give reports on feelings is not difficult; the great achievement is to transplant them, to suggest them, and this is possible only with the instruments of artistic form."

(The Babits-Kassák debate, 1916: Kassák)

Kassák replied to Babits in the next (18.) issue of the *Nyugat* ("To Mihály Babits, from under the 'terrible big ash'" – "A 'rettenetes nagy hamu' alól Babits Mihályhoz"), which is dedicated (as a challenge to Babits's dedication) "to the youngest poets." After a short statement of

gratitude, the reply grows into a strong rejection of all that Babits has stated. First, Kassák denies that the program of *A Tett* should be read as a recipe. He offers a brief summary of the program with the aim of refuting Babits's arguments concerning the problems of form – the program, he suggests, does not give any instructions relating to forms but only to artistic behavior. Babits, for his part, as Kassák declares, does have a very definite program and his recipe is erudition, a careful appropriation and practicing of the past. Whereas the new movement opens the space for the young generation, Babits erects for it a terribly monstrous staircase which must be mounted through experience, erudition and practice.

As to the issue of sophisticated forms, Kassák confronts "primitive" art with the elaborate, technically perfect "artistic" tricks, clearly favoring the former. Here he opposes Babits's conception of free verse, stating that this is, in fact, the most complicated form due to its inner structure. Moreover, the free verse in question is the most strictly composed whole, in contrast even with Whitman's.

As far as the predecessors and the cultural (poetic, stylistic etc.) tradition is concerned, Kassák does not have much more to say than this. He adds, however, that even if Babits has a "thirst for culture", the Avant-Garde movement is not up to enforcing any "lunatic illiteracy" on the world, that is, it is familiar with the knowledge of the traditions and the achievements of the past.

The voice used in Kassák's reply is not too friendly and it turns into sharp irony when the author replies to the accusations of "disharmony," "chaos" and "anarchy". It is just that the poetry characterized in this way can reflect the experience of today's youth, and this is precisely why it may have such a great influence: life is in fact chaotic, there is no harmony in it, the happiness of the family hearth is only an illusion – and poetry must react to this situation accordingly. Hence the need to introduce new topics, to represent subjects hitherto regarded as trivial, ordinary, everyday ones. (It is a strange moment in Kassák's theoretical thinking that this topic – the world represented – gets a central position, in quite a non-Avant-Gard way.)

Almost at the end of his reply, that is, at a very rhetorically powerful point in the text, Kassák adds a seemingly minor correction. We are, he says,

neither simultanists nor any '-ists' of any sort, and we do not want to form any new literary school; all we want is to be good poets, in a reconsidered sense of the word 'good,' that is, we want to give good poetry to the newest generation of readers.

Before commenting on this part of the text, some words about Babits's reply to Kassák's reaction are in order (Reply - Felelet, *Nyugat* 1917., No. 18.). Babits discusses some of Kassák's theses in ten short points, apparently sourly, sometimes with an overtly *ad hominem* argumentation (e.g., that an editor is not entitled to judge the writings published in his magazine, that even if for Kassák free verse is a natural form of expression, it should not be forced on the young poets, etc.). There is even an explicitly unfriendly ironic point (that *A Tett* does not compel criticism to give account of it at all), but the tenth point (expressing many doubts, dejectedly and parodically) formulates nevertheless some expected appreciation.

(Resistance, staying outside, autonomy)

As already stated, in the closure of his reply Kassák – the editor of *A Tett*, the pioneer and animating personality of the Hungarian Avant-Garde – firmly refuses to be classified under any sort of “-ism” label, and rejects even the assumption that he wanted to create a new literary school. He stands up against what Kosztolányi wanted to do, i.e., to try to categorize what he regarded as a new movement. It was the aim of Kosztolányi, among others, to make the Avant-Garde more familiar, more domesticated, as it were, to qualify it as more acceptable and easier to receive in the environment he himself was familiar with (i.e., the readers and writers around the *Nyugat*). This gesture, or, better to say, more than a sheer gesture but an operation of institutionalization which can lend legitimacy to the alien popping up in the field, is unacceptable for Kassák, so much so that he even refuses to name the “new school.” This refusal, this courageous, bold and provocative reaction demonstrates the definitive characteristics of the Avant-Garde in general.

This is a mode of operation, a pattern of behavior which characterizes Avant-Garde arts from the beginning until the coming of the

Post-Modern. The most dangerous enemy of novelty, scandal or surprise being acceptance, classification, finding a place and domestication, this art has a subversive power only until it is not *appropriated*. And, to be sure, understanding itself is an appropriation, either in the sense of empathy or as a cognitive processing. It is the ambition of the Avant-Garde to be simultaneously part of the institutionalized literature (because it badly needs audience, distribution, places for readings and performance, the infrastructure of producing books and magazines), and yet it also fights against all this. It wants to change the whole scene, to subvert it – and, generally speaking, to get out of the depressing, suppressing, exploiting (or even supporting) influence of money, power and all established institutions of society.

The Avant-Garde wishes to stay “unintelligible,” something which cannot be classified, which is incomprehensible, something which the frozen institutions cannot handle. The last centuries have seen the appearance of several new forms which seek to circumvent the institutional system; one of their extremes may be conceptual art (where the “object” or “art object” is not the work itself but is only a document of the work, since there is no work whatsoever – thus it is pretty difficult to turn it into a marketable commodity, it is not easy to sell or buy, it is problematic whether one can make a document of the document, and so on). Another is performance art (where the creation of the work of art is fixed neither beforehand nor during its creation, nor can it be recorded in its entirety posteriorly; documentation, if any, is necessarily incomplete), or actionism using the body of the artist herself, where it is almost ridiculous to mention work of art, value, material. These forms intentionally draw the work of art away from the world of the market (and any other literary artistic institution), wishing to eliminate the borderline between the artist and anybody else so that even the actors on the field should not be the same as those in the established, traditional field of arts. Multiplication, flirting with business, reckoning with the individual and unique work of art (from the “objects found” of Beuys to the works of Andy Warhol) amounts to this sort of shirking. Post-modernism can perhaps be characterized by, among others things, its conciliation with the impossible or ephemeral nature of the scandal, acceptance of what is given, and its novelty lies in this very ironic subversiveness.

Kassák's claim for the status of being unclassified, for the rejection

of all qualifications, can be interpreted as a manifestation of Avant-Garde behavior which, of course, entails both a theoretical and a practical literary orientation. One can perhaps suggest another, rather psychological point of view which does not exclude but is additional to this one, viz. that this defiant outsider's gesture originates in Kassák's personality, in his deviant, rebellious character which chooses the marginal position for himself in order to remain autonomous. This may be true for the whole Avant-Garde movement: insisting on the right to differ, stay marginal, remain an outsider not (or not only) as far as the personal life of the artist is concerned but in the activity on the field of literature. Autonomy presented as a value above all other values refers both to the contemporary context (a synchronic aspect) and to the past and the future (a diachronic aspect): acknowledging the relatives, ancestors and followers is always a delicate point.

One must add, however, that there is a counter-tendency in the refusal of classification (or denial of domestication, understanding and acceptance), viz. the era of the Avant-Garde can also be characterized by a proliferation of programs, movements and schools popularizing themselves. That is, it was the Avant-Garde itself that assigned a major importance to the manifestation and advertising of its own (artistic and literary) identity, producing a formidable number of self-definitions and self-classifications. And this too is a natural phenomenon: showing the demarcation lines, the main differences, the otherness goes hand in hand with the production and demonstration of the unique, individual, incomparable traits, and with the act of giving a name to the movement itself. When Kassák claims that his movement is neither Simultanist nor Futurist, this gesture against classifications does not contradict the fact that somewhat later he names his movement as Activist – if it is he who gives a name to his movement, then it is a credible and legitimate step. If somebody else does, it must be a mistake.

All that is said above can be formulated from another perspective, that of canons. Avant-Garde movements do not – against all their declarations – “eliminate” the canon, it would be possible anyway. They themselves form a continuously changing canon with vague contours. This canon, taken as a list of works, partly overlaps with the ruling one(s), but taken as a prescription for interpretation, as a set of interpretive conventions, it is highly different from them. This is exactly what can be discerned in the Whitman example: Babits wishes to put

Whitman in the process of literary history, in order to find his proper historical place (that is, as if he *knew* what place should be found for Whitman). Thus he reads Whitman's poetry as part of a process already closed, something uncontinuable, something "readable," which does pose any challenge for ever new interpretations. In the Avant-Gardist canon, however, this poetry becomes the central part of the newly created traditions, because it is strange, because there is something primitively simple, and, thus, can be given a place in the series defined by ancient art and breaking with the forms. Interpreting Whitman as being in the same series as Saint Francis and his *Hymn to the Sun* must be unacceptable for the Avant-Garde, since that would suggest an interpretation of free verse as a form continuously present, independent of history. It would suggest that this form is closely related to transcendence, it is an ecstatic emanation which strips off, as it were, the form itself. Although some of the Avant-Gardists tend to feel an attraction to some form of mysticism and Kassák himself has sometimes an ecstatic voice, Avant-Gardism cannot settle for such an interpretation. Rather, its proponents prefer to regard free verse as an ancient, lost and spontaneous form corresponding to the newly discovered and revived simplicity and directness.

For the Avant-Garde, appropriation starts at the point where Babits interprets Appollinaire, and what he sees in the French poet is "the simultaneous vision of concurrent colors and events," that is, not too much more than, and not too different from the poetry of Impressionism, and this appropriation follows when the counter-canon starts to gain the status of an official canon. Preserving and delimiting the canon, a jealous safe-keeping of the proper conventions of interpretation is just as exclusive in nature as the surveillance principle of any ossified conservative school.

Conclusions

To sum up, there is an apparent coincidence of two, otherwise independent, lines of argument against the early Avant-Garde movement in Hungary. One comes from the conservative side, and amounts to a rejection of the anti-traditional, "formless" and "unintelligible" literatures; the other belongs to the Modernist side, itself fighting to be

accepted and understood, and engaged in its own war with the (ruling) conservative medium. These criticisms are centered around the issue of the canon: for both the conservatives and the Modernists, changing the canon may be dangerous, and the new forms are either not really new, or represent a deviation which goes beyond the limits of intelligibility. The question of individualism vs. collectivism is also raised – both parties feel something controversial in this respect. Yet another issue is political orientation, although only in the background: while conservatism is clearly against the anti-war (and even leftist, international) trend of the new movement, Modernists feel some suspicion because Futurism (which they more or less identify with the Avant-Garde as a whole) has been notoriously a pro-war, militarist movement, with its celebration of power, fight, war, masculine virtues.

Viewed both in its contemporary context and in the posteriority of literary history, the canon and the canonized interpretation formed by the *Nyugat* (i.e., Modernism) turned out to be more powerful; i.e., of a Modernism which emphasized its ties to the traditions and which had a very cautious relation with the Avant-Garde movements. Throughout the 20th century, the Hungarian Avant-Garde occupied a rather marginal place, both as far as the works, authors and strategies of interpretations are concerned. That is, despite some (again, marginalized) attempts at rewriting literary history by shifting the focus on the Avant-Garde movements, the center has always been monopolized by the *Nyugat*'s Modernism. The standard of the age was based on the classics of this movement, including some outsiders, prominent examples of the late Realist trends (e.g., the "Popular" or "Völkisch" literature, a school representing the socially engaged, "rural" world view turning against the urban, "l'art pour l'art", aesthetically committed literature) but excluding Avant-Garde tendencies, even understating these trends in great Modernist authors.

Canonically speaking, this approach filled the core of the interpretation of the contemporaries – that is, the canonical status could be granted only to new works which relied on the Modernist (and not the Avant-Garde) tradition, which lend itself to be interpreted along these lines. So for the literary history in the 20th century, there has not been too much place provided for the Avant-Garde in the ruling tradition. The main lesson of the debate treated above, the initial confrontation of the Avant-Garde trends with both Modernism and conservatism (the

strange alliance with the strange interference of arguments) is that to this day the reception (interpretation) of Avant-Garde poetry (let alone Neo-Avant-Garde) has remained basically on the same track which was laid long before. The debate itself, of course, is only a good and exceptionally clear illustration, not the cause itself; it shows the origins of a long-lasting set of arguments, a tradition which has its roots in both conservative and (a special) Modernist approach.

The *Nyugat* has created for itself a tradition which has been wide enough to comprise, for instance, the revolutionary work of Bartók (or Ady); and one can argue for an alternative literary history stating that in the tradition (and canon) formed by Modernism there must be a place for the Avant-Garde as a subversive, yet impulsive force. Or, from another point of view which treats Postmodernism as the *telos* of the whole literary historical process, the central category could be the position of the subject, in which case the revision of this history should start from Romanticism, and reevaluate Modernism from this aspect. It would then blur the (traditional) differences between Modernism and Avant-Garde, thus emancipating the latter. This approach would also be opposed to the ideological character of the earlier (Modernist-based) conventions of interpretation which emphasize continuity, "progressive" traditions etc.

The debate, then, is something which has remained, even to this day, strikingly vivid, and this is unfortunate enough. Suffice it to look at the school textbooks or the repertoire of the concert halls to see how classical Modernism dominates our culture, and how difficult it is to make it understood that Avant-Gardism (and whatever came after it) is not something unintelligible, obscure and negligible but a forceful trend which has formed (and has never ceased to form) what we now regard as the literature of the 20th century.

RADOSVET KOLAROV

JE EST UN AUTRE: ROLES OF AUTHORIAL SELF-ESTRANGEMENT

The possibility for the subject to look at himself or herself or more precisely, at a part of himself/herself, at his/her role or aspect as an Other, ushers in the dialogue into the sphere of the I-space, turning it into a self-dialogue. Self-dialogicity – the inner split of the individual – seems embedded in the human brain. As is well known, the brain consists of two hemispheres with each side of the cerebral cortex, each hemisphere, having its set of rather specialized functions. Surgical cutting of the link between the two hemispheres has radical consequences for human behaviour – one then starts acting in a sense as two separate personalities. "Somehow, the creation of two brains results in an effective creation of two selves"¹ – one is, so to speak, inherently involved into a self-dialogic regime.

The creative subject is especially prone and sensitive to a stratification of his or her seemingly monolithic identity into separate selves. My aim in this paper is to sketch out a general typology of this phenomenon. Doing so, I am going to set aside those stratifications of the self which are not typical of creative work but are inherent in humans at large, e.g. the structuring of the self between the poles of the conscious and the unconscious, the sphere of impulses and desires, the self-awareness and self-control in psychoanalytical theories or related classifications, as for instance the delimitation of actual self, ideal self and ought-self (E. Tory Higgins²), or the

¹ Danah Zohar, *The Quantum Self. A Revolutionary View of Human Nature and Consciousness Rooted in the New Physics*. Bloomsbury, 1990, p. 91.

² Dan McAdams, *The Person. An Introduction to Personality Psychology*.

stratification of the self into distinct social roles, distinct "ritual performances" (Ervin Goffman)³.

From the specific perspective of the creative self in which I am interested, we should legitimately start from the understanding that there are two fundamental types of stratification: structurally vertical and temporally horizontal. In the context of the former, we can speak of the inherent spawning of projections and hypostases of the self in the shape of an other, or his/her destructive alienation from the process of creating a work of art, his or her presentation as a "peripheral" Other. "Je est un autre," says Rimbaud in a well-known letter to Paul Demeny. Let us note the grammatically catachrestic linkage of the first-person pronoun with a third-person verb form. This is an act of separating the creative "I" from the biographical, empirical "I" – an impersonal voice, which can only be identified in and by means of the work. Commenting on Rimbaud's famous phrase, Eugen Simion points out: "The 'I' whose voice is heard in poetry is *other*, not the one we meet in everyday life; this *other* must also have something to do with the hidden meanings of a poem. It is related to the *unknown*, the *invisible* which must be inspected, the unheard which the *voyant* poet is listening to."⁴ This understanding is akin to Marcel Proust's notion of the "deeper self." To these views pertains the contemporary instrumentalization of the various projections of the creative Self, e. g. the distinction between writer, dramatized author, implied author, and career-author (Wayne Booth)⁵, creative and created author, singular and synoptic proxy (H. L. Hix)⁶, the self that judges, the self that reads, the self that writes and the self that reads itself (Paul de Man). Within the practice of critical analysis and in spite of any recognition of the schizoscription and clash of voices, these subjects remain sustained by the common point where they meet. Post-theory has, however, largely reoriented itself towards Rimbaud's opinion on the author's self-alienation, though moving in a

Philadelphia, 1994, p. 573.

³ Dan McAdams, Op. cit., p. 567.

⁴ Eugen Simion, *The Return of the Author*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois, 1996, p. 52.

⁵ Wayne Booth, *Critical Understanding*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979, pp. 268 – 272.

⁶ H. L. Hix, *Morte D'Author. An Autopsy*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1990, pp. 81 – 90; 152 – 153; 163 – 165.

radically new direction. It does not look for the genuine other "T" somewhere in the depth of the text but conversely, it proceeds from the text, it conceives the author as marginalized and dissociated from the work he or she creates: in the act of writing the writer is "drawn outside himself or herself, devoid of rights and ownership, chucked out, turned into a nameless entity [...] a creature without existence, a blank space where the idleness of an idle discourse is doing the talking" (Maurice Blanchot)⁷; the writer has been "expropriated" of his/her writings, "deprived of self and of meaning," "he/she is not in the centre but at the edges of his/her text which presents itself to him/her as something 'odd', something 'other'" (Jean Ricardou).⁸ "Two of us wrote *Anti-Cedipus* and as each of us is a multitude, the two of us is a crowd now," Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari joke in the preface to *Mille Plateaux*.⁹ The subject is seen as produced as a mere residuum alongside the machines, it is continually reborn out of each consecutive state of the machine. I leave aside the popular view of post-modern theory regarding the dissolution of the author's subject, be that in the network of textual traces and handwritings (the textual faction of post-theory), or in "always already" existing systems (the faction of social constructivism). My concern is with those cases where some autonomy is indeed acknowledged to the subject and he or she is in crisis, shaken, struggling, so to speak, about his or her identity, and not about his or her mere disappearance and annihilation.

On the axis of time (the latter of the two types outlined above), the self is presented as a series of self-states which are linked up in an integral, identical Self via the thread of memory. Of course, this identity is rather loose and mobile; the different sub-selves are partially integrated, they can overlap or collide without attaining coherence. There are those philosophers who totally reject the possibility that on a level of summation the subject can be an ever-present witness to the dialogues between his/her selves, the highest unity of all his/her sub-selves. According to Thomas Nagel, the unity we think of as our mind is only "an enumeration of the types of functional integration that

⁷ Blanchot, Maurice, *Le livre à venir*. Gallimard, 1959, p. 290.

⁸ Ricardou, Jean, *Le nouveau roman*. – Paris, 1976, pp. 27 – 28.

⁹ Deleuze, Gilles, Felix Guattari, *Mille plateaux*. Les éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1980, p. 9.

typify it.”¹⁰ And Derek Parfit, an important philosopher writing on the issue of personal identity, says: “Given what we now know, what I really am is my brain. On this view, moreover, I am *essentially* my brain... Personal identity is not what matters. Personal identity just involves certain kinds of connectedness and continuity.”¹¹ Of course, such radical views are unsustainable. But the thematic thread which I am following, viz. that of perceiving oneself as Other, stimulates my interest in the writers’ inclination to emphatically thematize the cases of self-dissociation, self-discrepancy, which as a rule are commented on in instances of turning points in a person’s life, of crises and doubt concerning one’s own identity. Three cases can be distinguished here: of self-revision, self-criticism, and self-destruction.

As an illustration of the first mentioned type, let me refer to William Wordsworth. As Jack Stillinger notes, “critical opinion from Victorian times has established the notion of two Wordsworths – the youthful, radical, free-thinking and highly innovative genius of the *Lyrical Ballads* and *Poems in Two Volumes*, and the pitiful old man (old in this view, practically before he was forty) who has declined into flat versification, boring subjects, and what was much worse, political conservatism and religious orthodoxy.”¹² Over the next forty years after their first publication, Wordsworth kept making changes in some of his *Lyrical Ballads*. In the course of time, the age gap between the two Wordsworth became more and more one of psychological distance. In this case, the revising poet could be conceived as having an identity separate from that of the poet who composed the first version. Wordsworth himself repeatedly reflects on this erosion of his identity, making it the theme of a number of his poems.

An instance from our own times comes from the poet Donald Davie, who, speaking about the poems he himself wrote twenty years earlier, remarks that their author is, to him, “a total stranger, an unknown person with the same name.”

An example of self-criticism can be found in Nietzsche’s 1872 preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, entitled “An Attempt at Self-Criti-

¹⁰ Danah Zohar, op. cit. p. 92.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jack Stillinger, *Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 77.

cism." Nietzsche attacks his own text which now seems to him confused, unacceptable and odd: "I do not want totally to hide how unpleasant the book seems to me now, how strangely after sixteen years it stands there in front of me. [...] Let me say again: today for me it is an impossible book – I call it something poorly written, ponderous, sentimental, here and there so saccharine, it is effeminate, uneven in tempo, without any impulse for logical clarity, extremely self-confident and thus dispensing with evidence, even distrustful of the *relevance* of evidence."¹³ Nietzsche regards his own text as if it was not produced by his own hand; he feels oddly alienated from his earlier authorial "I" and speaks of himself in the third person¹⁴: "the meditative lover of enigmas whose lot it was to father this book" (let us recall that Rimbaud uses the same means of alienation – the third person – in stating "Je est un autre").

For an instance of self-destruction, we can turn to Gogol and his burning of the second volume of *Dead Souls* shortly before his death. While he was completing the first volume of his Poem, Gogol was already in thrall to his mystical, religious moods, to the idea of the purgatory of the soul and of the readiness for a spiritual exploit in the name of the whole of Russia. His *Selected Passages from the Correspondence with Friends* contain a re-appraised view on *Dead Souls*, stressing its author's self-betrayal. Criticizing his great work, he writes: "One would have to show them how the monstrously long parts are connected with the others where the writer betrayed himself by not sustaining the tone he already adopted. No one even noticed that the last half of the book is less worked over than the first, that there are great gaps in it, that capital and important events have been condensed and abbreviated, unimportant and tangential ones spread out, and instead of the inner spirit of the whole work appearing, the mixed character of the parts and its scrappiness strike the eye."¹⁵ As if wishing to annihilate a part of himself, Gogol writes with a tinge of

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*. Translated by Ian Johnston. http://records.viu.ca/~Johnstoi/Nitzsche/Tragedy_all.htm#criticism

¹⁴ H.L. Hix, *Morte d'Autor. An Autopsy*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1990, p.181.

¹⁵ N. V. Gogol. *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*. Translated by Jesse Zeldin. Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press, 1969, p.99.

masochism: "At every moment we ought to be pricked, struck, beaten by all possible arms and we must every moment thank the hand striking us."¹⁶ Burning the manuscript of the second volume of *Dead Souls*, Gogol perpetrates a symbolic suicide. He no longer sees any sense in living and really very soon after that he dies, leaving the doctors to speculate on the inexplicable causes of his illness, the mysterious diagnosis.

Another well known example of a destructive attitude towards one's own works is Franz Kafka, who, in his last will before he died, demanded that all his manuscripts be destroyed. Fortunately for literature, his friend Max Brod ignored Kafka's will and after the writer's death published the novels *Amerika*, *The Trial* and *The Castle*, as well as a collection of his short stories.

However broken the line of life may be, however difficult to sustain are the different images of the author and however powerfully thematized their discrepancy is, there exists the opposite tendency, viz., the attempt to link the disconnected and seemingly chaotic selves through a unified story, so that they are rendered meaningful and set under a unified narrative perspective. Modern psychologists define the human being as a story-telling organism. The very revolt against oneself is partly a syndrome of the anxiety about losing control over the monolithic identity. Even when thematizing their otherness, the authors consciously or unconsciously erect bridges to their older selves by means of textual self-repetitions, self-parody, and palinode. With the advancing of age one looks back to one's beginnings, seeking to find in them a store-house of untapped meanings and values, seeking (to recall Erikson) integrity in order to counter despair. This is an intriguing and rewarding topic but it remains outside the scope of my paper. "In my end is my beginning," says Eliot at the conclusion of his *Four Quartets*. And further in the same text he writes:

.....Not the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that can not be deciphered.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.97.

PÉTER HAJDU

SECRECY AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL DESIRE FOR ORDER IN DRAMA AND NARRATIVE

How can we experience secrecy in literature? Since a secret is a piece of information obtained by somebody and deliberately kept back from someone or everybody else, the reader must be informed of the existence, or even of the content, of that information. The situation is much more interesting when readers do not know the content of the secret, since otherwise it is only a part of the represented world, and the readers can see from outside the represented activities of the agents that are or are not in possession of that given piece of knowledge. However, if readers are also among those who do not know the secret, they must make some intellectual effort to try to guess. But even in this case they must be given information of the existence of the secret. In the following pages I would like to discuss some samples – first from ancient tragedies, then from European novels that, I hope, may provide us with some insight into the mechanism of secrecy in literature.

In ancient drama, the conventional chorus might be said to have a position similar to that of the readers. The chorus is usually not involved in the dramatic action, but necessarily knows everything that happens on stage and tends to interpret those events on a general level. The action of an ancient drama evolves in a public space, and the chorus represents a society sympathetic to the protagonist. Their position can be regarded as similar to that of the spectators': spectators necessarily experience everything that happens on the stage, and they feel interested in understanding the events. Members of the chorus model the reaction of the spectators, but they have the opportunity to ask the agents

questions if something is not clear enough, and they also formulate their interpretations. This in-between situation was expressed by the position of the *orchestra* in the ancient theatre – it was placed between the spectators and the *proskenion*, the stage where the actors were standing.

There is, however, a part, which the chorus in a tragedy does not know; it is the *prologus*, the surplus of events happening before the entrance of the chorus. The chorus is usually informed of the events that happened in the *prologus* by an actor during the first *epeisodion*, but this is not obligatory. The most obvious exceptions can be found in tragedies that have a god appear at the beginning. What a god tells the audience may be a secret even for the chorus, and gods usually display the hidden causes or the hidden meaning of the events that are to take place. At the end, when another god appears, the actors and the chorus also understand these hidden connections, and they realise that there is a more elevated point of view from where the causality and meaning of the events becomes visible. Spectators hold a position privileged even in comparison with that of the chorus, and they can safely experience the workings of secrecy in the represented world. They can see what are the consequences of the lack of knowledge, but they also experience the order in that world, since the consequences are governed by a divine plan, or in the case of *Hippolytus*, by a divine game.

In some of the plays of Euripides, however, the secret plays a very important role, and the information cannot be withheld from the chorus. The actors conventionally apply to the chorus to maintain the secrecy, but the possession of the secret makes the latter involved in the action. Let us discuss two plays in which the choruses are supposed to maintain secrecy. In *Hippolytus* Phaedra, after her stepson has turned down the indecent proposal made by the nurse, asks the chorus to keep the matter secret (710–712). The chorus swears on Artemis never to bring to light any of Phaedra's disasters. And in this play such oaths are always fulfilled, although Artemis, Hippolytus's protecting goddess, would probably not be angry with the chorus if it broke its oath and by doing so saved Hippolytus. This oath forces Artemis to ensure the fall of her protégé. Hippolytus also swears to maintain secrecy, although he declares that the oath was a mistake: "My tongue has sworn, but my soul has not" (612). This declaration, however, does not mean that he regards his oath as invalid; it is valid and what he only regrets is his unconscious act. In spite of his declaration of his readiness to be silent, he formulates

a threat to Phaedra. "When I come back with my father, I will see how you and your mistress can look at him," he says to the nurse (661-662). He wants his presence or his behaviour to be a disturbing factor in the relation between his father and his stepmother. Such behaviour would not mean bringing Phaedra's secret to light but only hinting at the existence of such a secret, so that the husband might sense that there is something wrong with his wife.

This threat is enough for Phaedra to commit suicide and to kill Hippolytus on false charges. Phaedra's vengeance, however, presupposes the secrecy both of Hippolytus and the chorus. Anybody could tell Theseus the truth in order to prevent Hippolytus' sad fate. However, nobody says a word. Not only does not the whole society of Trozenian women (the chorus) do so, but the young man himself – incriminated, banished and (what he cannot know) sentenced to death – keeps being loyal to the dead queen. Secrecy works here as destructive behaviour, which is, however, necessary to keep the dramatic action in motion. But in the play the spectators could also face a different experience. At the very beginning, a secret has propelled the plot: Phaedra was sick, yet she would not reveal the cause of her illness. The entrance song of the chorus ends with the question: What is the situation with the queen, why is her skin so pale? (173-175). Both the chorus and the nurse take it for granted that the illness has a definite cause and that the queen is aware of it. The chorus addresses the question to the nurse because it seems confused about the nature of this illness, and she gives the following answer: "I do not really know, because she will not tell me" (271). The nature of the disease is a secret by definition; only the queen knows something, but she does not tell it to anybody. The nurse and the sympathetic members of the chorus feel interested in the matter. They want to know the secret in order to be able to cure the queen. From this point of view the workings of secrecy are different from what we see in the second half of the play; the tragic fault is bringing the secret to light, which results in a catastrophe.

We should, however, ask the question why do the chorus and the nurse think that they should inquire into the matter? How do they know there is a secret? A close reading of the scene proves that from the very beginning Phaedra provides strong suggestions not only of the exist-

ence of the secret but, moreover, of its content.¹ Her very first sentence discloses that she has a mental condition which is some way connected with the person of Hippolytus. She wants the nurse to know the secret, but does not want to seem willing to tell it to her. She wants the nurse to find it out and then to act on her behalf in spite of her protestation. She does not say what she wants but only gives rather obvious signs because she wants to save her face whatever the result of the action will be. A secret can provide the energy for the forward movement of the plot, provided some agents know there is a secret.

In another of Euripides's plays, *Ion*, the secret consists of the origin of a child. Ion is Apollo's son born by Creusa in a cave. The mother tried to kill her baby by exposure but Apollo brought him to Delphi. Creusa has later become the wife of Xuthos, king of Athens. Xuthos, however, is a stranger in Athens; he was given the kingdom for his merits on the battlefield. His reign is legitimised by his wife Creusa, who is a descendant of Erectheus, the founder of the royal family of Athens. All this information is given to the spectators by Hermes in the *prologus*. He finishes his speech with the declaration that the main goal of the plot is to give Xuthos Apollo's son, to make Creusa recognise her child, and to keep Apollo's rape secret while providing the child with a worthy social position (69–73). The whole change in the situation would be based on Apollo's fatherhood, but this crucial fact should not be brought to light.

As a first step, Apollo's oracle prophesies to Xuthos that the first person he meets when he leaves the temple will be his son. He meets, of course, Ion, his son given to him as a present by Apollo. Xuthos happily accepts Ion as a son, but together they try to find a reasonable explanation. They think Ion must be Xuthos' natural son fathered before his marriage with Creusa. At this point almost every purpose is reached: nobody knows that Apollo is the father, and Ion will inherit the kingdom of Athens. Only one of the four goals formulated by Hermes is missing: Creusa does not know that Ion is her son. There is, however, one disturbing factor: the chorus. Creusa's slave girls necessarily witness the (false) recognition of father and son. Xuthos is aware of the problem and says that if any of the girls says a word about the affair to

¹ Hanna M. Roisman, *Nothing Is as It Seems: The Tragedy of the Implicit in Euripides' Hippolytus*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999, 47–73.

his wife, she will be executed (666–667). But the chorus is not afraid of death; it is upset by the possibility that the alien king's illegitimate son could inherit the rule of Athens. At the first opportunity they tell the whole story to the queen, who therefore tries to poison Ion. After the unsuccessful murder attempt Ion wants to kill Creusa in vengeance. Both attempts fit in with the type of tragic plot which Aristotle regarded as the best one: when somebody prepares to kill his or her relative, but does not do it because at the last minute true identity is recognized.²

In the end Pallas appears and throws light on every opaque detail. One of the four goals was to conceal Apollo's fatherhood, and now from the roof of the temple Pallas proclaims this fact to the whole public of Delphi. Is the secrecy broken? Only one important person is missing from the scene: Xuthos, the husband. Pallas tells Creusa she should not tell Xuthos the truth, so that he will remain happy in his sweet illusion (1601–3). This pact between Pallas and Creusa also presupposes the chorus's secrecy: it has made trouble by telling Creusa that Ion is Xuthos' son, while now the happy ending hinges on its not telling Xuthos that Ion is Creusa's son.

Not only is the behaviour of the chorus different in the two plays discussed here when it comes to maintaining secrecy, but it is also inconsistent within the works themselves. Moreover, the divine plan seems to have relied upon both secrecy and divulgation in this order. The question arises about who actually disposes of the information. Secrets seem to be the business of the gods; there is an omniscient entity in Euripides's plays of secret that gives or keeps back information in order to form a story in accordance with its intention.

Is there any similar entity in narrative? The obvious answer is that the narrator might have quite a similar function. The narrator, of course, is not always omniscient; moreover, even the so called omniscient narrators often declare some uncertainty or lack of knowledge. But even if the narrator is an agent or a witness, he or she has a privileged position in the background. The narrator is usually regarded as having a selecting and ordering function, and the power to select and order can best be proved in the case of the witness- or agent-narrators. A witness knows the whole story before the narration starts, and he or she decides how much and in what order should be given to readers.

² Aristotle: *Poetics* 1453b34–1454a9.

In Chapter XIV of Book I in *The History of Henry Esmond Esq.* Lord Castlewood tells Henry Esmond some astonishing things: "My lord had said to him that which confounded the young man – informed him of a secret which greatly concerned him." Then he hands this secret in a written form to clergyman Atterbury. In this situation Lord Viscount, Mr Atterbury and Henry Esmond learn the secret, but nobody tells it to the readers. This secret would change the whole story if brought to light, but Esmond decides to burn the paper and to keep the secret to himself. The new information, however, changes his behaviour and self-image. We are given many hints at these changes and at the content of the secret; the most telling among them is the rude picture of the Dutch tiles, "representing Jacob in hairy gloves cheating Isaac of Esau's birthright." The secret is connected with Henry Esmond's birthright and it would enable him to adopt the social position of Lord Castlewood's son. The reader is therefore given a lot of information in small portions, but the more or less exact content of the secret appears only in Chapter III of Book II, about 30 pages later when Henry Esmond discusses it with Lady Viscountess Isabella Esmond.

This novel is a memoir-like text, and nothing justifies that a piece of information known by the protagonist (identical to the reminiscing narrator) should be kept back from the reader. Nothing, that is, but the effects of retardation, or the intensification of the readers' curiosity. These are effects based on selection and ordering. The narrator knows the secret, as do all the three persons involved in the scene, but none of them reveals it. While he states other facts, such as what the Dutch tiles of the bagnio represent, he does not quote the dialogue between Lord Castlewood and Henry Esmond in which the secret was uttered (he only informed us of a secret uttered in a dialogue). At the same time he quotes the dialogue of Henry Esmond and Mr. Atterbury, in which the speakers feel uneasy about the secret and therefore avoid uttering it.

The selection of appropriate points of view or focalising agents might be fundamental in the narrator's activity of withholding information, since he can always apply a type of focalisation which allows the secret to remain unknown. A whodunit can hardly use the murderer's point of view, or must employ very elaborate and refined techniques to do so.³ Normally it uses other focalising agents. In mem-

³ See Agatha Christie's *Endless Night*, which is the only exception I know of.

oars, however, the focalising agent is given and therefore the narrative speaks only of the dialogue between Castlewood and Esmond, then follows Esmond to another room and informs of "an immense contest of perplexity" agitating his soul but not of the colloquy between Mr. Atterbury and Lord Castlewood, which is taking place in the next room at the same time. The narrative does not mention how Lord Castlewood dictates a document to Mr. Atterbury, but how Esmond burns it unread. Selected for representation are those scenes and for quotation those utterances that do not display the secret. Sooner or later readers are usually given the missing information and again it happens when the narrator selects a particular scene, a particular utterance or point of view. If this does not happen, the frustrating lack of knowledge which results from a longer reading activity functions as a strong suggestion of the shortages of human cognition, and usually of the existence of a transcendental point of view from which the secret can be experienced.

As a truly extreme case of narratorial omniscience of a transcendental nature, highlighted by the retention and then the unexpected display of information, I will discuss some passages from Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1985). This example may show an especially post-modern version of the omniscient narrator. The novel's "Part Three" is called "Words Misunderstood," and the title implies the concept of the narrator's role as interpreter. The agents of the story misunderstand each other, but readers happily have a narrator who tells them what an utterance actually, originally or intentionally means and why and how it is misunderstood. And this omniscience of a post-modern utopian nature – namely that a being knows all the exact meanings of every utterance directed at each recipient – is connected with the power of selection.

If I were to make a record of all Sabina and Franz's conversations, I could compile a long lexicon of their misunderstandings. Let us be content, instead, with a short dictionary.⁴

The narrator declares that what he is to give in some of the next chapters is only a selection of misunderstandings and that he has con-

⁴ Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, transl. Michael Henry Heim, New York, etc.: Harper & Row, 1989. 89.

trol of the complete set. But before delivering the short dictionary of misunderstandings, he gives one powerful example. In Chapter One Sabina wants to stand half naked but with a bowler hat on, holding hands with the fully dressed Franz, in front of a mirror. In this chapter Franz is the focalising agent, and ironically enough he thinks he has become aware of a temporary misunderstanding and that this makes it possible for him to correct it.

Again he had to smile at how poorly he understood his mistress. When she took her clothes off, it wasn't so much erotic provocation as an odd little caper, a happening *à deux*. His smile beamed understanding and consent. (85)

In the following chapter, however, the narrator will tell us about Sabina's real intentions. She wanted to re-conquer a part of her past, to replay one of her most exciting and provoking sexual experiences, which she had with the novel's (other?) protagonist, Tomas. In the original situation Sabina experienced violence and the humiliation of her femininity, "as if submitting of her own will to public rape," which she found extremely exciting. ("And suddenly, unable to wait any longer, she pulled Tomas down to the floor.") The bowler hat was a symbol of very complex and sophisticated meanings for her, but Franz could get no access either to that symbolism or to the highly erotic realm of Tomas and Sabina.

At the beginning of Part Six the narrator starts discussing scatological themes and connections between sexual desire, excrement and sanctity. Suddenly the abovementioned scene comes to the fore again:

In Part Three of this novel I told the tale of Sabina standing half-naked with a bowler hat on her head and the fully dressed Tomas at her side. There is something I failed to mention at the time. While she was looking at herself in the mirror, excited by her self-denigration, she had a fantasy of Tomas seating her on the toilet in her bowler hat and watching her void her bowels. Suddenly her heart began to pound and, on the verge of fainting, she pulled Tomas down to the rug and immediately let out an orgasmic shout. (247)

What Sabina was feeling on the spot remained a secret to Franz,

and only Sabina and the omniscient narrator could know it. The narrator seemed to share the information with the readers to ensure their privileged position towards Franz. Approximately 150 pages later the narrator delivers a new piece of information, which rewrites the whole scene and makes readers realise that their position was not more privileged than that of Franz. The narrator did not tell everything he knew; he only selected that which was appropriate for his purposes with the given scene. In another scene with other purposes he can select other details. Michael Henry Heim's translation may fail to make it evident that the narrator kept back information in Part Three intentionally and purposefully, but this meaning is explicit in all other translations I know, and – which might be more important – in the Czech original. The sentence "There is something I failed to mention at the time" sounds in Czech as follows: "Něco som tehdy zamlčel,"⁵ which literally means that time I concealed something.

When we think in terms of a narrator who selects some data from a larger set and presents them to us in a given order, we believe in the pre-existence of a world to be represented by the narrator, and maybe also in the existence of the narrator as a quasi-personal agent. This belief is much more legitimate in the case of witness- or agent-narrators, since the narrative display of such narrators contains the suggestion, or rather the statement, that the narrating entity experienced a lot more at the time when he was playing a role in the events than what he is to narrate at the time of narration. What he presents is a selected, ordered and thus interpreted set of events.

We can, however, abstain from the hypothesis of a selecting agent, and speak of an arranged set of statements, one which also contains a set of hints that some information is missing. What we do experience is a limited set of statements in a given order. Why must we suppose that the limited set is selected from a larger set? Why must we suppose that the order is the result of an ordering activity? On the one hand, we can speak of an eternal desire to detect the origin of the text.⁶ This desire might be burning in every reader's heart, but having lost the biograph-

⁵ Milan Kundera, *Nesnesitelná lehkost bytí*, Brno: Atlantis, 2006, 263.

⁶ Cf. "the reader's quest for the origin of the text", Didier Coste, *Narrative and Communication*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, 164.

ical author, readers need the narrator.⁷ This must be a transcendental desire to see the reason of the empirically available (parts of the) world.

The phenomenon of the secret will be a telling example of the potentials of a reading that tries not to reflect on non-existent parts of a narrative. If readers know the secret owing to their privileged position, then they can learn from the characters' unfortunate actions how much trouble the lack of information may cause. But it might be more important that at the moment they are given that crucial piece of information, they also experience the existence of an even more privileged position held by a more or less personal entity that gives or retains information. In the order of my examples: the goddess Aphrodite, the god Hermes, or the narrator. If readers do not know the secret, the statement that there is a secret implies that something exists in the represented world that is not told at the moment. This means the secret constitutes a call for imagining a richer and more real world than the one actually represented. Readers are supposed to fill up the blank spaces in the narrative through their imagination, but in the case of the secret they receive a guarantee or at least a promise that the blank spaces can be filled up and that the narrative will fill up some of them later.

This transcendental nature of a quasi-personal and quasi-transcendental narrator's faculties can be increased if the fictionality of the text is also displayed. In this case the narrator does not only claim that he knows everything and therefore can select and order for us what he thinks appropriate, but also that he can create new items of the represented world anytime. This self-referential game is usually ascribed to post-modern fiction, but I am going to analyse a nineteenth-century novel here because of its manipulations of secrets and information, of historical facts and fictionality. In this case the transcription of a hypertext and imagination offers us an excellent opportunity to understand the workings of the secret in narrative texts. I am talking about a novel by Mór Jókai, entitled *A két Trenk*,⁸ which presents the life stories of two cousins, Friedrich and Franz Trenck. The novel is based on the autobiographies of these eighteenth-century adventurers. Jókai not

⁷ Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction*, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, 222.

⁸ For those who cannot read the novel in Hungarian I suggest the contemporary German translation: *Feindliche Pole*, übersetzt von Ludwig Wechsler, Bd. 1-2, Stuttgart: Dr. Foerster & Co, 1894.

only rewrites and many times simply translates his sources, mainly *Des Friedrichs Freyherrn von der Trenck merkwürdige Lebensgeschichte*, but also creates a narrator who usually refers to the source text and makes his strategies of rewriting visible. The funniest example is the comparison between two sources, i.e., the German and the French versions of Friedrich Trenck's autobiography:

Characteristically enough Friedrich Trenck omitted this whole section of his adventurous life in the memoirs he composed for the German public; in his French memoirs, however, he shows what happened behind the wall.⁹

Unfortunately, Jókai was the owner of a complete French but only of an abridged German edition of Trenck's autobiography, and therefore he believed that Trenck elaborated a rather shy German and a rather piquant French version.¹⁰ The narrator appears here as a selector that compares various sources and has the right to decide which one he will follow.

This nature of this novel as the re-writing of a historical person's autobiography is first displayed on the fifth page, where Trenck falls in love for the first time – but the name of his beloved should be a secret.

He got to know what love is.
And it was the *first* love also for the lady.
That lady *had been married already for a year*.

In his memoirs Friedrich Trenck consistently keeps secret the name of the goddess of his first love. This secrecy is gentle and proper. The lady was still alive; she held a respected place in society. Trenck had to carry the secret to the grave. He admits to himself too that therefore the whole history of his life remains an unintelligible chaos, in which both he and king Friedrich appear in an untrue light; one cannot imagine such emotions or understand such situations; a connecting feature, a leitmotif is missing from the whole story that looks like a fairy-tale due to that.

⁹ Mór Jókai, *A két Trenk. Trenk Frigyes*. J. M. összes művei, Regények 59., ed. György Radó, Budapest: Akadémiai, 1969, 207.

¹⁰ György Radó, Jókai Trenk-regényeinek forrásai. In Jókai *op. cit.* 416

Succeeding generations, however, have had no mercy. The secret name buried in his grave is advertised in any Conversations-Lexicon nowadays. And the moment it is pronounced, everything Trenck confused in his memoirs becomes clear and understandable. (11)

Some sentences of the quotation are literally translated by Jókai: "Es war unsre beyderseitige erste Liebe"; "das Geheimnis folgt mir sicher zum Grabe." The narrator, however, refers to other sources as well; he uses additional information to interpret the story, to find a leit-motif, a central idea. The re-writing of Trenck's life story presents it as a meaningful whole. For the moment, however, the narrator also maintains secrecy. Friedrich der Grosse, King of Prussia, wants to know who the beloved of his favourite bodyguard is, and declares, "No secret of the bedroom can be withheld from me." Curious, the king starts an investigation and finds out what he wants to know. The lady is his sister, the princess Amalia, the wife of prince A. Z. The entire investigation is not long; on page 17 the readers are already informed of its final result. The narrator keeps back the information about his hero only for six pages. Curious-minded readers might consult a Conversations-Lexicon, and besides, the readers of the modern, annotated critical edition have no need whatsoever to do philological research or to experience even this short period of tension, since the commentator supplies the lady's name and position at the first opportunity.

The additional and extra-textual information might be useful here. The abbreviated form of the name of the husband, prince A. Z. suggests that he is also a historical character, but one cannot easily understand why he is not called by his own name, while his wife is. A lexicon or a commentary can solve the problem: this is because the historical princess Amalia had no husband. Prince A. Z. is a fictional character, and the abbreviation signals that. Everybody else has a proper name but him. And the cause of the lack of a proper name does not lie in the narrator's tact, but in the character's fictionality. The use of the first and the last letter of the alphabet (as on the spine of a lexicon) means something like 'anybody'. The husband's name is a secret, but this secrecy is groundless and the secret is really empty. The narrator does not keep back information – he only suggests that some secret information exists, while this is a lie. A. Z. looks like an abbreviation, but there is

nothing to be abbreviated; it is rather a funny sign for a character that is not only nameless, but also totally blank. In my opinion therefore, it can be regarded as a signal of fictionality.

Let me return to two sentences from the novel quoted earlier: "And it was the *first* love also for the lady. That lady *had been married already for a year.*" The first one is a translation from the source text; the second inserts a fictional fact and a fictional character into a historically reliable narrative. The game of combination of historical narrative, the protagonist's autobiography, its translation, its re-writing, and fiction becomes visible through the phenomenon of the secret, because when speaking of secrets the narrator displays his strategies of handling information. We are told of the existence of information kept back from us for some time. And then, on the narrator's will, we receive the information that has been kept secret.

The omnipotent narrator also claims a right to create new items in the protagonist's re-written life, as he does with prince A. Z., and this claim is best displayed in the case of secrets. Emperor Charles VII makes a confession, but the dialogue between him and his chaplain is not narrated. "It was a secret what they had told to each other; nobody was allowed to know the topic, not even the Chancellor." After the confession, however, the emperor consults the daily menu with his cook, who is his intimate. "He kept no secret from him. If that good man had written a diary, he would have bequeathed to the following generations an extraordinarily interesting piece of reading" (96). After this the dialogue between the emperor and the cook is narrated in full detail and we are allowed to learn the secret of confession. It is the narrator's joke. He discusses the possible sources of information with the conclusion that there is none. Nobody but the cook knows what the emperor said to the chaplain. If the cook had written a diary, we would know that. But the cook did not write any, so we do not know. After that the narration of what cannot be known starts. Fiction is the means to supply content to the emptiness called a secret.

In the last example the narrator presents the re-elaboration of a non-existent source (the cook's diary), while in other parts of the novel he makes use of real sources. But their juxtaposition challenges the narrator's reliability and highlights the importance of fictitious features. The narrator repeatedly claims the role of an interpreter: the story is confused due to some secrets, and he considers it as his task to make

the story understandable through supplying information and detecting hidden connections. He writes, for example: "In this affair of the two Trencks we experience an intentionally created mixture of true and false, probable and unbelievable, and finally we have to realise that the unbelievable is true in it and the probable is false" (170). This is followed by the narration of Friedrich Trenck's first imprisonment, based on a letter sent to him by Franz Trenck, an officer of the enemy forces. The letter existed, insists the narrator, and he offers two alternative versions of its genesis: either Franz Trenck wrote it to cause trouble for his cousin, or it was a fake letter written by someone else. The narrator is not omniscient, but he has many ideas about how to make the story a coherent and logical whole in spite of the missing pieces of information in the inherited historical material. He does not know the secret, but he acts as the grand interpreter who offers various solutions.

Jókai's omnipotent narrator not only selects and orders, but also completes the items of the represented world, and such a narrator is like a parody of narrators that should challenge the readers' hypotheses of any transcendental entity organising the representation. All these characteristics of reading might be governed by a belief in order, or a desire to experience order, if not in our empirical world, at least in the fictional ones. This is a desire that can be considered transcendental in so far as it relies on the hypothesis of an entity which cannot be experienced directly, but which is supposed to guarantee order. As the gods appear at the end of Euripides's plays to settle everything and calm the characters by explaining that all their troubles were parts of divine plans, so a selecting and ordering entity haunts the literary text. The fact that the set of represented events is not complete can be accounted for by theoretically various explanations. For example, it cannot be complete because the complete set of events of any world would be infinite; or completeness is an inappropriate requirement: what is given in a narrative is a complete set, because there is no other pole of comparison. But readers usually prefer another explanation: the set of narrated events is incomplete because it is only a selection made by a Selector. This reminds of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, where Levin finds the priest's epigram convincing: "What doubt can you have of the Creator when you behold His creation?"¹¹

¹¹ Part 5, Chapter 1.

Let us finally turn to the commonly accepted view that literary texts have some meaning. The order, or rather the impression of arrangement, may function as a suggestion of a secret sense.¹² The meaning therefore can be described as the secret of literary texts; it is always present in the form of a promise; it is always hinted at; we are continuously given suggestions of the existence of a secret, but its content is never explained.

¹² Cf. Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1979, 23–47.

GÁBOR BEZECZKY

SELF-CONSUMING ARGUMENTS

The statements Stanley Fish makes in his books¹ are well-known. It is less clear, however, how much popularity they currently enjoy. Unlike Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser or Hans-Georg Gadamer to whom he is comparable in some respects, Fish and the so-called reader-response criticism seem to get less attention now than one or two decades ago. Still, it is worth pointing out both the strengths of the arguments he presented in his "How Ordinary Is Ordinary Language?"² as well as the difficulties he has never managed to overcome.

Fish represents a strong anti-formalist, anti-structuralist tendency in literary criticism. Among other things, he challenges what he calls "the ordinary-language / literary language distinction."³ He claims that "*there is no such thing as ordinary language*."⁴ As a consequence, he does not accept that literature should be seen as some kind of deviation from ordinary language. He opposes "formal systems" to "human values," and denies that language could be reduced to "a formal system unattached to human purposes and values." He believes that "the purposes and needs of human communication inform language and are constituent of its structure."⁵ (This statement, however, is not as uncontroversial as Fish seems to believe. See, for example, Halliday 1973.) Literature,

¹ Fish 1967, 1972, 1980, 1989.

² Fish 1973.

³ Fish 1980, 97.

⁴ Fish 1980, 106.

⁵ *Ibid.*

he argues, "is the product of a way of reading, of a community agreement about what will count as literature."⁶

So far as deviation is concerned, Fish's critique of structuralism is fully justified, and can be supported by independent linguistic and literary theoretical considerations. The concept of deviation is indeed so vulnerable that it appears to be a moribund item in the literary critic's vocabulary. However, since Fish is more interested in criticizing deviation than in its history, it seems necessary first to provide some background information.

The traditional views on deviation can be summed up as follows. Any feature of a linguistic system can be violated occasionally without compromising the integrity of the language as a whole. Since ad hoc deviations, mistakes and nonsensical utterances (deviation, for short) will be recognized as instances of deviation, they cannot upset or subvert the normal and primary operations of the language, and they cannot bring about change. No matter how regular certain deviations can be, literature is not another language. To put it another way, the speakers do not have to know more than one variety of their language in order to read or write literature. When compared with ordinary language, the language of literature is clearly derivative and parasitic. Whatever secondary conventions and restrictions may be employed in literature, they must rely on the primary conventions of language. Thus, the interpretation of literature, even when the language of literature violates the norms of normal discourse, should be based on the fundamental structures of the language. By comparing deviation with the normal phenomena of language, we can recover meaning from deviation.

Deviation had a role in traditional rhetoric. John Walker, for example, defined metaphor as "an expression, where a word or phrase departs from its more common and ordinary sense."⁷ The twentieth-century history of the idea of deviation is also significant. In accordance with the rhetorical tradition, Ferdinand de Saussure provided a foundation to theories of deviation in modern linguistics: "the execution of sound patterns in no way affects the system itself. In this respect one may compare a language to a symphony. The symphony has a reality of its own, which is independent of the way in which it is performed.

⁶ Fish 1980, 97.

⁷ Walker 1971, 137-138.

The mistakes the musicians may make in no way compromise that reality."⁸ Saussure's comparison suggests that (i) the linguistic system is inviolate; (ii) deviations from the linguistic system are to be considered random individual acts.

Deviation from the established norms of usage was considered by the Russian formalists and the critics of the Prague School to be the aesthetic dimension of language. Viktor Shklovsky⁹ thought that in order to revitalize normal language that tends to become automatized, poetry must use "defamiliarizing" devices which deviate from normal language. In agreement with Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson added that the subject of literary scholarship is literariness brought about by deviation.¹⁰ Jan Mukarovsky thought that the violation of the norm "is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language; without this possibility there would be no poetry."¹¹ The idea of deviation was adopted by American linguists as well: A. A. Hill, for instance, said that "a reasonable and useful hypothesis is that the poet started with a fully formed and well-constructed sentence, which he then distorted in order to secure an effect in keeping with the structure of the poem as a whole, or the part of the poem in which the construction was placed."¹² Harold Whitehall looked upon literature as "organized violence done to language."¹³

If literary works are regarded as deviations, that is, random individual departures from the norm, they will be cut off from the fundamental structures of language. This is a procedure that has an effect both on the norm and on deviation. Fish is right when he mentions that "deviation theories always trivialize the norm and therefore trivialize everything else."¹⁴ What Fish does not notice is the fact that both the traditional and the modern views of deviation are inconceivable without the assumption of linguistic uniformity which can be summed up as follows. The speakers of a language are parties to impersonal and tacit conventions

⁸ Saussure 1983, 18.

⁹ Shklovsky 1990, 12.

¹⁰ Jakobson 1973, 59, 63.

¹¹ Mukarovsky 1955, 20.

¹² Hill 1967: 83-84.

¹³ Whitehall 1957, 137. See also Saporta 1960, Riffaterre 1959, 1960, Levin 1963, 1964, 1965, 1967, Cohen 1966, Lyons 1968, Enkvist 1973, Chapman 1973, Culler 1975, Dubois et al. 1981.

¹⁴ Fish 1980, 101.

that both transcend the speakers' individual differences and guarantee mutual understanding. Communication rests on the assumption that understanding is reciprocal. The language of any speech community is unitary and homogeneous. ('Unitary' means that there is only one set of rules at any particular time, and 'homogeneous' means that this set of rules is shared by all the members of the speech community. These two assumptions will be referred to as 'the assumption of uniformity.')

Once it is decided that all kinds of linguistic phenomena must be reduced to a single underlying system shared by all the speakers, no regularity can be discovered within the phenomena that are regarded as deviating from the norm. In addition, it should also be noted that the assumption of uniformity has a most respectable background in "mainstream" linguistics: there is an uninterrupted continuity in this respect, running from August Schleicher through the Neogrammarians, William Dwight Whitney, Ferdinand de Saussure, Antoine Meillet, Edward Sapir, Leonard Bloomfield, the Neo-Bloomfieldians to Noam Chomsky and beyond.

What is wrong with the assumption of uniformity? What is it that this conception of language cannot do? Let us analyze a relatively simple sentence: "The once audacious metaphor comparing the universe and the machine soon became a working hypothesis and finally to many it became the literal truth."¹⁵ First of all, it is obvious that no linguist, philosopher or literary critic relying exclusively on the assumption of uniformity can produce or correctly interpret such a statement. Ballard implies that a sentence like "The universe is a machine" means different things to different people, different things to the same people – at the same or different times. Whether such a sentence can be literally true is determined by the ideas the members of the speech community have about the universe and the machine. Resisting any literal reading, the sentence is at first a nonsensical statement that can only be interpreted as a metaphor. The metaphorical interpretation (M) of the sentence depends on the perception of similarities between the universe and the machine, while the literal interpretation (L) takes the similarities to the extreme, and identifies the universe and the machine. In other words, (L) looks upon the universe as a kind of machine. Since the working hypothesis (W) is aimed at answering the question whether and how

¹⁵ Ballard 1948, 211.

(M) could be replaced by (L), it cannot but contain both interpretations simultaneously. Until there is a definite answer to this question, both interpretations have to be taken most seriously. This is, however, quite impossible according to the assumption of uniformity.

When confronted with this sentence, the assumption of uniformity will run into difficulties. The choices are limited. If one thinks (M), (W) and (L) belong to the same language system, that is, if they are produced within the same speech community at the same time, then it must be concluded that two of them deviate from a third one, which in other words means they will have the same linguistic meaning. Paul Ricoeur refers to this operation, that is, to the full recovery of the original meaning from deviation as the "reduction of deviation."¹⁶ If, on the other hand, one thinks (M), (W) and (L) belong to different language states, then they will have absolutely nothing in common, because, according to Saussure, the identity of each linguistic item is defined only within the particular system to which it belongs. The assumption of uniformity is not in a position to deal with the situation which is described by Ballard's sentence. A linguist who has assumed that languages are uniform cannot, without being inconsistent, say that interpretations (M), (W) and (L) are produced within the confines of the same language. This is the same "conceptual knot" as the one Uriel Weinreich mentions.¹⁷

The weaknesses of the assumption of uniformity should have been pointed out by sociolinguists (including the dialectologists and the creolists). However, they were, with a few exceptions, very cautious and hesitant. Many of them had illusions about integrating sociolinguistics into the "mainstream." Uriel Weinreich, for instance, first advocated the rapprochement of structuralism and dialectology, that is, he suggested that heterogeneous "diasystems" should be constructed out of the structuralist linguist's unique and homogeneous systems.¹⁸ If, however, heterogeneity can be introduced at all, why should it not be introduced right at the beginning? It was only after the advent of generative linguistics that Weinreich mentioned that homogeneity implies "unnecessarily idealized and counterfactual descriptions of language states."¹⁹

¹⁶ Ricoeur 1977, 149-157.

¹⁷ Weinreich 1960, 329.

¹⁸ Weinreich 1954.

¹⁹ Weinreich et al. 1968, 100.

He added that the "nativelike command of heterogenous structures is not a matter of multidialectism or 'mere' performance, but is part of unilingual linguistic competence."²⁰ Other sociolinguists are, for various reasons, somewhat reluctant to theorize in sociolinguistic terms.²¹ And there are those who underestimate the importance of linguistic heterogeneity. It has even been suggested that "the generative-transformational model is the most hospitable to sociolinguistics of any linguistic theory yet known."²² Nor should it be forgotten that there were only few isolated attempts in literary theory to investigate the consequences of linguistic heterogeneity²³ until Mikhail Bakhtin's books and essays²⁴ were re-discovered. These historical facts can, to some extent, explain why Fish did not direct his attack against the assumption of uniformity. However, without the critique of linguistic uniformity, Fish's approach to literature remains open to critical arguments similar to the ones he levels at structuralist linguists and literary critics.

While making his case against formalism, Fish mentions that "The difference lies not in the language but in ourselves."²⁵ What is this difference? A difference that obtains between what? A difference obviously requires two things. The sentence that immediately precedes this remark states that "Literature is [...] a category, but it is an open category, not definable by fictionality, or by a disregard of propositional truth, or by a statistical predominance of tropes and figures, but simply by what we decide to put into it." Accordingly, the difference Fish mentions is the difference between the category of literature and what we decide to put into it. This interpretation of the cryptic remark concerning what lies in ourselves is in line with other statements of Fish. He says that what characterizes literature "is not formal properties, but an attitude – always within our power to assume – toward properties that belong by constitutive right to language."²⁶ Thus, depending on our attitude or decision, any segment of language can be literature.

²⁰ Weinreich 1968, 101.

²¹ Labov 1982, Bailey 1987, 271.

²² DeCamp 1969, 162; see also Romaine 1985, 60.

²³ Winter 1964, Thorne 1965, 1969, 1970, Todorov 1971, Kress 1978, Fowler 1979.

²⁴ Especially Bakhtin 1981.

²⁵ Fish 1980, 109.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Obviously, it is no use trying to find examples (phrases or sentences) that – in an appropriate context – could *not* be read as literature. (It should be noted in passing that the consideration itself whether a particular verbal construction can be interpreted as literature is almost an appropriate context.) The second half of the last quotation is much more interesting. Does Fish, by any chance, claim that the properties we regard as the properties of literature belong by constitutive right to language? Are the properties in question always there? Are they firmly in place even before they are discovered? Are there properties nobody ever discovers? How do we, then, know they are there? Is literature some kind of magnifying glass that helps us see certain properties of language which are invisible to the naked eye? Does literariness as a realizable potential inhere in each and every word and in all their combinations? If we suppose it does, then does literature inhere in language in interpreted or in uninterpreted form? Is there such a thing as uninterpreted literature? Is not the decision or the attitude (that makes literature out of segments of language) a particular form of interpretation? Or shall we have to say that all the possible interpretations of literature also inhere in language? If they do, where are they? Where are the unrealized interpretations of individual works of art? What does it mean that the properties of literature belong to language? Does not this contradict the supposed creativity of the readers? Or does creativity consist in discovering what has always been there? And finally, is this statement just a minor slip, or is this really what Fish had in mind?

This last question emerges only because Fish does not emphasize the possible consequences of his conception. However, it is certainly in the best Fishian tradition to point out the absurd consequences of seemingly inconsequential statements. Anyway, it is not easy to see how the statement could be a slip. Fish says, for example, that literature "is language around which we have drawn a frame, a frame that indicates a decision to regard with a particular self-consciousness the resources language has always possessed."²⁷ The crucial expression "the resources language has always possessed" confirms that the literary potential of language should, according to Fish, be regarded as a timeless presence. Fish replaces ordinary language and deviation with an enormous

²⁷ Fish 1980, 108–109.

storehouse of dormant possibilities. But the monster he sets free is just as menacing as the ones he has slain.

It is quite evident, for example, that literature as the sum of the covert literary potential of all linguistic possibilities is not available to any systematic investigation. Moreover, if we accept this conception, the interpretations of literature and the interpretations of interpretations should also be regarded as literary works, providing more material for the interpretations which will be at the same time instances of literature. Although this is a sizeable problem or paradox in itself, it seems even more important that language, as Fish describes it, is not really different from what he calls the "formalist" or "positivist" theories of language. For instance, Noam Chomsky's "ideal speaker-hearer"²⁸ can, at will, produce all the possible sequences of a language, as well as all their possible interpretations. It goes without saying that Fish's "human purposes and values" are included in the possibilities of the ideal speaker-hearer – otherwise s/he would not be ideal. The problem is that both the "resources language has always possessed" and the "ideal speaker-hearer" are fictions that transcend the temporal, spatial and social differences of the actual use of language, and that they create chaotic objects. Thus, Chomsky's ideal speaker-hearer must be able to produce all the sentences of all the dialects of a language, regardless of space and time. Once we accept either of these fictions, we will not be able to identify within them any sub-systems we call languages.

The expression "resources language has always possessed" apparently annihilates the creativity of the readers (or even that of the writers): how can you create something if it has always been there? Language is literally a machine. This recalls the remarks Jonathan Culler made in connection with a passage from Heidegger: "A speaker's utterances are understood by others only because they are already virtually contained within language. 'Die Sprache spricht', claims Heidegger, 'nicht der Mensch. Der Mensch spricht nur, indem er geschicklich der Sprache entspricht.' (Language speaks. Man speaks only in so far as he artfully 'complies with' language.) A generative grammar goes some way to formalizing this view. The construction of a system of rules with infinite generative capacity makes even the

²⁸ Chomsky 1965, 3–4.

creation of new sentences a process governed by rules which escape the subject."²⁹

Fish's statement, according to which "there is no such thing as ordinary language," and which serves both as a conclusion and as a point of departure, is far from telling the whole story. The statement is true in the sense that if we try to set up an exhaustive catalogue of the phenomena around us, we will never come across an object that we could label "ordinary language." Ordinary language is, as should be obvious, an abstraction. And it should also be clear that abstractions exist if there are people who think they exist. In this respect ordinary language is not in any way different from the abstractions Fish himself creates. (His most interesting innovation, that is, the term 'interpretive community' is modelled on the traditional concept of 'speech community' which is not very far from the idea of ordinary language.) Thus, what really matters is not the existential status of fictions and abstractions, but whether the idea of ordinary language can be useful and productive. It seems that ordinary language, when it is based on the assumption of uniformity, and when it is used in conjunction with deviation, is no longer useful. Fish, like anybody else interested in the interaction of texts and readers, or in the creativity of readers, should be concerned with a theory of language that does not reduce new forms and new meanings to existing ones, but can provide some kind of footing for them. It is difficult to see how such a theory could be anything but one adopting the assumption of linguistic heterogeneity.

Finally, Fish's approach to literature is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, he says (thesis i) that literature is the "product of a way of reading, of a community agreement about what will count as literature, which leads the members of a community to pay a certain kind of attention and thereby to *create* literature."³⁰ On the other hand, he states (thesis ii) that the formalists were wrong: literature cannot be explained on the basis of a set of formal properties. Let us suppose both theses (i) and (ii) are right. But can we accept both at the same time?

If thesis (i) is true, then we can say that the formalists formed an interpretive community, and paid a certain kind of attention to certain

²⁹ Culler 1975, 29, quoting Heidegger 1957, 161; see also Heidegger 1991, 96.

³⁰ Fish 1980, 97.

verbal constructions they called literature. Fish does not say – he is not in a position to do so – that the ideas the various interpretive communities cherish must be right in order that we may accept them as interpretive communities. Thus, if thesis (i) is true, then Fish has absolutely no right to criticize the formalists for their practices – no matter how bizarre they may seem to him.

If, however, thesis (ii) is true, that is, if the formalists were mistaken, then it cannot be true that the definition of literature within a community is the same as the community agreement about paying a certain kind of attention to verbal constructions. So, Fish either has to say that the formalists did not form an interpretive community, or he has to say that it is not possible to create literature the way they did. It is the latter that Fish actually does. But this amounts to stating that the interpretive communities must not only have an agreement about what counts as literature, but the ideas they have must also be true. But if the ideas concerning literature have to be true, what is more, if they have to be true according to Fish, then it must be false that literature is what the various interpretive communities think it is. Thus, if thesis (ii) is right, then it is extremely doubtful whether there existed any interpretive communities, or, for that matter, literature, during the course of history.

In conclusion, the least we can say is that Fish does not offer a satisfactory solution to the problems he discusses. They will have to be re-interpreted in the light of the assumption of linguistic heterogeneity.

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ANGEL V. ANGELOV

THE LIMITED "EUROPEAN PHILOLOGY" OF ERICH AUERBACH

"European Philology"

In the introduction to *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter*, Auerbach claims that the tenets of late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century German Romantic historicism have been elaborated most consistently in German Romance philology. The concept of historical development and of the individual national spirit became the guiding idea of philological knowledge. The idea of the historically individualized nations led to the emergence of the dialectical notion of human diversity and community (Auerbach 1958: 9).

Indeed, German Romance philologists set out to study the vast sphere of Romance literatures and languages, their various connections with the Latin heritage and, through the latter, with Greek Antiquity. This is the disciplinary horizon of Romance philology. Antiquity, Greek as well as Roman, is a model, or at least a source of inspiration, information and comparison for the classical works of Romance literatures. Through comparison with Antiquity,¹ Romance philology seems to "remind itself" that its origins lie in Classical philology. Whereas the heritage of Antiquity has been appropriated in order to support var-

¹ I use terms such as Romance, Latin or German with a clear awareness of their arbitrary nature; however, they have not only remained in use to this very day but continue to be institutionally established.

ious national and literary causes, the works of those whom Auerbach calls "European philologists" assign value less to national uniqueness than to the building of European unity on a common historical basis, with its assimilations and transformations. Since they were positioned outside this ideological framework, German philologists were able to share the nation-oriented views but without identifying themselves with the nationalist positions vi-a-vis any of the Romance literatures.² It is precisely this external position, this "outsidedness," that enabled the formation of Romance philology as a discipline in Germany. The very term "Romania," however, as used in its modern sense to refer to the Romance speaking countries, belongs to the French philologist Gaston Paris (Romania 1977: 519–520).³ How the individual Romance philologists would judge the relationship between Germany and the Romance countries, and especially between Germany and France, would depend less on strictly philological than on social values and, even more, on the political situation in the two countries. The logic of political thinking and the logic of the human sciences can and often do interact.

Es fanden sich Gelehrte wie man sie wohl in keinem anderen philologischen Fache und in keinem anderen Lande finden dürfte (es sei denn Benedetto Croce, und der ist eng mit der deutschen Geisteswissenschaft verbunden); sie waren oder sind durch die Weite ihres Gesichtskreises europäische Philologen. Ich denke vor allem an Karl Vossler, Ernst Robert Curtius und Leo Spitzer.

The fragments in this book (*Literatursprache und Publikum in der*

² However great their dedication to Romance studies may have been, it did not drive German Romance philologists (in this case, Leo Spitzer) to share one nationalism or another. "Er [Américo Castro] will den Ausländern vorschreiben wie sie spanische Literatur zu fühlen haben... Er verbaut also selbst seiner Literatur den 'Weltliteraturcharakter', den sie dort hat, indem er nicht den Chor der Fremdstimmen in ihrer eigenen Verbesonderung sich mischen lassen will mit spanischen Stimmen. Das ist alles sehr provinziell, kleinspanisch und rückständig gefühlt..." (Hausmann 2000: 307). Hausmann cites a letter Spitzer sent to Vossler from Istanbul (on 2 April 1935). In this letter Spitzer defends himself against Castro's criticism of an essay he wrote about Calderon.

³ For more on the historical changes in the meaning of the term "Romania" see Romania 1977: 519.

lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter), Auerbach goes on to write, as well as his works in general, shared a common basis; they showed, however, a clearer awareness of the seismic changes in Europe:

...denn mir schienen schon sehr früh, und immer dringender, die europäischen Möglichkeiten der romanischen Philologie nicht mehr nur als Möglichkeiten, sondern als Aufgabe, deren Erfüllung erst jetzt und gerade noch jetzt versucht werden könne. (Auerbach 1958: 9–10)

The introduction entitled "Über Absicht und Methode", from which the above quotes are taken, was most likely completed in 1956/57, after the rest of the chapters in the book were ready. This is Auerbach's last text. The acknowledgements in the book are dated February 1957. Here Auerbach for the first time explicitly argues for the European significance of Romance philology and uses the term "European philologists". Whether the pursuits of Vossler, Curtius, Spitzer and of Auerbach himself can be defined as philology is an issue that has been discussed more than once. If philology means publishing and commenting on texts or piecing together fragments of extinct works, then none of the four can be called a philologist. But if we decide that interpreting important literary records far removed in time is a philological pursuit, then all of Auerbach's research and publishing activity, as well as that of his three colleagues, is beyond doubt philological.

Defining what philology is presupposes disciplinary divisions and boundaries which are more relevant to modernity. Since the end of the 1970s, however, specialized knowledge, while remaining important, can no longer be unambiguously classified into specific disciplines, nor do the disciplines in question enjoy a stable existence. Owing to the constant transformations to which they are subjected, disciplines and, by extension, their boundaries, have become more institutional than problem-related reference points.⁴

The main question pertinent to the subject of this study is not whether they are philological according to one or another disciplinary framework but a different one: Did Auerbach and the other great Romance philologists work from the very beginning with an awareness of

⁴ (Lerer 1996: 63–78) The article also offers a brief history of the debate on whether Auerbach's pursuits are philological.

Europe and did they presuppose a common European horizon for their literary and linguistic studies? Or did this "European" consciousness emerge gradually and at a later stage, as the result of personal and social cataclysms, such as Auerbach's and Spitzer's exile, and Curtius's and Vossler's inner isolation in Germany between 1933 and 1945?⁵ The scientific tradition in which they were formed undoubtedly contributed to their eventual self-recognition as "European philologists", for this was a disciplinary framework which presupposed knowledge of several Romance languages in their historical evolution, of major literary works from before the end of the nineteenth century, of historical events. In other words, German Romance philologists moved within a field significantly broader than that of national philologies. Of course, there is always specialization; Romance languages do not boil down to French, Italian and Spanish; and the very idea of language unity is not nature-given but is a scientific concept; yet this very concept is conducive to the establishment of a cognitive horizon broader than the national one and presupposes comparisons both within Romance philology itself and with the historical development of Germany.

The languages and literatures of two other language families in Europe are studied by Slavic and Germanic philology respectively. The European presence of these three philologies differs in accordance with the texts and/or with the literary records under their scrutiny. Those written in Romance languages have had a stronger and a more lasting impact on the rest of Europe, and therefore have a stronger claim to be representatively "European." In the course of their historical development, Romance literatures have produced more works that are imitated, criticized and rejected and that others seek to emulate, than those produced by the literatures in Slavic and Germanic languages until the beginning of the twentieth century. The main characteristic of the literary works in Europe that would eventually be defined as classical is their authors' ability to assimilate and transform diverse influences – something that can also be found in Auerbach's studies on Dante. That is why one (but not the only) characteristic of the classical in Europe is a

⁵ Leo Spitzer (1887 – 1960), Ernst Robert Curtius (1886 – 1956) and Karl Vossler (1872 – 1949) are German Romance philologists. They are certainly not the only significant German Romance philologists and historians of literature from the first half of the twentieth century.

constant expansion of its cultural geography, an infinite openness to influences from and, especially, an assimilation of hitherto non-European cultural territories. Responding to criticism that he had ignored German literature in his *Mimesis*, Auerbach writes:

Das Vorwiegen des Romanischen erklärt sich nicht nur aus der Tatsache, dass ich Romanist bin, sondern vor allem daraus, dass in den meisten Perioden die romanischen Literaturen für Europa repräsentativer sind als etwa die deutsche. (Auerbach 1953: 13–14)

The history of Romance languages, if by this we mean, as is common, the late Antiquity and early Middle Ages, represents the temporal (dis)continuity of European culture in all its periods. The West proved its military might: in 1205 the Crusaders looted Constantine's city which later ceased to exist as Constantinople, while Rome managed to recover from the devastations. Thus for more than two thousand years the papal institution has been the only embodiment, not only in symbolic but also in real terms, of the turbulent continuity of European history. Even if we were to concentrate on the diversity and disruptions in the history of Europe and not on its continuity and evolution, we would still notice (provided that we don't turn either process or disruption into rigid ideology) that the disruptions had a generative power while the diversities were subjected to assimilations. Whereas it is true that some characteristics of the Romance area and culture have been defined as "the better Europe", there is nevertheless a qualitative difference between, on one hand, reducing the European to or its appropriation by one or several closely related cultures, and on the other hand assuming that the European is a historical Gestalt irreducible to its components.⁶ Auerbach's arrival at the idea of the unity of Europe can be accounted for precisely by his specialization in Late Antiquity and the Latin Middle Ages, as well as in French and Italian literature. What is peculiar about this specialization, let us repeat, is that it was formed in the German philological tradition and that it was externally positioned.

Still, the object of study and specialized knowledge are only a

⁶ It is obvious that in other areas of knowledge, the European would be based not on linguistically related literatures but on common religious, political, economic and cultural characteristics.

prerequisite and not a driving force that can shape one's consciousness of being a "European" philologist. I believe the real driving force resulted from a situation which may be described in general terms as a loss of and a threat to European culture. What constitutes European culture depends on the way we define it. Is European culture unified, what are its defining features and how many traditions does it comprise – these are all questions that will receive different answers depending on one's perspective. From certain viewpoints the European War has been perceived as the disintegration of the culture and unity of Europe – there is ample evidence of such individual and social perceptions and experience. The very term ignores the fact that this was a world war and indicates an internal European point of view; it was a war that affected all of Europe and not just several of its nations. Of course, the consequences of the war were not limited merely to changes in the social psyche, but my emphasis is on the accompanying experience of it as a motive force influencing a traditional and comparatively closed sphere of activity, such as philology was until the beginning of the 1960s.

I was initially inclined to assume that it was their exile in the 1930s that led to the shaping of Spitzer's and Auerbach's concepts of Europe. But after rereading a number of texts from the 1920s, I came to the conclusion that in addition to the First World War, the threat of another military conflict in the 1920s, mainly between France and Germany, also influenced the way some of the German Romance philologists rethought their academic pursuits. That the "unity" of European culture has always been more wishful thinking than reality, that conflicts, interests, spheres of influence in the economics of knowledge and of arts and facts also came into play is outside the scope of the present paper. My purpose here is to find out what motivated Auerbach in his choice to use the non-disciplinary term "European philologists" and what he meant by that. Briefly, my thesis is that Auerbach's consciousness of Europe as a historical entity was formed in the 1920s, but his exile turned this consciousness into a position which he defends openly in his *Mimesis*, *Introduction aux études de philologie romane* and *Literatursprache und Publikum*, while during his years in the USA he arrived at the present

⁷ This is the main thesis in the first version of this study – (Aurenou 2003: 33–44).

mistic conclusion about the end of European history and of Europe as a historical entity.

The dominant, though not the only, school of thought in German literary theory in the 1920s was that of *Geistesgeschichte*.⁸ *Geistesgeschichte* itself is unified with regard to the approaches applied towards history, especially if we treat it as a school of thought in the human sciences and not just in literary history and theory (Kluckhohn 1958: 537–540; Lunding 1965: 200).⁹ The similarity between the various *Geistesgeschichte* approaches becomes obvious, however, upon comparison with the rejected positivism and the subsequent *werkimmanente Interpretation*. Auerbach's philological historiographic method is a combination of *explication de texte* and *Geistesgeschichte*: comprehending history as an entity through microscopic analysis of texts and not through the "ideological syntheses" of entire epochs.¹⁰ However, I would like to focus on two other tendencies in *Geistesgeschichte*, which in the 1920s also served to express the reactions to Germany's

⁸ For a comprehensive review of the schools of thought or approaches in German literary theory in the 1920s, see (Mahrholz 1932: 80–160).

⁹ According to one definition, *Geistesgeschichte* aimed to reveal the active forces with their main spiritual dispositions, as well as the unity of spiritual life in each of the areas it studied. It is a platform that provides intellectual justification for every authoritarian and totalitarian ideology, irrespective of whether its proponents oppose the political use and political consequences of their ideas or whether they enthusiastically offer them to the powers that be. The main ideas of *Geistesgeschichte* were also strongly influential in Bulgaria from the 1920s almost until the end of the 1980s. Both before and after the establishment of the communist regime in Bulgaria in 1944, they were supported by champions of Bulgarian nationalist ideology.

¹⁰ For the sake of mere comparison, take the title of Hermann August Korff's synthesis in four volumes (1923–1953): *Geist der Goethezeit. Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte*. Julius Petersen's compendium, published in 1939, is a clear-cut display of the contradictory tendencies in German-language theory and history of literature in the 1920s and 30s. Whether a compendium will be eclectic or not is a matter of conscious decision but this one truly lumps together all existing positions (Petersen 1939). In 1939 Julius Petersen was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

military defeat.¹¹ In both, *Geistesgeschichte* is sometimes combined with a stylistic or formal analysis: one of them underlines the specific German essence, the German sense of form (*Gestalt*)¹² and capacity for experience whose supreme expression is to be found in the arts.¹³ This specificity was often highlighted through comparison with, and in fact in opposition to, the French (and, more generally, Romance) world-view and sense of form. In its academic version, this tendency found exponents who continued to fight with the enemy, "France", thereby restoring their personal self-esteem hurt by the defeat in the war and shaping patriotic attitudes and aristocratic isolationist values. In sum, the studies focused on "the inherent inward orientation of the German character" (*Innerlichkeit des deutschen Wesens*) discernible in the history of German literature.¹⁴

¹¹ Whereas the two tendencies in question were certainly not the only ones, I believe they were socially the most important ones in academic literary theory.

¹² The problem of aesthetic form and form-creation in general became topical (moreover, not only in Germany) in the 1910s, and enjoyed great popularity especially in the 1920s. Attention focused on the creative process in art and literature, and on the building of a rational everyday environment. They shared the democratic view which held that works of literature and art were a matter of technique, of craftsmanship. *Gestalt* psychology was the product of a similar mindset, stressing the importance of the perceiver's constructive cognitive activity. This was in stark opposition to the aristocratic view which explained the work of art as the result of an experience (*Erlebnis*) accessible to no one but its elect creator. Numerous studies and artistic practices from the 1920s attested to the combination of a democratic and a rational approach. International Constructivism sought to encompass the entire sphere of life (rational arrangement and simplification of interiors and of urban space, of objects for everyday use). What we now call design was called *Formgestaltung*. As regards reflection on the arts, I will cite two works discussing the German and Romance principles of form-formation: (Vossler 1928) and (Wölfflin 1931). The social function of such studies is not confined to the specialized realm, for they manifested as well as created general social values.

¹³ The most representative of *Erlebnis* are Gundolf's two books, *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* and *Goethe*, but they were published earlier - 1911 and 1916 respectively.

¹⁴ Hostility towards the neighbour in 1920s Europe was certainly not typical only of Germany. During the interwar decades, the sense of the national vulnerability and was healed through a return to "eternal" national values through a differentiated belittling of neighbouring nation states.

The other trend was represented mainly, but not only, by German Romance philologists who studied the Christianization and transformation of the ancient heritage during the Western Middle Ages and the Renaissance, stressing the Pan-European importance of particular works or genres as well as of French literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁵ Ernst Robert Curtius's activity (critical works and translations) in the 1920s constitutes not simply a tendency but a programme for interaction in the field of contemporary literature and philosophy between Germany on the one hand, and France, Spain and Britain on the other. The political differences between the two positions grew in the 1930s: while one supported the ideology of National Socialism, the other insisted on the equal status of national languages and literatures as an expression of the common human capacity for thinking through language. A good example (among many) is a lecture delivered by Vossler in Florence in 1936:

Etwas Verehrungswürdiges und Göttliches ist damit die Sprache in allen ihren völkischen Individuationen geworden... Diese (die nationalsprachliche Duldsamkeit) ist eine spätere, noch zärtere Blüte als die religiöse Toleranz, und beide hängen zusammen. Meines Nachbarn Muttersprache ist ja sein inneres Auge, seine Denkform mit all ihren Möglichkeiten, die Welt zu gestalten. Sie ist die Stimme seiner Kindheit und seiner Zukunft, seiner Erinnerung und Sehnsucht. Hat man dies eingesehen, so müssen alle Gewaltmaßregeln gegen die Muttersprache eines Volkes als ein Vergehen am keimenden Leben des Geistes erscheinen. (Vossler 1937: 114–115)

Such statements, which defended a clear moral position, were regarded as political by the National Socialist regime. Vossler was forced to retire on age grounds in 1937; in addition to the campaign organized against him, he was banned from lecturing even though as Professor Emeritus, he was entitled to continue to do so. In the 1930s and 40s

¹⁵ Here I have in mind Vossler's and Klemperer's publications on the subject of "world literature," Eduard von Jan's habilitation thesis *Französische Literaturgeschichte und vergleichende Literaturbetrachtung* (1927), as well as the study on German literature and European spiritual life in the nineteenth century (Bieber 1928). An analysis of this line in German-language literary theory and history, however, would require a separate study.

Vossler devoted himself mainly to the study of Spanish literature, seeking on the one hand its connection with the European literary traditions, but on the other concentrating on Spanish mysticism (the poetry of solitude, as he called it), which was in effect an act of withdrawal not so much from the historical as from his contemporary social situation, the reality he lived in.¹⁶

The subject of Europe appeared in Auerbach's works in the 1920s. In his dissertation, *Zur Technik der Frührenaissancenovelle in Italien und Frankreich* (Auerbach 1971 [1921]), the connection between Europe and the novella is presented in very general terms and practically not commented upon but his focus is not on the national differences between the Italian and the French novella but on the differences in the creative techniques. Of course, the different techniques may provide a clue to the differences in the national character, but Auerbach formulates these only in the last paragraph of the Conclusion (Auerbach 1971: 66). In short, Auerbach considers the early Renaissance novella to be both a national and a European phenomenon.¹⁷

However, in his habilitation thesis, *Dante als Dichter der irdischen Welt* (1929), we find a consistently expounded argument on the European character of Dante's works. According to Auerbach, Dante's poetry, and especially the *Commedia*, builds on the entire heritage of European literature and thought. Dante's powerful creative drive has transformed the Ancient Greek, Roman and Late Ancient heritage into a qualitatively new poetic entity which is simultaneously an end to and a summation of the Middle Ages (Auerbach 1929: 61, 67, 73). The problem of the possible sources of Dante's works is critically elucidated and generalized in Karl Vossler's two-volume compendium, whose second edition

¹⁶ Vossler's position against "the old and the new political myths" in the 1920s and 30s is consistent. His only statement against the French language, made in 1922, is an expression of anguish and despair. It is important who this statement comes from. To say that "it would be better if we spoke in Slavic [sic!] ... or in Esperanto, and best if we spoke in German, but never again and in no way in French" after all the books one has written about French literature and culture means renouncing a significant part of one's own life history. For more on Vossler's position, see Christmann 1994: 489–504.

¹⁷ The connection between Europe and the novella is found in Auerbach 1971: 2, 7, 36, 39, 40.

LYRIC GENRES IN ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

In the first sentence of his *Poetics* Aristotle promises a comprehensive survey of all kinds of poetry: Περὶ ποιητικῆς αὐτῆς τε καὶ τῶν εἰδῶν αὐτῆς, ἥντινα δύνανται ἕκαστον ἔχει ... λέγωμεν.¹ The reader's expectations, however, are not fully met in the course of his analysis. In the extant first book the focus is almost exclusively on tragedy, while epic receives only minor attention; other genres are usually discussed simply in connection with them. The lost second book was most likely devoted to comedy and there seems to have been very little discussion of other kinds of poetry, the only exception being perhaps the iambus. Genres other than epic and the two forms of drama are presented by less than twenty quotations and references.

The explanation for the distinctive position of these two dramatic genres is fairly obvious: in Aristotle's view they represent the culmination of the gradual evolution of all the innate possibilities in the mimetic capacity of human nature.² Nature itself has found in them the forms

"Our topic is poetry in itself and its kinds, and what potential each has", 1447a8-12. In the following I shall quote the English translation by R. JANKO (Aristotle: *Poetics*, Indianapolis 1987).

See S. HALLIWELL: *Aristotle's Poetics*. (Chapel Hill, NC 1986) 279. He convincingly refutes both G. F. ELSE's and I. BYWATER's explanations. ELSE's suggestion (Aristotle's *Poetics: The Argument*. Cambridge, MA 1957, 15 n. 56) that Aristotle only discusses genres which were still familiar and important in his days simply does not correspond to the facts. The weak point in BYWATER's explanation (Aristotle on the Art of Poetry. Oxford 1909, ad loc. 47a 8) who thought that lyric genres belonged to music rather than to poetry, is that rhythm and tune are among the poetic media.

which render its own functioning perfect and complete. As a result, description is gradually subordinated to evaluation as the treatise proceeds. This approach does not allow for the discussion of a theory of less developed and less refined genres to which lyric poetry too can be assigned. Yet this explanation does not really explain the almost complete lack of an analysis of these genres. It still remains to be resolved whether we can discover any mention in the most comprehensive and non-evaluative system of the genres discussed in the first three chapters of those genres which, although left unmentioned in the treatise, are assumed to have once played an important role in the history of Greek literature. And, above all, where do the genres called lyric genres in modern terms³ – i.e. solo songs accompanied by a string instrument, choral songs, elegiacs and other songs accompanied by a wind instrument – fit in? Does Aristotle's general approach to poetry account for the fact that he does not even briefly elaborate on them? Are the most fundamental distinctions and concepts for describing poetic activity unsuitable for grasping the essence of lyric poetry?

Taking this as a yes-or-no question, I believe that the answer can hardly be other than assertive. Instead of challenging the truth of this statement I shall in the following attempt to pinpoint which of the categories essential to any theory of ancient lyric poetry are missing and which distinctions are not complete in this respect. My conclusion, however, will not be entirely negative. I would also like to stress that certain categories in the *Poetics* are formulated in a way which allows them to include some of the lyric genres as well. There are certain concepts which play a subordinated role in the theory of tragedy, but which could serve as an adequate basis for characterizing certain lyric genres. Thus, although the *Poetics* does not include even a latent theory of lyric genres, it does offer at least the possibility of describing them with the help of certain categories in the Aristotelian system.

³ For the theory of lyric poetry in general, see J. KAISER: *De veterum arte...* (Diss. Leipzig 1906); H. FÄRBER: *Die Lyrik in der Kunsttheorie der Antike* (München 1936); C. O. BRINK: *Horace on Poetry* (Cambridge 1963) 162ff; P. STEINMETZ: *Gattungen und Epochen der griechischen Literatur in der Sicht Quintilians*: H 92 (1964); L. E. ROSSI: *I generi letterari e le loro leggi scritte e non scritte nelle letterature classiche*: BICS 18 (1971); W. R. JOHNSON: *The Idea of Lyric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles 1982) 76ff. I have not seen A. E. HARVEY: *The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry*, CQ 7, 1957, 206-223.

Let us start with an overview of how the most fundamental concepts are introduced. One well-known feature of the treatise is that Aristotle applies the very methods he recommends for art, namely a technical study. First, he defines the particular concept which defines the essence of any poetical activity and can serve as a genus concept. This concept is imitation; every kind of poetry (πάσαι) τυγχάνουσιν οὔσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σύνολον.⁴ Aristotle does not verify this statement; he simply quotes specific types of poetry as examples which confirm his claim clearly and unambiguously. His statement can also be viewed as an inductive reasoning from six specific cases (epic, comedy, tragedy, dithyramb, auletike for the most part and kitharistike); in any case, Aristotle assumes that anyone can gain an insight into how things are and will thus hardly have any doubts. His initial claim, based on these examples, is clearly a starting point whose truth can be grasped through intuition (νοῦς).⁵

The same path is followed in the discussion of the points in which different types of imitation differ from each other. Aristotle defines three kinds of differences (in regard to objects, techniques and modes), but he does not offer an explanation for his selection of these three differences and his rejection of others: διαφέρουσι δὲ ἀλλήλων τρισίν, ἢ γὰρ τῷ ἐν ἑτέροις μιμεῖσθαι ἢ τῷ ἕτερον ἢ τῷ ἑτέρως καὶ μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον.⁶ In the next sentence he refers to painting, but only as a contrasting parallel, as a genre in which imitation is achieved by other techniques than in poetry. Thus the similarities and differences noted by Aristotle underline the importance of technique, but add little to the statement that poetic imitation can be achieved in three different ways. This is also a matter of intuitive comprehension and has to be accepted as an axiom.

Nor does Aristotle offer any arguments when he specifies the possible objects, techniques and modes of poetic imitation. Objects can be noble and good, or base and bad persons (or those in-between like "us"), in other words, persons whose actions can be characterized unequivocally from a moral perspective. The poetic techniques are words, rhythm and melody. The modes can be narrative or dramatic or a combination of the two.

⁴ 1447 a16.

⁵ *An. Post.* 100 b6-17.

⁶ 1447 a16-18.

But shouldn't these categories and distinctions be challenged? I am fully aware that challenging them is, in a certain sense, rather anachronistic. Nevertheless, we can take the risk of being anachronistic if we seek to determine the points on which Aristotle's theory fails to grasp what we consider to be the characteristics of lyric poetry.⁷ I shall therefore consider the following questions:⁸

1. Is imitation as a generic term broad enough to include lyric genres as well?

⁷ I will not offer a comprehensive theory of lyric poetry, although I do assume that certain features are indispensable to any discussion of the genre. These are (i) the personal voice of the poet; (ii) a well-defined and specific relationship with his audience; (iii) a well-defined situation of life corresponding to a certain speech-act, especially if it is an important religious, social or private occasion distinguished from ordinary events of everyday life by certain traditional modes of behaviour; (iv) the prominence of emotions both as a state of mind to be expressed and as a state of mind to be induced in the audience; (v) a way of direct communication with the gods. Obviously, not all of these features must necessarily play a significant role in each and every lyric poem. For these characteristics see R. PFEIFFER: *Gottheit und Individuum in der frühgriechischen Lyrik*, *Philologus* 84, 1929, 137-152; E. STAIGER: *Grundbegriffe der Poetik* (Zürich/Freiburg 1946); B. SNELL: *Die Entdeckung des Geistes* (Hamburg 1955, 3. ed.) 83ff; H. FRÄNKEL: *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (München 1969, 3.ed.) 487ff; F. CAIRNS: *Generic Coroposition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh 1972); E.-R. SCHWINGE: *Griechische Poesie und ihre Gattungen*. *Ant.u* Ab. 27, 1981, 143-152; H. MAEHLER: *Die Lieder des Bakchylides I*. (Leiden 1982) 1-5; T. TODOROV: *Genres in discourse* (Oxford 1990) 1-26; W. SCHADEWALDT: *Die frühgriechische Lyrik* (Frankfurt 1989) 9-39.

⁸ I will not deal with two related questions. First, I only mention in passing the problem of whether objects, techniques and modes are suitable categories for distinguishing different genres of poetry, since other categories such as the *purpose* of imitation, can also be set up. This category is vital to both the definition and the detailed analysis of tragedy. It is not quite clear why Aristotle failed to take into account the different ambitions of poets composing different kinds of poetry. The absence of this category as a criterion of differentiation is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to find a definite place for lyric genres which were traditionally (and quite naturally) thought to have a different effect on their audiences than tragedies. Neither will I discuss the question of techniques of imitation, i.e. why a few lyric genres are mentioned in the class in which poetic expression takes the form of words, rhythm und melody.

Exile meant the loss of the academic environment, including its entire institutional economy: philological knowledge divided into language families, seminar classes, high-quality students, well-stocked libraries, specialized publications, rivalries, exchange of guest lecturers in and between different European countries. To this one must add the change of the language of tuition and the different cultural identity of the students whom the exiled professors taught and with whom they communicated. The German language would remain important to Spitzer, but it would no longer be crucial. From his very first publication, Spitzer leaves the impression that his language homeland is (at least) bilingual; as regards Auerbach, however, the German language would remain his "homeland" until the end of his life. Thus, in addition to being private experiences, deprivation and yearning became structuring characteristics of Auerbach's professional activity. The definition of philology as "European" did not follow the convention according to which the philological field is formed through linguistic kinships which also serve to define kindred literatures. The research, in turn, presupposed and created complete entities such as historical periods, whilst the national functioned as a sub-indicator of kindred (e.g. Slavic, Germanic) identity. Auerbach's "European" philology (as well as Leo Spitzer's "European" historical semantics)²⁷ from the mid-1930s and in the 1940s are endeavours which sought to justify the topical need for European unity during and after the Second World War. "European" would come to mean that the specialized historical and philological knowledge and research techniques could be used to accomplish social and even political tasks.

I believe that it was precisely Auerbach's daily life among the tangible cultural otherness of Istanbul, together with his need to place his pursuits on a solid foundation at a time when the European countries were being occupied and destroyed, played a crucial role in directing his quest for European unity towards the points offered by history. Istanbul itself, with the layers of time open to view, offers a stimulus towards studying the vicissitudes of history as well as the longevity of culture. In the epilogue to *Mimesis* Auerbach would state that he had often been compelled to leave his field of study – Romance lit-

²⁷ I have dedicated another study to Leo Spitzer's "European" historical semantics. (Angelov 2004: 140–155)

eratures. This is not merely an apology for the fact that the project on a European literature realized in *Mimesis* transcended the recognized boundaries of his research discipline. In a similar way Auerbach would have to transcend the disciplinary framework of Romance philology in another work written almost at the same time, *Introduction aux études de philologie romane*. Auerbach's interpretations are driven by a desire "to give a voice" to texts; they can indeed be defined as patient and insightful listening to the voice (in other words, noticing details and peculiarities) of texts but also as tracing their relations with their precursors as well as with the reality from which they speak. Auerbach's interpretations cannot be defined as belonging entirely to the discipline of literary history because his "synthetic" philological approach embraces within the concept of "literature" historically and generically different texts. His analyses of modern literature are, rather, attempts at "cultural-historical synthesis" and are indebted not so much to his method of close reading as to his erudition moulded by the broad philosophical, historical and literary school of thought in Germany from the late nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries called *Geistesgeschichte* (Uhlig 1996: 45). However, it is impossible to draw a firm dividing line because Auerbach uses "cultural-historical synthesis" both when analyzing modern literature and when dealing with the Old Testament and mediaeval literature.

In Istanbul Auerbach taught a subject called "European philology" – a designation possible only from an outsider's position which distinguishes the foreign (the European) from one's own. Today names of university courses and programmes containing the definition "European" enjoy great popularity, but in the first half of the twentieth century such a name seemed impossible even within Europe itself not because there were no debates on the unity and "destiny" of Europe but because of the specialized character of academic knowledge. Even if the coincidence of the formal title of "European philology" in Istanbul and Auerbach's later self-definition as a "European philologist" happens to be accidental, it was nevertheless his exile in Istanbul that prompted him to problematize the social tasks of philology, which was not at all necessary in an environment with an established disciplinary framework. It is also important that Auerbach came to his new workplace from an environment with a formidable scholarly tradition and did not have to make special efforts to adjust to the standards of his new environment. De

spite living in exile and being required to deliver his lectures in French, in Istanbul Auerbach would continue to feel at home primarily using his native German. The above-mentioned textbook *Introduction aux études de philologie romane* was written in French but the other two books, which Auerbach thought of as studies and not textbooks, were written in German: *Neue Dantestudien* and *Mimesis*.²⁸ Does this mean that they were not designed for seminar classes or that parts of them were also taught in French? His last book, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter*, was also written in German even though he lived in an English-speaking environment at the time.²⁹ Auerbach obtained a teaching position in the USA in 1947, at the age of 54 – too late for him to begin thinking and writing in English without difficulty.³⁰ But was this the only reason? I find that Auerbach's attachment to his "homeland" is indicated not only by the fact that in the USA immediately after the Second World War he continued to write in German, but even more by his choice of subject for his research: Latin late antiquity and the Western Middle Ages, which he conceived of as the beginnings of Europe.³¹ A comparison with Spitzer, who in the USA initially wrote exclusively in French but then also in English, is indicative of more than the personal differences between the two men.³² Even

²⁸ *Neue Dantestudien*, which includes essays written in Germany, was published in Istanbul in 1944, while *Mimesis* was published in Bern in 1946.

²⁹ Noting Auerbach's language sensitivity regarding twelfth- and thirteenth-century texts, Dante Della Terza adds that the essay "Figurative Texts Illustrating Certain Passages of Dante's *Commedia*" is difficult to read not only because of the lengthy quotes but also because of the author's difficult English (Della Terza 2001: 91).

³⁰ Stephen G. Nichols's testimony (Nichols 1996: 64) can be interpreted in this vein. "Perhaps because we spoke French primarily, a language she handled easily whereas my spoken German was rudimentary to non-existent, I had the sense of being transported on those afternoons into another world, a world of European intellectual life as lived in Germany before the Third Reich." Nichols is referring to his conversations with Marie Auerbach while studying her husband's archives "three or four years after his death". Having lived in the USA for fifteen years by then, Marie Auerbach still obviously found it easier to speak in French than in English.

³¹ Auerbach published in English several essays on Dante and Vico.

³² To my knowledge, Spitzer's first publication in English dates from 1940. See Spitzer 1940.

more indicative would be comparisons with German intellectuals who emigrated to Turkey and the USA and who were not philologists.³³ It seems that after 1936, the year he arrived in Istanbul, Auerbach did not feel entirely "at home" with his place of work and designated his "foreignness" by inhabiting his "native homeland" of German Romance philology. The metaphor of the "philological homeland" indeed appears in his essay "Philologie der Weltliteratur" (1952), though with a different meaning.

During his eleven years in Istanbul Auerbach did not show any interest in Turkish or Islamic culture in a way that would have made it part of his scholarly pursuits; on the contrary – the creation of a European philological home, of a utopian space, seems to have been meant to distance or even displace the immediate presence of the environment he lived in. Had Auerbach shown an interest in Turkish culture other than that of an observer, this would have distracted him from his pursuits; a research interest in the foreign would have changed the nature of these pursuits. The degree of foreignness is manifested in a provision in the contract between him and the university, according to which the professor would eventually start teaching in Turkish. Although this requirement is legitimate, in this case it nevertheless manifests on a professional as well as on an existential plane Auerbach's purely human limitations and his restricted ability, exhibited throughout his life, to function equally successfully in different cultures. Auerbach, whose knowledge of languages was prodigious (the texts analyzed in the original in *Mimesis* span more than 2,500 years) would have been faced with a significant linguistic but also cultural challenge. Did he feel any inner motivation to learn Turkish? It seems to me that this detail shows the extent to which the idea of the whole world as a "philological homeland" is simply a metaphor. Easily discernible in this metaphor is the yearning for the comfort of the home provided by language but it con-

³³ The collection edited by D. Fleming and B. Bailyn (1969) gives us a vivid idea of the intellectuals' emigration to the United States in the 1930–1960 period; the studies in it are written by students or colleagues with a personal knowledge of these figures. There is also a substantial body of literature on the subject of academic emigration from Germany to Turkey in 1933–1945. In the last decade the subject has also been presented in several exhibitions in Germany and Turkey. The exhibition at the University of Mersin, Turkey, dates from 2008.

reals what is plainly obvious – that in the cultural history of the world there are always languages whose spread turns them into a dominant and therefore powerful means of communication; some therefore feel more comfortable in this "home" than others, while still others remain homeless for ever.

The Problematic Europe

Chapter One of *Mimesis*, "Die Narbe des Odysseus," concludes the analysis of the Homeric epics and of the Old Testament with the following proposition: "...denn so, wie sie sich schon in früher Zeit fertig ausbildeten, haben die beiden Stile ihre constitutive Wirkung auf die europäische Wirklichkeitsdarstellung ausgeübt. (Auerbach 1946: 30) And after the entire huge undertaking has been brought to completion, the last words in the epilogue of the book are the following:

Möge meine Untersuchung ihre Leser erreichen; sowohl meine überlebenden Freunde von einst wie auch alle anderen, für die sie bestimmt ist; und dazu beitragen, diejenigen wieder zusammenzuführen, die die Liebe zu unserer abendländischen Geschichte ohne Trübung bewahrt haben. (Auerbach 1946: 498)

The identification of the personal with the historical reveals the main motive for the "European" concept of *Mimesis*. We do not know where Auerbach's professional path would have taken him had he followed its normal route in his native country. But his concern for the history and unity of Europe was prompted by his exile; the conception of *Mimesis* is the result of absences. The book does not have a list of references other than to the works Auerbach deals with. This is his famous explanation for this fact: "Hier gibt es keine für europäische Studien gut ausgestattete Bibliothek" (Auerbach 1946: 497). Auerbach of necessity turns the absence into an advantage, conceiving and writing a book that is more original than anything he might have produced had he remained in Germany, using all conveniences offered by the German academic environment.³⁴ Evidence of quality specialism, however,

³⁴ This supposition seems somehow obvious, but I was happy to find it verified in Harry Levin's memories about Auerbach (Levin 1969: 466).

abounds in the book: familiarity with a vast body of texts in different languages, skilled analysis of syntactic, lexical and compositional peculiarities, ability to organize a huge mass of material. In each chapter Auerbach discusses from different perspectives one main subject: the drama of human existence, the variable answers (Western) European literature offers to the question of what is human. As noted earlier, texts of different genre are designated as literary since according to Auerbach they best represent *l'humaine condition* (the title of the chapter in which Auerbach analyzes Montaigne's *Essais*) at a given time. Using the terminology of the day, *Mimesis* may also be described as *Geistesgeschichte*.³⁵ Today we can reinterpret the ideas in *Mimesis* in the spirit of literary historical anthropology. A history that traces how reality is represented in literature also represents more convincingly the history of Europe rather than providing a theoretical answer to the question of what is realism. The problem of realism was topical for the history of literature and of art until the end of the 1960s, but it is not this problem and not its specialized treatment that are the driving forces of the book. Auerbach places the problem of realism under a historical perspective in order to create an "imaginary museum of European civilization" (Levin 1969: 466).

Once posited as a purpose of investigation, "Europe" can also be transferred to Auerbach's earlier works written before his exile to Istanbul, and even to the whole of his output. Discussing the difficulties facing synthetic-historical philology in its efforts to represent "das geistige Geschick eines solchen Gebildes wie Europa" (Auerbach 1958: 18), Auerbach explains that he first applied his method in "La cour et la ville", published in 1933 (Auerbach 1951: 12-50). But this study is not about Europe; the European is not its horizon. By making this claim, however, Auerbach assigns to all his studies a unifying characteristic, a unity seen in hindsight. In the 1920s, the recognition of European characteristics in the works of Dante was not yet combined with a belief in "European philology"; as noted earlier, the concept of the latter had to await Auerbach's exile.

³⁵ Hatzfeld sees as one of the shortcomings of *Mimesis* this very mixture of half-stylistic analysis with half-philosophic history of literary realism. See his predominantly negative review (Hatzfeld 1949: 333-38).

Das Allgemeine, das mir darstellbar zu sein scheint, ist die Anschauung von einem Geschichtsverlauf; etwas wie ein Drama, das auch keine Theorie, sondern paradigmatische Anschauung vom Menschengeschick enthält. Der Gegenstand im weitesten Verstande, ist Europa; in einzelnen Forschungsansätzen versuche ich ihn zu ergreifen. (Auerbach 1958: 22)

The comparison between the drama and the history of Europe originates in the preface to Auerbach's book on late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, but he applies it to his entire activity. In this way, the idea of the "destiny of the spiritual entity called Europe" ("das geistige Geschick eines solchen Gebildes wie Europa") adds to his earlier studies a potential which they in themselves do not carry. Thus, however, Auerbach's professional path acquires the quality of wholeness; a central and non-specialized topic highlights the social significance of his pursuits from their very beginning, ruling out any contingencies. I can recognize in Auerbach's argumentation the modern yearning for teleological unity, whether existential or historical.

"Destiny" is one of the notions much discussed in Germany after the First World War as regards its culture, religion, art and people. Large social groups in the 1920s found that the mystical attraction and anti-causal implications of this concept corresponded to their mindset. Auerbach, too, uses this mythopoetic term in his interpretations, but as usually happens whenever he employs terms that do not belong to philology, here "destiny and unity" (*Geschick und Einheit*) come as if in such self-evidence that he does not find it necessary to refer to a particular school or tradition with which he feels connected and which offer a theoretical explanation for "predestination".³⁶ He uses the pair "destiny and unity" consistently – from the first chapter of his book on Dante (Auerbach 1929: 5–33) to the Introduction to his last book. To Auerbach "destiny" means the events through which literary characters manifest their essence, events that cannot but happen to the literary characters because the latter are involved in their happening and give them their special form. The destiny of the literary characters is both concrete and paradigmatic; in its concreteness it represents essentially human characteristics. To put it in Freud's words, what happens to lit-

* As far as I can judge, Auerbach's understanding of destiny is close to Georg Simmel's (Simmel 1984: 12–18).

erary characters is that which befits them. Auerbach does not recognize the danger that "destiny" may be turned into a tool for someone's political propaganda – for the 1920s, this non-recognition is understandable. What is less acceptable, however, is that he continued to use it even after 1945. I suppose that to Auerbach, destiny and unity possessed the energy needed to keep the direction his studies. "Destiny" presupposes not only drama but also the unity which the scholar can find in the history of individuals, of European literature or of a particular community.³⁷ In fact through the terms "destiny" and "unity", which are also valid for the paradigmatic life history, Auerbach defines his attitude towards the history of Europe. In this way the destiny of Europe, too, acquires paradigmatic, culturally generalizing but also existential human value.

When is it possible to mark a European horizon for a study based on material from the history of a particular European country? For convenience, I shall leave the question of which history may be defined as European without an answer. Auerbach's answer would probably be that this is possible when the study in question represents a paradigmatic event in the "destiny" of Europe. Then the history of the words *cour*, *ville*, public, figure, *passio* and passion, which Auerbach investigates in several essays and studies from the 1930s and early 1940s, can represent a paradigmatic development – of social attitudes and behaviours; in sum, the history of words must function as a history of culture (Auerbach 1967: 55–92; 161–175; Auerbach 1951: 12–50). Auerbach does not choose words of current political usage – this, however, is not to say that his choice is not socially topical.³⁸ Auerbach traces changes in word meanings corresponding to changes in social attitudes from antiquity to Dante and to seventeenth-century France. Auerbach also takes a similar approach in his essay "Figurative Texts Illustrating Certain Passages of Dante's *Commedia*" (Auerbach 1967: 93–108). Viewed from this position, Auerbach's studies can indeed be understood as representing paradigmatic changes of values in European history. Then "La

³⁷ I find no semantic reason for Auerbach's use of *Geschick*, nor of *Schicksal*, although it is possible to make a distinction between the two terms. The entry on *Schicksal* in *Wörterbuch* 1992: 1287 refers to the difference between *Geschick* and *Schicksal* in Heidegger.

³⁸ Vladimir Sabourin (Сабоурин 2008: 456–468) finds precisely political significance in the way Auerbach represents the problem of theatrical publicity in seventeenth-century France.

cour et la ville" (Auerbach 1933) and "Typologische Motive in der mittelalterlichen Literatur" (Auerbach 1953a) may equally be classified under the subject of "Europe", irrespective of the fact that neither of the two studies discusses the European directly and that they were written before and after Auerbach's exile to Istanbul. In the 1930s several German Romance philologists transformed the history of words into a means of promoting humanism, into a social position against the transformation of the German language into a divisive and lie-supporting political tool³⁹ All four whose works I am familiar with were dismissed from their teaching positions because of their non-Aryan origins. Leo Spitzer began his studies on "European" historical semantics in 1933; in the 1930s and 40s Eugen Lerch (who remained in Germany) likewise traced the "European" history of several words, two of which had unambiguously political and topical references: "Deutsch" and "race" (Lerch 1938; 1942).

Still, mediaeval literature is paradigmatic in a way that is different from the paradigmatic national-European quality of seventeenth-century France. The opinion that the French seventeenth century is paradigmatic of Europe was widely shared but just as widely contested in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, depending on one's attachment or hostility to France. The narrowing of the concept becomes visible when the history of a particular country or of a particular cultural region is identified with the European – for example, when the culture of France is represented as an epitome of Romance culture and France is assumed to be "the classical European country," so that French studies function as pars-pro-toto studies of the paradigmatically European.⁴⁰

³⁹ The concept of the history of words as a history of culture is part of the *Geistesgeschichte* studies in Germany. See e.g. (Burdach 1926). The difference in the studies of Spitzer, Auerbach and especially of Eugen Lerch in the 1930s and 40s is not one of method but of social position. None of the three rode the wave of state, i.e. institutional, approval of the value of these studies.

⁴⁰ Leo Spitzer's notion of happiness and harmony, of *joie de vivre*, which in his study on Albert Thibaudet (Spitzer 1959: 337–373) he interprets as civilizational characteristics inherent to French and Romance culture, is romantically utopian. Utopian or not, this notion formed Spitzer's conviction that Romance culture, that *civilitas romana* of the Middle Ages, is the foundation of Europe. Let us also recall the exceptional characteristics which Jacob Burckhardt, a

Was dabei im besten Falle erzielt werden kann, ist eine Einsicht in die vielfältigen Beziehungen eines Geschehens, aus dem wir stammen und an dem wir teilnehmen; eine Feststellung des Ortes, an den wir gelang sind, und allenfalls auch eine Ahnung der nächsten Möglichkeiten, die vor uns liegen; jedenfalls aber innerste Teilnahme an uns selbst und eine Aktualisierung des Bewußtseins: "wir hier und jetzt" mit allem Reichtum und aller Beschränkung, die es enthält. (Auerbach 1958: 22)

Here, even more clearly than in the final sentences of *Mimesis*, the history of Europe as a process of change and becoming is paralleled with the inner nature of personal self-consciousness and personal action. The study of history becomes equivalent to the creation of a common European identity, the identity of what is called *Abendland*. One detail seems to me to speak volumes. Presenting the main theses in his *Literatursprache und Publikum*, Auerbach symptomatically replaced "abendländisches Publikum" with "europäisches Publikum" in the title of the last chapter: "...absichtlich paradoxer Titel (Das europäische Publikum und seine Sprache)" die Einheit des Europäischen betont." The chapter itself, however, carries the heading "Das abendländische Publikum...", and is titled "Das abendländische Publikum ...", not "Das europäische" in the Contents (Auerbach 1958: 23; 177). The word *Abendland* is common in German and came to be used after the eighteenth century as a general term for western Europe (Paul 2002); Auerbach therefore regards the two terms as synonymous.

The term *Abendland* has a complicated history and its meanings are different and sometimes opposite. Still, essential for all of them is that *Abendland* is less a geographic than a cultural-historical, value-laden designation, and this is precisely how Auerbach uses it. Through it one can narrate the conflict-ridden history of west-European identity. *Abendland*, especially during the Middle Ages, differentiates and opposes Western to Eastern Christianity; it designates both the revival of the idea of a Roman Empire through the alliance between Charlemagne and the Papacy (*translatio imperii*), and the period of the Crusades. To Auerbach, who was a medievalist, this use – identity through differentiation and simultaneously a claim to universalism – must have

citizen of the Protestant city of Basel, projects onto the Italian Renaissance.

been obvious. Of course, *Abendland* includes Greco-Roman antiquity as part of the historical heritage of western Europe, as well as the idea of enlightenment, reason, personal freedom and responsibility – the values Europe has endeavoured to make universal ever since the sixteenth century. Erasmus and Comenius were the first to formulate the modern European idea through such values. With regard to Germany, however, *Abendland* is an integrating term; it links Germany with western Europe by opposing the idea of a "specifically" German historical development. "Specificity" can easily be turned into a tool of uncritical self-glorification and hostility to others. The synonymous use of Europe and *Abendland* distinctly reveals Auerbach's dual, unifying as well as divisive understanding of the identity and symbolic geography of European culture. If we narrow *Abendland* a bit further and accept that the European has for centuries been represented by the concept of the Romance, then the tasks of Romance philology as European philology will become clearer and the cultural geography of Europe smaller. Where in the west should the map of Europe end – should it include Scotland; does Europe's eastern boundary run along the Rhine or along the lower reaches of the Elbe? Is Königsberg part of Europe (not just because of Kant), and should the map of Europe include to the north present-day Finland but without the Finns who are Orthodox Christians? Or to the south, the Island of Cyprus? Because of Cyprus? Should it also include North Africa because of St Augustine (to whose works Auerbach has devoted insightful pages), but not only because of him? The problem does not seem easy to solve, and neither is the synonymy of Europe and *Abendland* a solution; Auerbach does not discuss the question of where Europe ends. His territorial proximity to contemporary Greece, to erstwhile Byzantium, the fact that Istanbul was once Constantinople, does not prompt him to think that they were part of Europe in the past, if not in the present. The word *Abendland* evokes its direct opposite – *Morgenland* which refers to the East without outlining clear territories but which does imply distance, otherness and oppositeness not least through the vivid natural images of morning and evening, of sunrise and sunset (Orient, Occident, *Morgenland*, *Abendland*). Byzantium, Orthodox Christendom might not be pure Orient but neither are they *Abendland* and therefore do not belong to Europe.

After 1945 many (literary) historical publications devoted to the question of what is Europe appeared in Germany and Switzerland. The

purpose was to justify once again the Romance-German cultural unity, represented as a centuries-long tradition based on the Latin Middle Ages which transmitted the ancient heritage to modernity. The majority of these publications discuss the different ways in which Europe (including that of antiquity) is present in German (German-language) history or literature. These works actually strengthened the ties between Germany and the other west European countries between 1945 and 1955, in line with the political agreements between the then FRG and its western neighbours. Literary history and historiography, economic projects like the Fernch-German coal and steel union (the precursor to the European Economic Community), the military alliance between western Europe and North America functioned in a similar way – they were designed to demonstrate that the West was united and that the new Germany was, as the saying went, an inseparable part of *Abendland*, of Europe.⁴¹ The cultural-historical identification of Europe with *Abendland* solidified the already existing division of Europe into two blocs.⁴² Literary history and philology divided Europe the same way as did political doctrines. The creation of value systems took place not without the significant contribution of the human sciences, and their investigation from this perspective gives us additional reason to assume that the agreement on the division of Europe after the Allied victory was not based solely on strategic interests. “The spiritual unity of Europe” proves to have been founded on a hidden demarcation line.⁴³ If Russia was Orthodoxy and

⁴¹ The difference in the names of the two German states is indicative: “German Democratic Republic” repeated the names of the republics that were part of the Soviet Union, where the ethnic or the national served as an attribute to the form of government: German, Kazakh, Belorussian “republic”. The additional definition of the “republic” as “democratic” implied that there were also republics of another type – for example, non-democratic or semi-democratic republics, unlike the socialist ones. The name, however, aroused the suspicion that precisely the republics whose names were an ideological substitute for the real existence of democracy were non-democratic.

⁴² Most of Central Europe fell within the Soviet zone, a fact reaffirmed by the unsuccessful revolution in Hungary in the autumn of 1956. In Austria’s case, the question was resolved more felicitously in 1955 through the treaty signed by the Great Powers which guaranteed the country’s neutrality (after the unsuccessful communist putsch in 1951).

⁴³ The history of *Abendland* is intertwined with the history of Christianity in western and central Europe and, by extension, with the history of the Catholic

the Soviet Union – communism and republics with a predominantly Slavic and Muslim population, all of these characteristics foreign to (Western) Europe, then the fact that the countries of central Europe, where the majority religion is Catholicism and which have a Latin literary tradition, remained in the Soviet bloc after 1945 was not due solely to military and political reasons but also to historically formed cultural (pre)conceptions.

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and the Protestant churches, of the national idea in Germany and of its relationship with other European countries, with the assimilation of the ancient heritage and with the division of Europe into East and West (Lexikon 1993: 22–24; Brockhaus 1986).

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ANDRÁS KAPPANYOS

ONE WORK – TWO AUTHORS?
ON EZRA POUND'S INTERFERENCE IN
THE CREATION OF T.S. ELIOT'S *THE WASTE LAND*

According to some scholars, the sheer existence of *The Waste Land* is due to the interference of Ezra Pound. T.S. Eliot was helpless, he couldn't get anywhere with the material he had written, which didn't seem to have any particular shape. It is quite commonly thought that Pound actually carved the poem from the raw material presented by Eliot. On the one hand, Pound would never have been able to write such material; on the other hand Eliot could never have edited it into a poem. Accordingly, they conclude, Pound is a co-author.¹

Although this view is probably highly exaggerated, Pound's crucial role cannot be doubted. We have to bear in mind that he never considered himself a co-author, although he esteemed the poem very highly² and even envied it.³ We can judge the extent of this interference from the facsimile edition where we can see all those cuts, notes, warnings and other mysterious signs. But we have hardly any information on the chronology of the writing of the different parts. Hence we do not know how much of the other parts of the poem were known to Pound at the time when he made certain suggestions. So it is very difficult to decide whether there were two different ideas struggling against each

¹ John Harwood, *Eliot to Derrida. The Poverty of Interpretation*, (London, 1995, Macmillan), 61–85.

² "justifies the whole movement" Ezra Pound: *Selected Letters*, 248.

³ "Complimenti, you bitch." *The Letters of T. S. Eliot. Vol. 1, 1898–1922* ed. Valerie Eliot, (London, 1988, Faber & Faber), 498.

other (Pound's and Eliot's), whether Pound's idea was struggling with Eliot's shapeless material, or whether Pound lent a clearer shape to Eliot's own idea.⁴

In short, the main critical question could be put this way: what would the poem have been like without Pound's intervention,⁵ and, after all, what *is* the poem? What did the author *want it* to be? Strange as it might seem, the main direction of our interpretation should proceed from our understanding of the chronology: some parts of the poem were written, or cancelled, without Pound's interference, and some alterations were initiated by him. So it is not the exact dating that should mostly concern us but the sequence of the creation of the poem's parts. Defining the sequence, we can close the circle of our possible interpretations.

There seems to be a well-established knowledge of the sequence of external events (journeys, stays etc.) and it is also clear that the typescripts were made on three different typewriters. Determining the most important stages of the chronology depends upon the relation between places and typewriters.

In September 1921 Eliot, following a nervous breakdown, was allowed three months leave from work. On 12 October he went to Margate where, a week later, his wife left and he remained on his own. During the next three weeks he presumably worked on the poem. Returning from Margate, he spent a week in London and then went to Lausanne via Paris (18 November). He left his wife with the Pounds and probably showed Pound the parts he had written in Margate or earlier in London. In Lausanne he stayed at the institution of Dr Vittoz, where he continued working. Towards the end of December and on his way back home, Eliot stopped over in Paris again and went through the poem together with Pound. After his return to London came their "Waste Land" correspondence: a letter from Pound with some more suggestions, one from

⁴ This ambiguity gives way to the most diverse speculative theories concerning the "real" nature of *The Waste Land*; whether it is a religious hyperbole, an urban apocalypse, a spiritual autobiography, a pamphlet expressing the disillusion of a generation or a homosexual lamentation. Here I will try to handle it as a poem.

⁵ See e. g. Grover Smith: "It can do no harm to imagine how the poem might have developed without Pound." In: G. Smith, *The Waste Land*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 82.

Eliot with questions, and a last one from Pound containing basically approval and encouragement.

As for the typewriters: one of them was Eliot's own machine, which he had already used at Harvard and taken to London with him; the second was his office machine at his bank; and the third was Pound's typewriter in Paris. We will call them machines A, B and C respectively. In the surviving material, the first and second part of the poem are written on the A machine; the title page and the third part are on the B machine; and the last two parts on the C machine. It is clear that the C machine belongs to Paris (although there have been some other assumptions). We have to associate the A and B machines with some of the elements of the London-Margate-London-Paris-Lausanne-Paris-London sequence.

The first convincing chronology, which is based mostly on philological evidence, is Dr Lyndall Gordon's.⁶ Dr Gordon attributes the B machine to Margate, the A machine to Lausanne and the C machine to Paris. Consequently, the third part, "The Fire Sermon," as well as a minor poem, must have been typed at Margate together with the title page (at the time with a motto from Joseph Conrad). This means that the whole concept of *The Waste Land* was conceived in Margate, and "The Fire Sermon" shows this concept in its most original form. Dr Gordon calls this state of the poem the Albemarle version after the name of Eliot's hotel. (In an ironic gesture Eliot enclosed his hotel bills with the manuscripts sent to John Quinn.) This Albemarle version of the poem presumably included many earlier fragments and miscellanies.

At Paris Eliot presumably showed Pound this Albemarle version. In fact, besides other evidence, we can find Pound's notes on both copies of "The Fire Sermon." He edited it twice: once in November and once again after Eliot's return from Lausanne. It was in Lausanne that the poem made its biggest steps towards the final stage and was now already under Pound's influence. According to Dr Gordon, Eliot wrote the first part, "The Burial of the Dead," at that time by using some lines of an earlier poem, "Death of Saint Narcissus." He omitted another old poem and substantially reshaped a third one, making the second part,

⁶ Lyndall Gordon, "The Waste Land Manuscript," *American Literature*, 45 (1974): 557-570. A revised and more detailed version of this concept can be found in L. Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 86-119.

"A Game of Chess," out of it. He worked all the untitled fragments into "What the Thunder Said," the fifth part. He had presumably his "A" typewriter with him, though Dr Gordon does not explain why we have no typescript either of parts IV and V as well.

It was on his way home, when Eliot stopped at Paris, that the poem suffered most of Pound's criticism. There was little new text added to the existing one and their discussions were mainly about cuts. Dr Gordon presumes that Eliot left a copy, partial or whole, with Pound, who sent it after him to London together with his notes. Eliot had begun to negotiate the publication of the poem in *Dial* on 20 January.⁷ There came the well-known TWLC in which the most important suggestions of Pound concern changing the Conrad motto (he does not say into what), and the excision of the remaining three separate poems.⁸ Eliot accepted both suggestions, and the poem was published in this form in October 1922.⁹

The first question is why would Eliot have carried with him the B machine from his office to Margate or anywhere else? What impression would he have made on his bosses by taking the office typewriter for his three months of sick leave? This machine, as Dr Gordon proves, was mainly used for dictating, which means it was not for Eliot's personal use. More probably it was assigned to a typist. What's more, Eliot had his own light portable machine, here called A. Common sense suggests that typewriter B never left Lloyd's offices, consequently all the texts typed on this machine were created either before September 1921 – the beginning of Eliot's sick leave – or after his return to work in mid or late January 1922.

The second question is why did Eliot refrain from typing part V, which was definitely created in Lausanne? After all, he had his A typewriter with him. Well, probably he had no time. But then what about part IV, of which he made a fair copy by hand, and typed it out only in Paris on Pound's machine? And why did he use only Pound's machine when he had his own with him? (I have to add that the Eliots stayed at a hotel, not at Pound's residence.¹⁰)

⁷ *The Letters*, 502.

⁸ *The Letters*, 497–9 (because of the faulty dating) and 505.

⁹ *The Criterion*, Vol 1. No 1. Oct. 1922.

¹⁰ See the date on one of Vivien Eliot's letters: 12 January 1922, Hotel du Bon Lafontaine. *The Letters*, 501.

We know that writing poetry in Lausanne was against the medical advice Eliot had received. The suspension of usual activities was part of Dr Vittoz's therapy.¹¹ Presumably Eliot wanted to keep his work secret and did not want to disturb other patients with his typing. But if this is true, then it is also true of the typing of the first two parts. It seems much more likely that in Lausanne Eliot had no access to any typewriter whatsoever and also that typing was banned altogether. What is more, if we suppose that the first part was written in Lausanne, Eliot must have cancelled its first page immediately after writing it, as Pound did not even touch it. Apparently Eliot had already given it up by the time Pound first confronted the text. Such quick revising was not like him, as the oldest texts of the parcel had been around for almost a decade. And there is the later abandoned Dickensian title above this passage, "He do the police in different voices," which was clearly adopted from Part II. There was simply not enough time for this process in the Lausanne period, as has been assumed (writing Part I; writing Part II with the Dickensian title, expanding it to Part I, then reconsidering Part I and cancelling the first page, when all the while he still hadn't touched Part IV and V). And why would he have created the title page in Margate with machine B when he had only one larger part, "The Fire Sermon," ready? And what's the use of inventing the Dickensian title if he had already arrived at the final title?

Dr Gordon's arrangement of the chronology very well supports her own version according to which Eliot's original intention was to write a story of redemption, a spiritual autobiography, and it was only Pound's intervention that formed an urban apocalypse of the poem.¹² This might be true but it does not justify Dr Gordon's chronology. She arranges it in such a way that those texts which are closer to Pound's presumed conception should appear as late developments as possible.

In general, it seems an acceptable hypothesis that the later an idea appears, the more it is likely to be due to Pound's interference. In the following I will try to establish a more probable chronological arrangement of the poem's birth. As for the typewriters, my basic hypothesis is this: if typewriter B belonged to Eliot's office, then it is rather improbable that it left the office at all. As far as we can judge from the printing,

¹¹ cf. Peter Ackroyd: *T. S. Eliot*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), 115-6.

¹² cf. Lyndall Gordon: *Eliot's Early Years*, 118-9.

this was a better quality machine than Eliot's own, the A machine. So he typed his texts on the B machine whenever he had access to it. That means that all the pages typed on the B machine were created either before October 1921, or after mid-January 1922. Indeed, he spent a week in London returning from Margate but it is rather unlikely that he would have visited his office during his sick leave to type out some poems.

All the pages typed on machine A were created when he was away from the bank and from machine B, presumably in Margate and in London, while in Lausanne Eliot could hardly use any typewriter. We must not forget that he already owned machine A in his Harvard years, so the texts typed on it might date much earlier, e.g. to the time before Eliot got the job in the bank or had no access to machine B. If we accept all this, we can draw the following conclusions. The typescript of Part III was ready by September 1921. As the typescript of part I cannot be earlier than November (possibly late October), Part III definitely preceded Part I. And Part II can hardly be earlier than Part I, as we can see from the position of the temporary title "He do the police in different voices." On the typescript of Part II this line was typed (along with the subtitle "Part II") together with the body of the text. The line is parallel with the other lines; its letters are placed evenly above those of the body text. On the first page of Part I this title is slightly slanting, the letters are not exactly above each other, which means that the completed page was later reloaded to the typewriter so that the title above it could be added. Also, the letters of the title are thinner, suggesting that this time there was no sheet for a carbon copy in the machine. The idea of the Dickensian title came simultaneously with the creation of Part II and was "post festa" extended to Part I. The question here is why, having completed "The Fire Sermon" even earlier, did Eliot not apply this title there as well? Probably because he was not sure that he was writing the same poem. Probably because he simply did not have the earlier manuscript with him. In fact, on the manuscript of "The Fire Sermon" there is no indication of its being the third part of something.

So the most probable chronology of the first three parts is this: Part III before 1921 September, London; Part I October-November, Margate; Part II November, Margate and possibly London. I think the concluding stanzas of Part III were also written either in Margate or afterwards in London, especially the one beginning with "On Margate Sands" (a characteristic self-reference). "Oil and Tar" might have been

ready for years. When on his way to Lausanne he stopped and visited Pound, he left with him the following writings: the typescript of Part I, probably without the first page (drunken night) which he had cancelled earlier; the typescript of Part II; a carbon copy of Part III; and some drafts made in Margate. After editing them, Pound sent these back to Eliot in Lausanne. Apart from the typescript of the first three parts, the draft of the Thames maidens' song must have been in this parcel, as Pound wrote on it "Type this out anyhow." This note makes sense only in the correspondence.

So in Paris Eliot left a copy of each of the first three parts, as well as some drafts, and then he went to Lausanne. He took with him the carbon copy of Part II and the typescript of Part III. Part I definitely had a carbon copy as well, and this could have been with him too. The copies he left with Pound were sent back to him in Lausanne and provided him with Pound's marginalia, one of them also containing Vivien's remarks. Eliot did not spoil the clean copies except for copying Vivien's suggestions onto the carbon copy of Part II. He probably intended to send the typescript back to Vivien. He did not care too much for Pound's editing, except for Part III, which he slightly altered in keeping with Pound's observations. He was mainly concerned about the two remaining parts. We do not know of any draft of "Death by Water;" the earliest known copy is a handwritten fair copy, which he presumably made in Lausanne because in all the other places he had access to typewriters. Probably parts of it were drafted in Margate, but we have no evidence of this. Eliot sent this fair copy to Pound, who sent it back – probably with the other copies – having written nothing on it but "Bad – but cant attack until I get typescript."¹³ Last in Lausanne he completed the draft of Part V, which he presumably did not send but took with him back to Paris.

It was around Christmas 1921, probably the 26th, that Eliot arrived in Paris, and about 15 January 1922 returned to London together with his wife. Our knowledge of their stay is very limited. Somebody typed Parts IV and V on Pound's typewriter (probably Eliot himself as the mannerisms of Pound cannot be identified in the typing). It is very probable that together they read through the text, or at least parts of it.

¹³ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land. A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), 55.

and this is the origin of all the cryptic lines, encirclings and other signs. It seems that they left Part I alone. For Part II they reused the copy with both Pound's and Vivien's remarks together with Eliot's answer to one of Vivien's suggestions.¹⁴ This also shows that this copy was sent back to Paris, or otherwise he would have been able to share his objections verbally. The carbon copy that Eliot kept - apart from his own scribbling of Vivien's suggestions - remained spotless.

As for Part III, Pound used the fair copy that Eliot had previously taken with him to Lausanne. He definitely edited the other copy earlier than this as he wrote beside the Tiresias episode "Vide other copy."¹⁵ They presumably read through Part IV together, or Pound edited it in Eliot's presence, since it contains nothing from Pound's hand except cryptic lines. Unusually, Pound read Part V in draft form and wrote above it: "OK from here on *I think*."¹⁶

From here on, however, our possibilities are limited to deductions. Pound begins his letter of 21 January with "MUCH improved."¹⁷ What does this statement refer to? What is improved and compared to what? We must not forget that the Eliots had left Paris only a week earlier!

I would imagine it somewhat like this. Having arrived at Paris from Lausanne, Eliot showed Pound the new developments, especially the draft of Part V. He typed the last two parts on Pound's machine and they discussed them in detail, or at least "Death by Water." Pound also ran through the changes in the other three parts and expressed his opinions verbally, though sometimes he stressed them in pencil. Afterwards he kept the whole parcel (or at least one copy of each part) with him. He examined it again and provided it with new annotations in pen. This scenario can be deduced from the annotations on the two copies of Part III: one copy is annotated in pencil only, the other in pen only. In his letter of January 1922 Eliot enquires about nothing but the annotations in pen. Then, before the Eliots left, Pound presumably handed over the whole parcel.

If Pound reported some improvement a week later, the basis of his statement could be nothing but this previous state of the poem. And

¹⁴ *Facsimile*, 13.

¹⁵ *Facsimile*, 33.

¹⁶ *Facsimile*, 71.

¹⁷ *The Letters*, 497.

seeing this improvement is possible only if he received a new version before 21 January. It is most probable that on getting home, Eliot re-typed the whole lot with consideration of Pound's latest annotations in pen. He did it presumably on machine B and then sent this new version back to Paris. This could be the "MUCH improved" and could very possibly have been 19 pages long. We do not have any copies of it because they must have formed the basis of the British and American editions, and they later ended up at the type-setters. The copies edited in facsimile were obviously not suitable for that, and by the time Eliot sent the manuscripts to John Quinn, the poem was already published. The only remaining part of this version is the title page with the Conrad motto that is the last written part in the whole parcel.

Pound does not mention this motto earlier except in his letter of 21 January. Knowing his thoroughness, I believe it rather improbable that he overlooked it. It is much more likely that he had not seen it before this version. This single sheet could only remain in the parcel because Pound persuaded Eliot not to use it. Consequently, he had to make a new title page with the Petronius motto, and that went to the printers. The other pages were virtually ready for publication. This could be the version of nineteen pages that Pound mentions in the correspondence.

In his letter to Scofield Thayer, the editor of *Dial*, Eliot writes, "It will have been three times through the sieve by Pound as well as myself, so should be in final form." The three sieves are three readings: one during Eliot's stay in Lausanne; another during his stay in Paris; and the third one in the correspondence. Indeed, Pound sends the results of his third reading the day after Eliot posts his letter to Thayer. His two most important suggestions are to omit the Conrad motto and to omit the three "miscellaneous" poems. According to his letter to Thayer, Eliot had already given up the inclusion of the three poems.

In his answer Eliot writes: "Criticism accepted so far as understood." This is followed by questions concerning what is "not understood." One part of his references can be connected with Pound's latest annotations to Parts II and III, another part of them refers to Pound's previous letter and there are some which probably concern verbal remarks made back in Paris. In his answer Pound leaves almost everything to Eliot's decision and does not make any textual remarks. The concern of his suggestions is not the creation of the poem but its publication (Do

not omit *Phlebas*, do not include *Gerontion*, etc.). The poem has been through the three sieves and is now ready.

This story seems to me to be acceptable; or at least I do not know of any fact that would make it impossible. We can identify three versions of the poem, three stages of its development: before the first sieve, the Albemarle version (that Eliot left with Pound in November); after the first sieve, the Lausanne version (which he handed to Pound having returned from Lausanne); and after the second sieve, the 19-page version (that he sent back from London to Paris). The fourth, the one after the third sieve, is the published version. There is one fact of this external story which can be of great importance concerning the internal story. The title that makes it *one* poem occurs only in the nineteen page version, as one of the latest developments. The latest element of the manuscript bundle is the title page, and this is the first place that the actual title appears.

I do not want to suggest that the title was supplied by Pound. In fact in the final form of the poem there is only one word that is positively his contribution. But it is more likely that he realized the potential for a great, paradigm-changing work of art in Eliot's jumbled material. We have to give credit to Helen Gardner for her assumption: "we shouldn't assume that without Pound Eliot would have published some of the weaker passages of in the drafts (...) it is highly doubtful whether, without Pound, *The Waste Land* would have been completed and published at all. The most important thing Pound gave Eliot was the support of a constant affection, encouragement and belief."¹⁸ Pound wasn't a co-author, or a metaphorical parent of this poem; rather, as he rightly puts it, *sage home*,¹⁹ that is a male midwife. Or, to change the metaphor, a new religion takes more than a new gospel: it also requires a prophet.

¹⁸ Helen Gardner, "The Waste Land: Paris 1922," in A. Walton Litz, ed., *Eliot in His Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 67–94, especially 74–76.

¹⁹ *The Letters*, 498.

MAURICE N. FADEL

HAPPINESS AS TRANSCENDENCE OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

There exists a special experience of happiness. It is not related to rationality or to the power of will. It does not lie in the satisfaction of a goal achieved, of a dream come true. It does not result from planning or striving, from evaluating risks or avoiding obstacles; neither is it akin to the pride one feels after overcoming a difficulty.

Such happiness is an event that arrives all of a sudden, without being expected or wished for. It bears no history and breaks the sequence of past, present and future. It seems to occur beyond the cause-and-effect processuality within which we are placed. It takes us out of our orderly or chaotic everyday life, out of ourselves, out of the unbreakable continuity of that well-known "self", established by circumstances that are within or out of our control, it destroys our personal story, the long novel that we keep on writing and whose protagonists we are.

Similar to such happiness, Marguerite Duras's novel *The Lover* (*L'Amant*) produces an exceptional experience. It is true that much effort has gone into establishing the literary nature of the text: it was awarded the Prix Goncourt, all blurbs emphasize its market success by quoting the number of copies sold and of the languages it has been translated into; being made into a film is yet another indication of success. All of this is in keeping with the older trend of apprehending literature as institutional activity; nonetheless, the novel has never found a permanent home in the prestigious salon of literary masterpieces. Even though through the perhaps too highly extolled poetic style the author herself sends an unmistakable signal that it is a work of literature, the novel flaunts the traces of the personal experience and the taste of pain-

fully endured early wound which take it beyond the limits of art and artifice and which cannot be disguised by skillful writing.

The Lover could be interpreted along the lines of a number of themes but not that of happiness. Everybody in this novel is unhappy – the heroine with her unbearable family and their miserable existence; her lover – the rich Chinese, incapable of opposing his father's will which destroys the relationship with the little white girl; the mother with her attempts to improve the family's circumstances, her love for her eldest son and her humiliating treatment of her daughter; the elder brother – a drug addict, gambler and thief, a lonely and homeless man; the prematurely deceased younger brother.

The Lover is a novel about time but time seems to be in contradiction with nothing other than happiness. It is as if happiness is time's adversary, a force that stops the movement from past to future and the oblivion it brings about. Happiness is an appeal to the passing moment "Ah, still delay – thou art so fair!"¹ Happiness is concentrated in such captured moments which we do not allow to depart.

Time comes into the novel not as an easy conjunction of separate events but all of a sudden, as if it never existed before and now rushes in like a tidal wave: "At the age of eighteen it was too late. Between eighteen and twenty five my face suddenly faded... I don't know if this happens to everybody, I never asked myself that. I must have once been told about this force of time with which it strikes you when you are at your youngest and most cherished age."² Time is symbolized by water. It flows from everywhere in the novel – there is the river along which the heroine travels, the sea where she sails away, the buckets of water poured on the house, the rich Chinese man washing the "little bitch", the tears.

Time in *The Lover* is a paradox. It is generally accepted that the awareness of time is preceded by the lived experience. However, it is not like that in the book. Time is an elemental force which does not follow experience but comes before it, rather than being its result. Time sets in prior to the average, normal sensation of time and of historicity

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*. Leipzig, 1872. Translated by Bayard Taylor.

² Marguerite Duras, *The Lover*. Published by Dneven Trud and 24 Chasa, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2005. Translated into Bulgarian by Silviya Vagenshtain. The translations into English for this article are mine – M. F.

caused by the occurrence, by the event. The heroine's face all of a sudden and without any reason comes to resemble the face of the elderly Duras: "It all started that way for me, with this tormented look on my face which was evident to everybody, with these bluish circles around my eyes, far ahead of time, of *experience*" (emphasis in the original). Delight leaves its mark on the face before ever being experienced: "At the age of fifteen I had delight imprinted on my face without knowing what delight was." Desire comes before its satisfaction. "[Desire] arrives either with the first glance or it has never existed at all. It is either the natural connection between the sexes or nothing. That I also came to know before the *experience*" (emphasis in the original).

Time does not exactly add a new look to the heroine's face. Its verdict is radical – it destroys and moreover does so not to the outside, but *meanly*, to the inside: "[The face] did not sag like other faces with fine features: it kept the same contours but its substance is ruined. I have a ruined face." Concerning the white girl, the novel describes her encounter with the subversive power of time, it is focused on the point where this power takes shape. It is as if in order to illustrate time's destructive conquest, the novel stops being a consecutive story but disintegrates into fragments.

The heroine is so immersed in time that she refers to herself sometimes as "I" and sometimes as "she", thus emphasizing the distancing of what she used to be from what she is at the moment of writing; the transformation of the former "I" into the present "she". The distance between "I" and "she" is not regularly kept. "I" becomes "she" and vice versa without order, but this chaos only emphasizes the presence of time, because the present "I" of the writer is a continuation of the former "she" of the girl – both of them born at the beginning of the novel, at the moment when time rushes in, when the heroine's face "all of a sudden fades," when it starts resembling her later "ruined face".

The time difference is represented by yet another common figure in the text: the photograph. The photograph seems to be the reverse of the memory. It seems to stop time. It grasps a moment and stores it as an image. In the memory of something, as is known, there is a distance between the past and the present. The one who remembers is not settled in the past, and by surrendering to the bygone experience realizes its irrevocability. The photograph in the *The Lover* does not store, it erases; the pictures are not placed beyond time but are a part of it: "Portraits were

always retouched so that what was peculiar to the face would become slightly less prominent." The attitude to a photograph is connected to the memory. Photographs only widen the discrepancy between what once was and what now is. They give us an impulse to experience time: "We are looking at the photographs... We remember the time when we were so little in the old photographs, and we look at ourselves in the recent ones. The chill between us has grown even stronger."

Duras's writing in general shows an effort to bring together image and time. It endeavours to leave the abstractness of language; it aims not to depict pictures but rather to show them to us or even to get us involved in them, in their situation: "Look at me, I'm still on the barge, still with [my heavy hair]." Yet, no matter how vivid the characters may seem to us, they are entangled in time, and time causes their frozenness to melt away within a moment, it destroys them as it does the white girl's face. What is more, the characters become a part of this destruction. This is so because it is time that constitutes their very reason for being. They are born in order to determine the way in which the heroine's life will be penetrated by everything that takes place at the very beginning of the novel and onwards.

Unlike the girl, who is dragged by time and change, the lover *stays the same*, he is beyond time. He remains unchanged throughout the whole of his presence in the text – he remains in love. At the beginning, when he is alone with the white girl, he tells her that he "loves her madly." At the end, in the final sentence of the novel after their parting, he says that again: "He told her that everything remained as before, that he still loved her, that he could never stop loving her and that he would love her until death." But in fact this character has no "before". His time prior to that love is not presented (we know about it from his stories which are retold by the heroine, but there is not direct presentation), nor is the story of his falling in love told either. He comes onto the stage already in love and this is how he stays. His love is not a love story, as it *has no history at all* since the time factor is not relevant to it.

That love is not related to domination. Certainly, the relationship between the Chinese man and the girl is not free of it, but while domination is present, it has no effect. Each of the characters has something more and something less than the other one. The Chinese man is wealthy but not European. The girl is white but poor. Neither of them could dominate. Both are in fact equally weak and frightened, yet Du-

ras highlights only the fears of the Chinese. He does not take the risk of surrendering to his love. He follows the rules: his relationship with the girl is as clandestine as if she were a prostitute; he obeys both his father and tradition by marrying the woman chosen for him, one who is from the same nationality and class as his own. Even though his love is forcibly removed from the visible aspect of his life and is not officialized but meanly concealed, it still leaves him numb and deprives him of his future because it is his constant present. He is numb in bed too and so the girl has to take the initiative. She seems more daring, ready to ignore the rules of behavior, even perverted ("...He was not capable of knowing such perverseness," the author-heroine self-lovingly declares and, with a dose of satisfaction with her own exceptionality, describes her early sexual maturity). But actually there is no daring: just as the Chinese is not able to go against his father's demands (not for reasons of morality but because he is afraid of being disinherited), so is the girl incapable of abandoning her mother and running away with her lover.

The Chinese is not happy in his love. It is not just his own fault that he decides not to surrender to it and so to preserve his status of a wealthy man. But he is not happy also because he is not loved. Happiness presupposes not only the desire for it, but also its satisfaction, it aims at becoming objective. Is this valid for the novel, though? The Chinese man does not set himself free of this love, he does not run away from it as is the common reaction to something that brings misery, because this love is his *painful happiness*, his moment standing still. This is not the happiness that arrives when a goal is achieved but is one that comes unexpected and even undesired, breaking the casual sequence. This is the happiness that problematizes the seemingly impregnable borderline between it and its negation; it is happiness and unhappiness in one. The Chinese cannot remain within its domain, just as another person could hardly let a happy moment go. It is hard to comprehend this kind of happiness because positive happiness is always privileged. It spills out of advertisements and is promoted by the media. It always comes hand in hand with the unquestionable victory, with success and achievement. The novel, however, seems fascinated with another kind of experience. Although it is focused on the young girl, displaying her presence with a somewhat exhibitionist satisfaction, its title nevertheless fixes attention on a less important figure – that of the lover.



The power of speaking belongs to the author-heroine. No one else in the novel speaks. The other characters' words are retold. Little of what the Chinese says is remembered, apart from the reiteration that he loves her. Their conversations are distanced from their pleasures: they discuss money, the girl's poverty, the Chinese man's wealth. "We will exchange remarks like journalists, controversial, equally meaningless." Actually the girl does not want these conversations: "She tells him she does not want him to talk to her." The two of them are committed to the body. Eventually the Chinese loses his willingness to talk: "The delight he draws from her every night has engulfed his time and his life. He barely speaks to her now."

In the self-oblivion and self-destruction of his delight the Chinese communicates directly with the girl's body, the body alone and not with her. This takes her by surprise: "... He went beyond my expectations, taking into consideration my body's fate alone. That's how I turned into a child of his." A child of his not because he is superior, or because she is barely past the childhood age, but because, with something like the organic relation between parents and their children, *he knows her body better than she does*, he feels her body as a part of his own. He knows and feels her *not consciously*, but through the bodily sensitivity which is beyond our control.

His devotion is contagious. In her childish (and perverted) manner "the little bitch" wants to imitate him; her gender is unstable, *floating*, changing: "I'd like to eat the of Hélène Lagonelle's breasts as he eats mine...". In her own way, the girl is selfish – unlike the Chinese and maybe because she is not in love, she does not forget herself in her pleasure but enjoys her own experience in which the partner is only a casual participant. By the end of the novel the girl, just like the Chinese, comes to feel the very body of the other, this body's life which cannot be contained within its owner's life. She becomes aware that *we do not own our bodies*. At this point the Chinese stops being a distant presence, he is no more the elegant wealthy man who pulls her away from her detestable family and surrounds her with delights: "Now he had begun to mean more to me. I started to perceive the unspeakable softness of his skin, of his penis, as something unrelated to him."

The Chinese man's averseness to language, as well as his inatten-

tion to and disrespect for the linguistic capacity itself, as demonstrated by his tautological and unexceptionable speech, his surrender to the body which reveals its own cognitive ability and *loses its limits* (each body pours itself into the other one) – all of this gives us good reason to suspect the lover of something he may be hardly aware of: at any moment he spends with the girl, unlike his hypocritical public existence, *he goes beyond himself to the extent of transcending the human condition*. In the context of the ambivalent coexistence of the happiness and unhappiness of love, the Chinese does not function as one who uses reason in his speech and acts rationally. He is not the *animal rationale* as the human is defined by the long history of Western tradition and pedagogy. That is why the lover in the novel remains nameless.

The fruitful cooperation of the Institutes of Literary Studies of the Bulgarian and Hungarian Academies of Sciences dates back to 1981. Initially it was a contact between the departments for literary theories of two socialist academies; later it comprehended whole institutes in countries that both became members of the European Union. The context has changed immensely, but the intense intellectual climate of the encounters of groups of Bulgarian and Hungarian literary scholars did not. Workshops, conferences, academic visits, and joint publications characterise the cooperation, which resulted in the foundation of a book series in English called *Images of the Other in Literary Communication*. The first volume was published in 2006, and it has taken six years to prepare this second one. What we are offering here is not an usual volume of conference proceedings, but rather a selection of papers representing the achievement of two research institutes of literature and their cooperation.

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