the other/
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The Other Alien Stranger

Cracow 2014
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subashish Bhattacharjee</td>
<td>Infinity, Literality and the Other: Philosophy and the Othering of Samuel Beckett’s „Godot”</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Czekalski</td>
<td>Belonging in South Africa: Nationality, Race and Religion in J.M. Coetzee’s “Boyhood”</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Marynowska</td>
<td>The Cities and Aliens in George R.R. Martin’s „A Song of Ice and Fire”</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izabela Pisarek</td>
<td>Emigration as an Experience of Strangeness – Lost and Found Eva Hoffman</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanna Roś</td>
<td>Who is an Outsider? Marcin Bortkiewicz’s Adaptation of „The Stranger” by Albert Camus</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcin Sroczyński</td>
<td>From Dancing to Grieving. Homosexual Otherness in Andrew Holleran’s novels</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Szymon Pietrzykowski</td>
<td>Gay as a Stranger. Homosexuality during Fascism in Ettore Scola’s “Una Giornata Particolare” [“A Special Day”]</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicja Kowalczewska</td>
<td>Margery Kempe: Mysticism and the Problem of Identity and Sexuality of Medieval Women</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katarzyna Kleczkowska</td>
<td>Those Who Cannot Speak. Animals as Others in Ancient Greek Thought</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnieszka Dudzik</td>
<td>Understanding Cultural Differences within the Context of Medical Encounters: Nonverbal Dimensions of Communication</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruxandra Ana, Oskar Lubiniński</td>
<td>Not Exotic Enough? Implications of the Duality of Cuban Foodways on the Tourist Market</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNA DRWAL
Muslim as “Others” in India in the Debate about the Creation of a Unified Indian Nation 129

JAKUB MORAWSKI
The Gaze of the Other – Psychoanalytical Understanding of Productive Potential of Cinema 139

JOANNA PUCHALSKA
The Scourge of the Land and Sea – An Awful Outlaw or a Romantic Hero? 149
INTRODUCTION

DEAR READER!

We are glad to present you the twenty fourth volume of MASKA and the first edition of our periodical with all papers written in English. We hope that the idea will appeal to both Authors and Readers and – starting from this volume – the last issue of MASKA every year will be an English-only edition.

The present volume focuses on the topics of otherness and strangeness. The images of strangers and aliens are significant themes in comparative literature studies. It is also one of the most important issues in cultural and religious studies, especially in the age of globalisation and multiculturalism. The problem of otherness and exclusion has been analysed many times by sociologists, psychologists and philosophers.

Our adventure with otherness will start with the literary motifs of otherness in the works of Samuel Beckett, John Maxwell Coetzee, George R.R. Martin, Eva Hoffman, Albert Camus, and Andrew Holleran. Afterwards, we will focus on the issue of the otherness of homosexuals, women, and animals. Subsequently, we will follow the problem of cultural differences, analysing the problem of communication in medical encounters, duality of Cuban foodways on the tourist market, and Muslims in India. Lastly, we will take a look at cinema in the light of psychoanalytical theories, and images of pirates as heroes and strangers.

We wish you a pleasant reading and successful researches on the topic of otherness and strangeness.

EDITORIAL STAFF OF „MASKA“
I owe you lot nothing, nothing more than you owe me. I don’t need to join you in your ghettos, because I’ve got my own...¹

Samuel Beckett’s opting for the word ‘Godot’ in the French title of his seminal play, En Attendant Godot (1949 [Waiting for Godot, 1956]) rather than the French synonym of God, Dieu, could perhaps be read, as it more commonly is, as an Anglicization of the proposed space and thus an endorsement of the linguistic origins of the playwright. But, what is infinitely more interesting is to view this ‘strange’ translation as an effect that produces identity through ‘difference and repetition’, and the possibilities of an ethical engendering of the Otherness situated innately. It is of consequence that the self-Other dialectic affected in Beckett’s play is responsive to multiplicities, as evident in the spectrum of analyses framed on the basis of alienation, existentialism and phenomenology, with a substantial input from Marxist-origin theories, but is also a possible site for the inclusion of further comparative interpretations along the lines of ‘Other’ as conceptualised in Indian philosophical traditions such as that of the Jaina, the Mīmâmsaka and the Vaiśesika, collapsing the obtained strands into more recent continental philosophical models such as those derived from Emmanuel Lévinas, Zygmunt Bauman, Mikhail Bakhtin and Gilles Deleuze. The propinquity of the wait and the Other, as executed by the two central characters, Vladimir and Estragon, for the absent protagonist, Godot, is resonant with the creation and disintegration of identity that placates itself within the imbroglio of the Otherisation, and, to appropriate Deleuze and Guattari at this stage, presents itself as a nomadic war-machine straddling or passing through ‘smooth spaces’ of disassociation². Furthermore, an emphasis on the absent Other in Beckett’s play in the context of

such diverse ethics produces affect that is significant for an anthropological study of the event of the Other as subject to a confluence between these different modes of thought.

While for the larger part of western philosophical tradition the Other has remained static as distinct and distanced from the self, in conversation with certain schools of Indian philosophy the Other is a travel/traveller through the delimited processes of ethics. The structuration in dominant continental and western philosophical systems of the ‘spectre’ of the Other is a homogeneous object that is not entirely consolidated within the self’s motive, thus producing a systemic difference as the mode of identification. On the contrary, Jaina philosophy, for instance, produces a manifold and self-differing (also deferring) identity of the self whereby Other-ness is a supra-philosophical possibility of multiple constructs and modifying ethics. It is interesting to attempt to outline the possibilities where these variegated concepts of the Other may be seen to merge together in the containment of Beckett’s Waiting for Godot. Despite near similar alienatory scaffoldings (of) being offered by Beckett’s other literary creations, Waiting for Godot presents a unique set of modalities which graft a space for the reading of the Other as subject to manifold investigations. It is in this play by Beckett, in his entire oeuvre, that we find “the three animating principles of Jaina-inspired theory of multiplism: conditionality (syādvāda), multiplicity (anekāntavāda; lit.: non-onesidedness), and circumscribed schemas (nayavāda)”\(^3\) that contribute towards the delimiting of the Other. But it is remarkable how this dialogue-producing literary event is able to proliferate and transgress into multiple philosophical orientations of the identification of the Other, basing itself plausibly on certain tracts of Indian philosophical schools as well as shifting course dynamical-ly and appropriating ethics-oriented continental philosophical strands that involve multiplicities, assemblages and convergences of the emotional and the transcendental signifiers of the Other.

Jaina philosophy, which is predominantly inclined towards the ethics of non-violence, commits the Other to pluralism and multiplicity, and also shows how the erasure of the Other necessitates the implementation of violence. To employ it holistically: “Jaina metaphysical knowledge and its consequent ethics [is a] quite general attempt to present a philosophy of non-violent engagement with Otherness”\(^4\).

Comparing primarily to Waiting for Godot, the expected absolution of the Other in Godot is never realised largely due to Vladimir and Estragon’s aversion for a violent endorsement of the consummation of their wait. The implementation of this difference as an enactment is ratified by the tendency of the Other to be multiplist\(^5\) in its

\(^3\) Ch. Ram-Prasad, Indian Philosophy and the Consequences of Knowledge, Ashgate, Hampshire and Burlington 2007, p. 13.

\(^4\) Ibidem, p. 1.

\(^5\) “[Multiplism] argues that the consequence of knowledge must be an understanding of how a common reality can contain many different and incompatible truths; and motivates a non-violent form of engagement with those who make claims for those truths” (Chakravarthi 1).
removal from ontological and phenomenological consistency, seeking to find “the balance between granting the integrity of the Other and attempting to negotiate beyond Otherness”\(^6\). The Other is, to draw from Jaina philosophy, an unknown, unspecified, but delimited object that embodies the slippage which takes the object beyond the ambit of the framing of ontological schematics of the self:

The Other is the (individual or) collective or other personal principle that, in any primary identification of, by and as oneself is not intrinsic to the constitutive identity of that self. The Other is also that which exists in a state held to be inaccessible from within one’s own schema of life.\(^7\)

The Other in Godot exists outside of external to both Vladimir and Estragon, not only because the motif of this alienation mechanism is decidedly non-biological, transcendental and voluntarily distanced, but also because of the absence of desire that it causes desire being a ‘schema of life’ ensures the prolongation of the self, a constant proliferation, but its absence may also inversely showcase an abject relationship with the Other that requires the authoritarian emancipation of violence to distil. Although Otherness is not primarily a Jaina concept, but the engagement with irreducible and impenetrable differences of being anticipates the concern over alterity which later comes to be categorized as Otherness. And this engagement is constitutive of the affects of violence and non-violence as we shall further discuss.

The Other is substantiated largely by one’s acquiescence to violence or its lack thereof – violence may be seen as a proliferation of the self into the universal schema whereas non-violence is construed as violence upon oneself for the act of self-preservation:

Non-violence consists in not overcoming the Other and homogenizing it within one’s own schema of life […] It follows that the change in the conditions of the Other should not be the end towards which one practices non-violence, for that would imply that one is willing to arrogate on oneself the right to change the Other’s life. […] Non-violence, thus negatively construed with regard to the Other, simply creates the space in which the Other can flourish.\(^8\)

Therefore, the external absence of the violence innate in Vladimir and Estragon’s waiting is never consummately differential in order to accommodate the appearance of the Other. The non-violent spaces of existence for the Other are striated sufficiently, to invoke Deleuze and Guattari, for the preservation of the absence and silence of the Other in *Waiting for Godot*. Conversely, the multiplism affected here in the invocation of the Other is ample to interpret the universal realm of contention between the self and the Other because “[overcoming] Otherness requires violence, while merely being contented with the givenness of the Other is at most to forgo

\(^6\) Ibidem, p. 2.
\(^7\) Ibidem.
\(^8\) Ibidem, p. 5.
violence but no more. Multiplism wishes to convert non-violence into a positive act of engagement”⁹. For Jaina philosophy, the metaphysical concerns of non-violence far outweigh the connotations of violence – violence is not a choice but a propulsion of desire, but non-violence is an active participation of instincts, an engagement of psychological faculties that admonishes the possibilities of mere practice in favour of a more complex schema. In societal context, the Other ‘otherises’ the self by distinguishing itself as contradictory and separate. Therefore, the excluded, alienated individual, by appropriating a non-violent exclusion, may be in effect the active individual, creating the space for the subjective individual to become an isolated, inactive Other. To engage a historical event, Gandhi’s non-violence was an active participation of his instincts which Otherised him as a historical figure and distinct, alienated from the violent participants of the parallel contemporary event, thus presenting the Other as an active catalyst and signifier of change and identity through difference.

For the formulation and creation of identity, moving marginally away from the Jaina principles and established through difference and Othering, the Mīmāmsaka school of philosophy characterised categories and substances whose particular catalytic interactions would lead to the determination of both the realised self and the unrealised ‘other’/Other:

The Mīmāmsaka school of philosophy accepted five categories: substance, quality, action, universality, and absence, and to the nine kinds of substance itemized by the Vaiśesikas—earth, water, fire, air, earth, space, time, self, and mind—they added darkness and sound. The relationship between substance and qualities and other categories was subject to analysis which resulted in what is called an ‘identity in difference’ position.¹⁰

Therefore, the interactive ideals for identity would be operational in accordance with the individually elemental factors producing similarly individual and external Others as distinguishing markers for the self. To bring this into Waiting for Godot would be in terms of co-existence – Vladimir and Estragon, ‘created’ individuals with manifest biological and extra-biological elements, may exist separately; but the act of waiting can only be executed if the two individuals ‘coexist’ at the same space in the same time. The event thus endorsed is relative and not dissociative, being created through rhizomatic connections of and between different assemblages that may act as a precedent of the Deleuzian ‘rhizome’ in identity-creation. In effect, the Other is ‘naturally’ unknown to the spectators during the Other-event as absence, among the five categories of the Mīmāmsaka school of philosophy are enacted most plausibly in the locating of the Other, as can be seen from the following dialogic exchange:

Pozzo: Who is Godot?
[…]
Vladimir: Oh, he’s a … he’s a kind of acquaintance.

⁹ Ch. Ram-Prasad, op. cit., p. 11
Estragon: Nothing of the kind, we hardly know him.
Vladimir: True … we don’t know him very well … but all the same …
Estragon: Personally I wouldn’t even know him if I saw him.11

The varying principles in effect here lend to Godot’s identity as the Other – the Other therefore is not necessarily devoid of an identity, but may precisely be the possessor of an identity due to absence or alienation:

[Nothing] perceivable is wholly different or wholly identical: rather, things are distinct in relation to each other or identical while being of different categories. All cognition involves this ‘identity in difference’ of the various aspects of the combination of categories involved.12

Signifiers that produce identity and Otherness are also, ethically, the possible source of infinities that are created in terms of locating the Other within a comprehensible event, as can be deduced from the range of inducers available in both Mīmāṃsaka and Vaiśesika schools in terms of creation of a difference based identity. The disaffection is native to a comparative study of the Othering that may affect the individual whose identity itself depends on the yet-to-arrive, but must also understand that such identities would be delimited, devoid of a determinative logos, and sustaining multiplicities: “from the moment a system of symbols becomes independent of the objects designated it itself subject to undergoing displacement that are incalculable for the logician”13. And if the position of the Other is championed within these uncertain signifiers as definitively a Humanist principle, based on the context of an eagerness to knowledge as opposed to the variable nature of the signatory instances, it is still fallacious as the Other is equally prone to slippages of definition. The equation is resolute in an oblique manner if we draw from Wallace’s appropriation of Aristotle: “[it] is a […] myth that man is by nature curious and truth-hungry and wants, above all things, to know”14. Enacted on Vladimir and Estragon, this pretence of knowledge is never completely executed – the distance and absence are never eliminated because even these seemingly innocuous ambiguities are consistently shifting and forming new alliances. Despite the alienation to which these two characters are subjected to due to never encountering Godot is not alleviated and the Othering never erased because it is incumbent upon the actors to eradicate the principles of difference at play in the variables – an act which is never executed by the persons in wait although it seems to be the natural course of action. Here it is emotion, that is given more prominence than the equitability of ethics in locating, determining and advocating

12 S. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 123.
for an erasure of the Other. The dislocation of the politics of other from definitive ontological identities may be the point of transition that could be counted on for the movement necessary at this point from schools of Indian philosophy to the idea of the Other in continental philosophical traditions. Also, to circumvent the issuance and to find meaning, the self is satisfied with its role and ideation whereas the Other is in constant crisis of “knowing” – knowledge becomes the prerogative of the Other and not the domain of the confirmed self.

In the concept of the Other for the French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas the Other is not knowable and cannot be made into an object of the self, contrary to the movement of what Lévinas himself referred to as “ontology”. For Lévinas, the irreducible relation, the moment of epiphany, of physical encounter with the other, is a privileged phenomenon in which the other person’s, both immanent and transcendental, the ‘face-to-face’ proximity and distance are strongly felt. “The Other precisely reveals himself in his alterity not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness”15. At the same time, the exposure or revelation of this event of the Other’s appearance makes a demand that naturally predates the ability to coherently formed decision-making capabilities. The self immediately recognizes the progressive transcendence and heteronomy of the Other.

To approach the other in conversation is to welcome his expression, in which at each instant he overflows the idea a thought would carry away from it. It is therefore to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity.16

The location of Godot conforms to Lévinas’ distinction of the Other in a reverse order because this neutral gendered absent subject is, contrary to the Other who might be the processor of elimination, the possible victim of ‘murder’ without physical accompaniment, or linguistically, if only the waiters, Vladimir and Estragon opt for a caesura of the wait, and thus reverses the following position: “The Other, inseparable from the very event of transcendence, is situated in the region from which death, possibly murder, comes”17. But the possibility here is also of a reversal, of self-erasure rather than murder:

Vladimir: We’ll hang ourselves tomorrow. Unless Godot comes.
Estragon: And if he comes?
Vladimir: We’ll be saved.18

16 Ibidem, p. 51.
18 S. Beckett, op. cit., p. 87.
Effectively, the Other, through absence, induces the death-drive, an urge for euthanasia in the self for incapacity to appropriate the former.

However, Lévinas places a higher insistence on the physical presence of the Other in its endorsement of the infinite, or in allowing a connection with Infinity, and holistically decrees that the written word is an inadequate supplement for the Other’s absence – a statement which is opposed vehemently by Derrida in Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Lévinas (1978, [Violence et métaphysique: Essai sur la pensée d’Emmanuel Levinas, 1964]). Godot, in Waiting for Godot, is the linguistic supplement of the absent-presence, which itself takes us to Derrida’s “Pharmakon” – an extended non-physical presence that bases its principles of alterity in the possible fact that Vladimir and Estragon are the tacit selves validating this absent principle as the Other. The possibilities are invariably multiplied if we consider the inclusion of the nine substances of the Vaiśesikas and the further two from the Mīmāmsaka school, as were discussed earlier. The ‘face-to-face’ moment of epiphany that Lévinas writes of is not manifest here with the posited Other on whom the play is seemingly dependent, but as always existing – the formulation of the definitive principle is followed from the initial encounter between the two ‘waiters’ for Godot, Vladimir and Estragon:

Estragon: Nothing to be done.
Vladimir: I’m beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I’ve tried to put it from me, saying, Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven’t yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. So there you are again.19

The deliberate removal of the asides create the impression of an epiphany in effect, and the Otherisation here is possibly noted in the self through the interactive ejaculation when Vladimir says: “Vladimir, be reasonable […]”. The tacit self here has a propensity to be aligned with the creativeness of the contrapuntal Other and “[the] ethical self is hostage to the Other: our natural inclination to care for other places the Other as asymmetrical and hierarchical in relation to the self”20. The realisation of one presents the possibility of the second to ‘Otherise’ the precedent or the self, therefore the Other is virtually present and never tangibly so, both nullifying and approving Lévinas’ ideation at the same time, as we may extend to Derrida, when he states: “[we] live and of difference, that is, in hypocrisy”21.

Zygmunt Bauman, while not paradigmatically dislocated from Lévinas in his conception of “alterity”, discussed at length and established by Lévinas in Alterity and Transcendence (1999 [197022]), does not situate his Other as estranged or alienated from the apparent self. Rather, Bauman constructs his “arguments in favour of an

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22 The collection of the articles entitled Altérité et transcendence was published in 1995.
ethic of alterity, inspired by Emmanuel Lévinas’s theory of the Other, is based on emotions”\textsuperscript{23}. The affect inherent in Bauman moves away from the Other of Lévinas as an unknown whose ‘collision’ with the self produces identity. Instead, the Other for Bauman is a known peripheral ‘being’ whose possibilities extenuate the process of identity as an already known artefact:

If postmodernity is a retreat from the blind alleys into which radically pursued ambitions of modernity have led, a postmodern ethics would be one that readmits the Other as a neighbour […]\textsuperscript{24}

The neighbouring Other is not a Robert Frostian spectre who is present though invisible – the neighbour is situated in multiplicity of Godot-motifs, a creation, identity production and reproduction that is not extravagantly different from the Deleuzian effect of schizophrenia through capitalist re-reproduction. The possibilities of emotions are artificial and manufactured often, as is the instance of Vladimir and Estragon’s waiting for the invisible Other – the preternatural process of waiting for the negative signifier is emotional, and not present as a cogent artefact of empirical situativeness.

The constructive dialogue that acts as a synthesizer between the self and the Other primarily is produced by the multiplist or multifarious constructs of interaction. Effectively, the Other cannot exist without a possibility of ‘dialogue’ that consists of the depletion or deletion of alienation, and thus anthropologically or culturally uniting: “[The] driving force behind dialogue is not only ‘scientific curiosity’ in a general sense, but a genuine interest for the “alterity of the Other”, an interest specific for the cultural and social sciences”\textsuperscript{25}. It is also an issue that may be related specifically to Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of dialogue

in which the Other becomes the main point of reference of the speaking subject. For without the Other as a contingent, historical being, the human subject cannot develop and acquire an identity. I need the Other as interlocutor in order to develop my discourse; and I not only need the agreement of the kindred spirit, but also the disagreement of the theoretical stranger.\textsuperscript{26}

The disagreement evident in our literary instance is that the ‘waiting’ for Godot is never absolved; there is no caesura to the process of waiting that the two principal characters are subject to. Although the process of dialogue is a pseudo-mandate for the existence of the Other, the process is terminally delayed and the Other construct is therefore endorsed not as a creation that takes into consideration the Vaiśesikas

\textsuperscript{23} P.V. Zima, Modern/Postmodern: Society, Philosophy, Literature, Continuum, London and New York 2010, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{24} Z. Bauman, Postmodern Ethics, Blackwell, Oxford 1993, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{25} P.V. Zima, Modern/Postmodern: Society, Philosophy, Literature, Continuum, London and New York 2010, p. 221.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibidem.
categorization of the materialist foundations of creation, a tangible, externally manifest Other that interpellates the Other through its presence, but rather as a constituted emblem of ‘darkness’ and absence allied to it, as could be deduced from the Mimâmsaka tradition of identity. Godot is not the Other because he is an absent logos, but his Otherness is situated in his being absent as the locator of semiotic unity – why wait when the waited for ‘object’ or individual is eternally absent?

Contrary to the philosophies of identity and difference, alterity, multiplism, plurality, emotions and dialogue, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s conception of the Other is comparatively more emancipatory and homologous to the Mimâmsaka theory of Other in so far as it liberates the entity from specificities and liminalities, and acts as a ‘nomadic’ body – not fixed beings, but evolving ‘becomings’. Contrasting a ‘nomadic view of ethics’27 with a ‘traditional mode’ Braidotti says,

The nomadic view of ethics takes place within a monistic ontology that sees subjects as modes of individuation within a common flow of zoe28. Consequently, there is no self-other distinction in the traditional mode, but variations of intensities, assemblages set by affinities and complex synchronizations.29

To be sustainable, in society or in literature, the externalised figure is codependent upon the one within the periphery of the accepted self or societal self – a specificity that is brought into crisis due to the aggression of the ethics of sustainability which also perversely states ‘survival of the fittest’. The irrepressible exclusion “is against both the moral philosophy of rights and the humanistic tradition of making the anthropocentric Other into the privileged site and inescapable horizon of Otherness”30. But most importantly, the Deleuzoguattarian conceptualisation of the Other is important also because it does not privilege a human subject. Unlike most other philosophical schools, Deleuze and Guattari liberate the Other from its human occupancies and allows for it to be considered as an independent, self-assertive and extra-human factor that is not transcendent or external at all times, but also ‘immanent’:

In terms of the ethics of conatus31, in fact, the harm that you do to others is immediately reflected in the harm you do to yourself, in terms of loss of potentia32, positivity, self-awareness, and inner freedom. Moreover, the “others” in question are not just...

27 “The core of Deleuze’s ethical project therefore is a positive vision of the subject as a radically immanent, intensive body. That is, an assemblage of forces or flows, intensities, and passions that solidify in space and consolidate in time, within the singular configuration commonly known as a constituted entry or an «individual» self.” (R. Braidotti, Nomadic Ethics, [in:] the Cambridge Companion to Deleuze, ed. D.W. Smith and H. Somers-Hall, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, p. 179.)

28 An æon in some Gnostic belief systems.


31 An innate inclination of a “thing” (mind, matter, or a combination of both) to continue to exist and enhance itself.

32 Here, vocative. As in, political power, authority.
constituted human selves, but also non-anthropomorphic and planetary others. These include external and non-human forces: the environment as a whole – the earth. [...] This post-human ethics rests on a multi-layered form of relationality. [...] Containment of the other [...] occurs through interrelational affectivity and the construction of common planes of actualization of projects and communities: it is a pragmatic praxis of immanent relations.33

To re-enter the domain of *Waiting for Godot*, Godot, who is generally accepted to be a human, could just as well be the post-human, or the anthropomorphing of a ‘natural’ object, an animation which will not function in the desired manner. Alternatively, it could be a reference to a schizophrenic desire that may be derived from the creation of an absent Other and enabling it to proliferate for the purpose of identity and vocative production.

Drawing from the Indian and continental philosophical models of the Other an almost impossible conclusion to the effects of Otherness in Beckett’s infinite wait, the conditions of alienation and the progressive identification of the absent Other, we may induce the Jaina taxonomy of modes of relationship with the Other: homogenization, exclusion, pluralism and multiplism. The homogenized other is founded upon a hegemonic principle, an object that has been overcome – an attribute which is achieved through the naming of Godot; similarly, the exclusion takes place physically through absence and through the negatively ambiguous naming – Godot instead of Dieu, as well as God itself. Pluralistically the Other is acknowledged as an extension of the same human characteristics that apparently familiarise the two tragicomic characters of Vladimir and Estragon to the audience. And finally, the multiplism in effect tries to rationalize the Other – in this instance Godot – firstly, by homogenizing and failing to interpellate; secondly, by negative exclusion and ideological failure in that vocative; and eventual (as well as ‘evental’) success by acknowledging and coordinating the Other through pluralist and multiplist strategies. Whereas the Jaina, Vaiśesika and Mīmāmsaka theories of the Other present an ethical inclination for substantiation and differentiation, often on the grounds of the ethics of violence, the philosophical orientation of Lévinas, Bauman and Bakhtin rely on alterity, and often on physical proximity, attesting to the links between the Indian philosophical concept of the Other and their own. The ethics of Otherness that may be introduced through Deleuze and Guattari and exemplified through *Waiting for Godot* amply and aptly showcase the possible consistencies across thought systems and semiotic markers for the definition of the Other – the Other does not exist as a separate system of assemblages but, even in philosophy, rests on the creativity of a ‘nomadic war machine’.

33 G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, op. cit., p. 181.
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SUMMARY

Indian philosophical schools have generally presented the “other” as an ethical iteration of the project of plurality, whereas for continental philosophical traditions, the Other has been an unqualified, external, alienated object. The confluence of these diverse schools, namely the Jaina, the Mīmāmsaka and the Vaiśesika schools of philosophy in the Indian tradition, and the Other in Lévinas, Bauman, Bakhtin and Deleuze and Guattari produce an important intersection where the concept is liberated from its predominantly ambiguous classification. While the confluence remains in the critical domain, a literary example in the form of Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* could enable the clarification of this interaction, as well as provide a comparative philosophical and sociological platform for consideration of the Other.
Belonging in South Africa: Nationality, Race and Religion in J.M. Coetzee’s “Boyhood”

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Almost inevitably as part of the process of story-telling […] the White child-narrator will be confronted with the evils of apartheid, and will find himself or herself at the threshold of a profoundly life-changing decision – the rejection of all they have always associated with home, with family, with nation and with self.

Introduction

John Maxwell Coetzee’s Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life, the first in a series of three fictionalised autobiographies published by the author, focuses on the childhood of John Coetzee (from the ages of 10 to 13), a boy growing up in mid-20th century Worcester, South Africa. If there is one description that least accurately describes the childhood portrayed in the memoir, it can, as the author himself points out, be found in the Children’s Encyclopaedia:

Childhood, says the Children’s Encyclopaedia, is a time of innocent joy, to be spent in the meadows amid buttercups and bunny-rabbits or at the hearthside absorbed in a storybook. It is a vision of childhood utterly alien to him. Nothing he experiences in Worcester, at home or at school, leads him to think that childhood is anything but a time of gritting the teeth and enduring.

Rather than “innocent joy”, the predominant characteristic that resonates throughout the boy’s childhood appears to be that of exclusion. The narrator fre-
quently describes him as an outcast, emotionally damaged and persevering in the face of surroundings that consistently reject him:

He has a sense that he is damaged. He has a sense that something is slowly tearing inside him all the time: a wall, a membrane. He tries to hold himself as tight as possible to keep the tearing within bounds. To keep it within bounds, not to stop it: nothing will stop it.⁴

This theme of abnormality and inner conflict is often repeated within the context of the novel. But why doesn’t the boy belong? According to the protagonist, his alienation is a result of his parents’ actions and many of the boy’s feelings of estrangement appear to have roots in his upbringing. Within his family “[he] is on his own. From no quarter can he expect support.”⁵ Throughout the novel, he views his parents as highly unorthodox and comes to the conclusion that they are to blame for his exclusion among his peers. As stated by the narrator, “[…] he is unnatural and he knows it. He comes from an unnatural […] family.”⁶ He cannot understand why he belongs to a “shameful family in which not only are children not beaten but older people are addressed by their first names and no one goes to church and shoes are worn every day”.⁷ And so, for instance, because he is not beaten at home, the boy is terrified of being punished at school – the disgrace of the spectacle is far greater than the pain. Ultimately, public beating becomes a rite of passage that he ought to go through (but never does) in order to belong:

The strange thing is, it will only take one beating to break the spell of terror that has him in its grip. He is well aware of this: if, somehow, he can be rushed through the beating before he has had time to turn to stone or resist, if the violation of his body can be achieved quickly, by force, he will be able to come out on the other side a normal boy, able to join easily in discussion of the teachers and their canes and the various grades and flavours of pain they inflict. But by himself he cannot leap the barrier.⁸

However, I believe that there are three additional, key factors that are responsible for the rift between John and South African society; factors that the boy is not yet aware of. These are, respectively, the racial segregation resulting from the Apartheid politics of the National Party, the boy’s rejection of his South African heritage as a result of his distaste towards the distorted history of the country taught to him at school and, finally, his secular worldview, incompatible with the predominantly devout, Christian beliefs held by society. It is the purpose of this article to explore these issues, and their alienating impact on John’s life, in greater detail.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 9.
⁵ Ibidem, p. 13.
⁶ Ibidem, p. 6.
⁷ Ibidem.
⁸ Ibidem, p. 7.
NATIONALITY

Coetzee’s protagonist appears to vehemently reject the South Africa described to him at school, or, as he calls it, the “country without heroes”\(^9\). From highly aggressive comments (“He is relieved he is not Afrikaans and is saved from having to talk like that, like a whipped slave”\(^{10}\)) to more thoughtful passages on the nature of patriotism (“Why should he not be free to choose between Toweel and Ortiz in boxing […]. Do South Africans have to support other South Africans […]?”\(^{11}\)), the author highlights the boy’s rebellious thoughts and his innocent, concealed attraction towards an idealised vision of Britain. It appears that as a child Coetzee most probably “thought of himself as English because his family spoke English at home, although his last name is of Boer origin and his father is more Boer than English”\(^{12}\). Perhaps this attraction also stems from the lack of available South African literature at the time; Van der Vlies notes that in the relationship between South African and British textual productions the book “has been central to processes by which South Africa has always defined itself in relation to an elsewhere”\(^{13}\). Oblivious to Britain’s “subjugation and exploitation of indigenous South Africans”\(^{14}\), he is seduced by the country’s vivid history. Here the boy finds role models that the South Africa he has come to know at school clearly lacks:

He cannot understand why it is that so many people around him dislike England. England is Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain. England is doing one’s duty and accepting one’s fate in a quiet, unfussy way. England is the boy at the battle of Jutland, who stood by his guns while the deck was burning under him. England is Sir Lancelot of the Lake and Richard the Lionheart and Robin Hood with his longbow of yew and his suit of Lincoln green What do the Afrikaans have to compare?\(^{15}\)

Since “propaganda was typical of the National Party narrative at the time, [as was] the suppression and misinformation about South Africa’s rich prehistory and subsequent volatile colonial history”\(^{16}\), the appeal of Britain’s vast array of historical and mythological narratives comes as no surprise. In contrast, he despises his Afrikaans heritage. He has no interest in supposedly heroic figures such as Jan van Riebeeck, the founder of colonial Cape Town, who, as stated by president Thabo Mbeki,

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\(^9\) Ibidem, p. 108.
\(^{10}\) Ibidem, p. 49.
\(^{11}\) Ibidem, p. 109.
\(^{13}\) A. Van der Vlies, *South African Textual Studies. White, Black, Read All Over*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2007, p. 2.
\(^{15}\) J.M. Coetzee, *Boyhood…*, p. 128.
\(^{16}\) L. Meskell and L. Weiss, op. cit., p. 93.
planted “a hedge of almond and thorn-bush [...] to ensure the safety of the white European settlers by keeping the menacing black African hordes of primitive pagans at bay” – an event which marked the onset of colonial and racial oppression in South Africa. This distaste towards the Dutch colonisers continues into the boy’s later life, as can be seen in Coetzee’s second semi-autobiographical novel, *Youth*. In this text, John, as a young adult, places national literatures in a hierarchy, where “of all nations the Dutch are the dullest, the most antipoetic.” The boy despises Afrikaners and claims that they are “in a rage all the time because their hearts are hurt”. Conversely, the English, heroic as always, “have not fallen into rage because they live behind walls and guard their hearts well.” At the thought of being transferred to an Afrikaans class because of his surname, he is filled with panic, lives in a state of continuous dread. He has come to hate Afrikaans songs so much “that he wants to scream and shout and make farting noises during the singing.” The mere thought of being turned into an Afrikaans boy, “with shaven head and no shoes, makes him quail. It is like being sent to prison, to a life with no privacy.” In short, the boy has a transnational sense of identity; his views constitute the complete opposite of nationalism, if defined as “the adoration of nation, making people from the same community believe they are related to each other and enforcing their feelings of being connected [...]”.

He rejects his Afrikaans heritage and longs to be British; however, he is aware that he can never fully belong to or completely erase his ties with either group. Coetzee remarks that the boy will remain in a state of flux, neither Afrikaans nor English – there are “tests to face, some of which he knows he will not pass”. In terms of cultural identity, John can be categorized as being in an ‘in-between’ space in society. His struggle continues in *Youth*: “He would prefer to leave his South African self behind as he has left South Africa itself behind. South Africa was a bad start, a handicap.” As before, although years have passed and John has moved to London and partially transitioned into English society, he cannot entirely escape his South African self.

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19 J.M. Coetzee, *Boyhood…, p. 73.
20 Ibidem.
22 Ibidem, p. 70.
23 Ibidem, p. 126.
RACE

Being part of a racial minority also contributes to these feelings of solitude – John is white in a predominantly Black African and Coloured society. He is also part of a tiny English-speaking minority (“Aside from himself and his brother, who are English only in a way, there are only two English boys […]”28). The boy appears to be confused by the racial stereotyping of Coloured people he observes in adults. He notices his mother’s awkward behaviour and contradictory statements. In the Coetzee’s house Coloured men are always hired to conduct repairs around the house because “they are used to working with their hands […] because they have no book-learning”29. However, as the repairmen repeatedly fail to perform their tasks correctly, his mother’s opinion does not alter – a clear remnant of “the racialized ideologies forged during colonial rule”30. Additionally, she states that “Coloured people are the salt of the earth […] yet she and her sisters are always gossiping about pretend-whites with secret Coloured backgrounds”31. Racial discrimination of this type can be directly linked to the apartheid system, but its roots can be traced further into the past.

Many of these feelings result from the policy of segregation introduced in the years following the Union of South Africa (1910) and preceding the institution of apartheid in 194832. The policy, implemented to varying degrees throughout the new country, “generally separated races to the benefit of those of European descent and to the detriment of those of African descent”33 and was, importantly, an explicit, legally enforced form of discrimination “implemented through a series of laws […] which were often enforced with great brutality”34. Although sometimes viewed as less severe than apartheid, segregation was to have a lasting impact on South African society; its consequences still noticeable in the 21st century35, as evidenced by for example the violent, xenophobic anti-immigrant riots that swept through the country in May 2008 and left over sixty people dead and thousands homeless36.

However, even if Coetzee portrays the realities of apartheid in “a clear and un-compromising light that makes sure no traces of injury and destruction can escape”37, Boyhood’s protagonist has no discernible knowledge of these political events and so

28 J.M. Coetzee, Boyhood…, p. 67.
29 Ibidem, p. 37.
30 L. Meskell, L. Weiss, op. cit., p. 89.
31 J.M. Coetzee, Boyhood…, p. 37.
33 Ibidem.
34 Ibidem.
37 H. Leusmann, op. cit., p. 60.
he is invariably confused by the racial oppression so prevalent in South African society. Unlike those around him, he finds his supposed racial superiority in respect to Coloured children unjust and shameful. Entire passages of admiration are devoted to their innocence, closeness to nature, physical beauty and agility\(^{38}\), but also his embarrassment when the two worlds come into direct contact, as in the following excerpt:

> So this boy who is unrelentingly kept all his life to the path of nature and innocence, who is poor and therefore also good, as the poor always are in fairy-tales, who is slim as an eel and quick as a hare and would defeat him with ease in any contest of swiftness of foot or skill of hand – this boy, who is a living reproof to him, is nevertheless subjected to him in ways that embarrass him so much that he squirms and wriggles his shoulders and does not want to look at him any longer, despite his beauty.\(^{39}\)

He finds his situation equally puzzling when visiting his cherished farm, Voelfontein, and coming into contact with its Coloured workforce, which he finds simultaneously intriguing and inaccessible:

> If it is not embarrassing to have Ros’s wife and daughter work in the house, he wants to ask, cooking meals, washing clothes, making beds, why is it embarrassing to visit them in their house? It sounds like a good argument, but there is a flaw in it, he knows. For the truth is that it is embarrassing to have Tryn and Lientjie in the house. He does not like it when he passes Lientjie in the passage and she has to pretend she is invisible and he has to pretend she is not there. He does not like to see Tryn on her knees at the washtub washing his clothes. He does not know how to answer her when she speaks to him in third person, calling him “die kleinbaas,” the little master, as if he were not present. It is all deeply embarrassing.\(^{40}\)

This feeling of shame is also present when he treats his friends to a birthday feast. The boy is initially proud as a result of his temporary affluence; “he feels princely, dispensing pleasures like this; the occasion would be a marvellous success, were it not spoiled by the ragged Coloured children standing in the window looking in on them”\(^{41}\). However, as time passes, his wealth becomes a source of shame. In the Coloured children’s innocent faces, he “sees none of the hatred which, he is prepared to acknowledge, he and his friends deserve for having so much money while they are penniless”\(^{42}\). He also notices that, even though his boyhood is far from idyllic, these children appear to have no childhood at all. Their transition into adulthood, and into the servant class at that, is almost instantaneous:

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\(^{39}\) Ibidem, p. 61.

\(^{40}\) Ibidem, p. 86.

\(^{41}\) Ibidem, p. 72.

\(^{42}\) Ibidem.
With Coloured people in general, and with the people of the Karoo in particular, he simply does not know when they cease to be children and become men and women. It seems to happen so early and so suddenly: one day they are playing with toys, the next day they are out with the men, working, or in someone’s kitchen, washing dishes.\(^{43}\)

The white population’s stance towards the Coloured members of society is clearly visible in an incident occurring towards the end of the novel. Mr Golding, one of the protagonist’s father’s clients, arrives at the Coetzees’ home, demanding money owed by the boy’s father. John observes how, as a result of his father’s debts, the Coloured man’s social status rises. In the hope that he does not prosecute he is received in the front room, like all other callers, and served tea in the same tea service. However, after the whole ordeal is over his superiority disappears along with his presence in the house:

After he has left there is a debate about what to do with the teacup. The custom, it appears is that after a person of colour has drunk from a cup the cup must be smashed. He is surprised that his mother’s family, which believes in nothing else, believes in this.\(^{44}\)

Finally, as an acceptable half-measure, the cup is bleached in order to save money. Similar examples of racial discrimination can be found in other works by Coetzee, for instance in *the Life and Times of Michael K*:

There are farmers who beat their workers to death. There is a black girl who, accused of theft, is robbed of her clothes and painted with white paint.\(^{45}\)

However, the Coloured population is not the most disadvantaged social group in Boyhood. The narrator clearly highlights the Coloureds’ superiority over the Natives. At school the boy learns the Coloureds “were fathered by the whites, by Jan van Riebeeck, upon the Hottentots […] the land comes with them, is theirs, has always been”\(^{46}\). On the other hand, the Natives are described as “latecomers, invaders from the north”\(^{47}\), men “without women, without children, who arrive from nowhere and can be made to disappear into nowhere”\(^{48}\). He draws a parallel between the plight of the natives and one of his favourite stories, a tale of three brothers. The third brother is “kind and honest and courageous […] the humblest and most derided”\(^{49}\), while the other two brothers are “boastful, arrogant, uncharitable”\(^{50}\). At the close

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\(^{43}\) Ibidem, p. 86.
\(^{44}\) Ibidem, p. 157.
\(^{45}\) H. Leusmann, op. cit., p. 60.
\(^{47}\) Ibidem, p. 61.
\(^{48}\) Ibidem, p. 62.
\(^{49}\) Ibidem.
\(^{50}\) Ibidem.
of the story, the third brother is crowned prince. A similar image, albeit without the happy ending, can be found in the Coetzee’s portrayal of South Africa:

There are white people and Coloured people and the Natives, of whom the Natives are the lowest and most derided. The parallel is inescapable: the Natives are the third brother.\textsuperscript{51}

The boy does not appear to accept this division and upon hearing his mother’s admiration for the wisdom of an old Native man (“It is the only time he can remember her using the word wise”\textsuperscript{52}), he is relieved at the possibility of others respecting them. He is puzzled by his supposed racial superiority and empathises with those of a different racial ethnicity.

**RELIGION**

If the surrounding racism puzzles the boy, the ever-present religious persecution completely baffles him. This problem is chiefly a result of his upbringing, since he has been raised without religion in a highly-devout culture. When pressured into revealing his religion at school, the boy states “Roman Catholic”\textsuperscript{53}, thereby picking his religion at random. His reasons, however, are far more concrete than they appear to be at first sight. He picks Catholicism because of his admiration for Rome, “because of Horatius and his two comrades, swords in their hands, crested helmets on their heads, indomitable courage in their glance, defending the bridge over Tiber against the Etruscan hordes”\textsuperscript{54}. Since he knows nothing about Catholicism, he instantly becomes a target to “the menaces of the real Catholics”\textsuperscript{55}. He has no wish to be Christian, because being Christian appears to mean “singing hymns and listening to sermons and then coming out to torment the Jews”\textsuperscript{56}. The Jews do not persecute him, but they are, in turn, demonised by his relatives:

The Catholic boys nag him and make sneering remarks, the Christians persecute him, but the Jews […] pretend not to notice. The Jews wear shoes too. In a minor way, he feels comfortable with the Jews. The Jews are not so bad. Nevertheless, with Jews one has to tread carefully. For the Jews are everywhere, the Jews are taking over the country. He hears this on all sides, but particularly from his uncles […] when they visit.\textsuperscript{57}

In short, when it comes to religion, as with nationality and racial identity, John finds it difficult to fit into one unified social group. As a result, he creates his own set of principles:

\textsuperscript{51} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibidem, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibidem, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibidem, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibidem, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibidem, p. 21.
He can think of nothing more heroic than holding a pass, nothing nobler than giving up one’s life to save other people […]. That is who he would like to be: a hero. That is what proper Roman Catholicism should be about.\textsuperscript{58}

He remains loyal to his own, idealised vision of Roman Catholicism, which further intensifies his departure from social norms.

As a result of these disparities, the boy is constantly bullied by the Afrikaans children. For instance, since he does not openly conform to the predominant religion in his area, Christianity, he is mistakenly labelled a Jew and harassed by the other boys: “«Jood!» an Afrikaans boy hisses at him as he passes: Jew! When they rejoin class, no one smiles.”\textsuperscript{59}

Perhaps as a result of this rejection, the protagonist devotes most of his time to solitary pastimes, most of which he enjoys in secrecy. This secretive nature leads to a type of a dual personality: in order to belong, John seems to be playing a part when in the company of others. This is observable, for instance, in his behaviour at home and at school. „At home he is an irascible despot, at school a lamb, meek and mild […]. By leading this double life he has created for himself a burden of imposture.”\textsuperscript{60}

Towards the end of the novel this duality, in addition to the boy’s sense of estrangement, reaches its climax as the teenage protagonist is described as having an “ugly, black, crying, babyish core”\textsuperscript{61} concealed within a toughened exterior.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

In conclusion, the protagonist of J.M. Coetzee’s \textit{Boyhood} suffers from a sense of alienation within South African society due to his rejection of the accepted social norms; norms concerning chiefly the categories of nationality, race and religion. As a result of his bilingual upbringing and aversion towards the version of South African history propagated by the educational system, John develops a transnational sense of identity and longs to become British, but realises that this process can never be fully completed. He finds his supposed racial superiority, imposed by apartheid and prior policies of racial segregation, shameful and irrational and cannot comprehend the ubiquitous racial discrimination in South African society. Finally, as a result of being brought up in a secular family, John does not follow any religious doctrine and, as a result, is ostracized by his peers, who constitute the predominantly Christian religious majority.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibidem, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibidem, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibidem, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibidem, p. 112.
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SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of three issues – nationality, race and religion – on the life of John Coetzee, the child protagonist of J.M Coetzee’s semi-autobiographical *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life*. The article stipulates that the boy’s sense of alienation within South African society is a direct result of his rejection of, respectively, nationality (due to his bilingual upbringing and affection for English history and language), race (the boy cannot comprehend the racial segregation imposed by policies of legislated racism and division) and religion (he is brought up in a secular family and, consequently, does not follow any religious doctrine in a highly devout, predominantly Christian society).
"Are you your city? Not the usual question one might ask, but in a way, we are all part of our cities, for without citizens, they would not be what they are" – asked in his article Harry Verhaar¹. But what, we may ask, if one is not a citizen, but a newcomer?

The literary cities were often utilised by writers foremost as the symbols or causes for changes in a hero’s or heroine’s life – a man comes to a given city from the countryside or a little town. He/she does not feel comfortable enough being in a completely new place, and is supposed to change, find or form something new in his behaviour, attitude and mind. The examples of such heroes and heroines were contributed by Raymond Williams in his illustrious piece *The country and the city*. A city is commonly foreign for such people and results in alienation of those, as it is in the case of Margaret, the heroine of *Mary Barton*², however, the isolation, as Balzac’s pieces show, sometimes is not necessarily unpleasant³.

The literary heroes and heroines, who found themselves in a new city or dwell in such for some time, generally always reach the point when two forces collide – their own identity and the identity of the city. We could, in this moment, take into account the conception of identity provided by both Martin Heidegger and Oscar Wilde, which was neatly covered by Arto Haapala⁴. In their view, the human identity is not something that is deeply rooted and existing. The identity is shaped always in the context, in the face of certain circumstances, relations and meetings, in relation to others and other. This is noticeable also in those literary characters, who only in the vague moments may discover their inner self, their tendencies and attitudes.

Most often, to understand a city, to gain the respect or achieve success in it, means to identify with it, accept it as a part of self, adjust to the city’s conditions. This

is the effect that cities exert on Victor Hugo’s characters, in whose books it is the crowd that personifies the city’s force. Nevertheless, according to Frederick Engels there is nothing worse than to accept the role that city enforces on us:

> The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellant and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. And, however much one may be aware that this isolation of the individual, this narrow self-seeking is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city. The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate principle, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme.

It is no different in the prose of George R. R. Martin, where we can also find included concepts of cities, in which the city commonly serves as an oppressor and adversary. Martin’s cities achieve its oppressiveness by the fact that they push the characters to the role of aliens and newcomers who need to gain cities’ favor. The hero or heroine either adjusts her/himself, or is broken by a city’s power.

Martin’s series: *a Song of Ice and Fire*, is a collection of seven books, five of which have been already published. The plot is revealed by point-of-view narrations of thirty one characters. The story’s focal point is the dynastic war of power and influence waged between the major families. The tension in the Westeros is fueled especially in the northern locations by disturbing events behind the mighty Wall that protects the Kingdoms against the Others, and in Essos where Daenerys Stormborn, the daughter of the previous king Aerys, strives to regain the authority.

The cities of Westeros and Essos, as settings, are the essential parts of the storyline. Almost every major city is introduced from the perspective of two or more characters. It is stream of consciousness technique that allows the comprehensive and multidimensional presentation of Westeros and Essos cities in the narratives. The technique, the definition of which was first formulated by William James in *The Principles of Psychology*, assumes that a character’s feelings, thoughts and observa-

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7 We may perceive the point of view as a kind of camera, whose angle varies, producing multiple perspectives. It is the “position of the narrator in relation to his story”, see Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, ed. J.A. Cuddon, London 1999, p. 970. A. Rasley, *The Power of Point of View: Make Your Story Come To Life*, Cincinnati 2008, p. 9; the story is centralized around the person whose perspective is in use, thus selecting for us only the knowledge possessed and acknowledged by this character see J. Culler, *Literary Theory: a Very Short Introduction*, New York 2000, p. 88.


tions are revealed as they appear\textsuperscript{10}. Considering the fact that every character observes the world in a different manner, also the Westeros and Essos cities are perceived variously and various concepts of cities\textsuperscript{11} are highlighted. The most interesting moments are those, in which a given character arrives in a foreign city. As a result, both the city and the character become alien to each other. In this paper I would like to present this motif and its interpretation in Martin’s books.

For the majority of characters in \textit{a Song of Ice and Fire} at least one of the cities is perceived as home, at least the only well-known location if not the truly loved one. As a result, when a given character leaves his or her city, another one on the route will be foreign for him/her. Depending on personal standpoint and experience, every hero or heroine deals with an alien city in a different manner.

For Eddard Stark, for instance, King’s Landing, beside being a centre of atrocity, represents everything what is foreign, hostile and incomprehensible. It is a centre of corruption, violence, lies and chaos, thus being the total opposition of Winterfell\textsuperscript{12}. Respectively, Winterfell, observed in terms of binary oppositions, stands for the concept of country\textsuperscript{13}. It is the place where Eddard’s character finds understanding and whose identity Eddard can accept. Nowhere else in Westeros does he feel as alienated and insecure as in King’s Landing, which repeatedly pushes him into warning his daughters about the city’s true face\textsuperscript{14}. Almost every hint about the city’s appearance reveals Eddard’s negative attitude towards King’s Landing that results from the sense of non-belonging to the society there. When he sits in the room of the Small Council, we read: „As the others took their accustomed seats, it struck Eddard Stark forcefully that he did not belong here, in this room, with these men”\textsuperscript{15}. In the Red Keep he is forced to borrow clothes, because his own are not suitably light and ele-

\textsuperscript{10} The stream of consciousness may be either the one that is characterised by a the first-person perspective, or the second, which is known as “free indirect style” and is similar to a reported speech, but without the thoughts of other characters as it is common for a traditional mode of narration, see D. Lodge, \textit{The Art of Fiction}, Nowy Jork 1993, p. 43, \textit{The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms}, ed. C. Baldick, New York 2001, p. 244, R.F. Dietrich, R.H. Sundell, \textit{The Art of fiction}, Nowy Jork 1983, s. 273; it should be emphasised that the stream of consciousness is not the interior monologue – the latter directly presents a character’s speech and thoughts as they appear, while the former allows shortening or reshaping, see \textit{The Concise Oxford Dictionary...}, p. 244.

\textsuperscript{11} Concept of cities are understood in this paper as the way of perceiving a given city through its leitmotif, such as a concept of city as a prison, a system, a centre or as a opposition to the country; the concepts were the objects of interest especially of Raymond Williams, see R. Williams, op. cit., passim.


\textsuperscript{14} G.R.R. Martin, \textit{A Game...}, p. 223.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibidem, p. 193.
to present himself among the lords of the Small Council.\textsuperscript{16} The crowded squares and yards are “a chaos of mud and horseflesh and shouting men.”\textsuperscript{17} The streets are stinky and dangerous due to their overpopulation and anonymity.\textsuperscript{18} Eddard despises both the city, its citizens and the feeling of alienation. He is painfully aware that such a place – the centre of corruption and disorder – is inadequate for the man of his morals, that in this city he will always remain the alien.

His daughter, Sansa Stark, has at first completely diverse attitude towards the city – she is the character who eagerly explores King’s Landing. Sansa believes that she can fit into the city being herself. She apparently perceives herself as a person born to live in such a centre, among lords and ladies of king’s court. She eagerly utilises the facilities and opportunities that the city provides for the rich ones, taking part, for example, in the knights’ tournament. Nevertheless, in this case Martin as if reminds us that to be fully accepted by a foreign city one has to get rid of what is his/her personality and indulge in city’s ways completely. King’s Landing and its population treats Sansa just like another alien, whose background is the main obstacle to her well-being. Moreover, after Ned Stark’s execution and the outbreak of Robb Stark’s rebellion, Sansa is a very precious prisoner of war for House Lannister. She is forced to stay in King’s Landing, officially as a protegee of the crown. Thus King’s Landing comes to be the oppressive and treacherous system that is basically her prison:

She couldn’t have gone beyond the walls anyway. The gates were watched day and night by Janos Slynt’s gold cloaks, and Lannister house guards were always about as well. Besides, even if she could leave the castle, where would she go? It was enough that she could walk in the yard, pick flowers in Myrcella’s garden, and visit the sept to pray for her father. Sometimes she prayed in the godswood as well, since the Starks kept the old gods.\textsuperscript{19}

We can assume that both Eddard and Sansa are unable to read through the city, or to accept the city as a system and to take advantage of the knowledge of it. Eddard refuses to approve the principles that King’s Landing adheres to; Sansa is convinced that being imprisoned in the elaborate system of the Red Keep, the seat of the King’s administration, family and court, she will never be capable of escaping. Unless the city stands for the imaginary perfect center of the world, she is no longer interested in the possibilities it offers, thus accepting her imprisonment in the system. Both characters as if chose to remain aliens to the city. It can be stated that to be an alien in King’s Landing is to remain faithful to one’s previous identity and rules.

Another character, whose presence in King’s Landing confirms the thesis, is Arya Stark. Although her father’s presence in King’s Landing was troublesome and ended with his death, for Arya the foreign city does not pose a problem that cannot be overcome. In this case Martin clearly chose to depict a deeply rational heroine, with ease

\textsuperscript{16} Ibidem, pp. 190–191.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibidem, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibidem, pp. 278–279.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibidem, p. 618.
of adaptation, the results of which are interesting. Arya tends to perceive cities as organized and readable systems. This kind of perception of cities is visible especially in 19th century novels, such as *Crime and Punishment* of Dostoyevski or the adventures of Sherlock Holmes written by Arthur Conan Doyle. St. Petersburg in Dostoyevski’s piece is readable only for the criminal and the detective, and so is London in Doyle’s works\(^\text{20}\). Respectively, King’s Landing, as foreign and dangerous as can be for a little girl, becomes a place where Arya manages to dwell; the only condition is to accept its rules and character. Arya starts to familiarize herself with King’s Landing – its streets, slums and secret passages, which together with the populace create the complicated system:

He [a cat – author’s note] had run her halfway across the castle; twice around the Tower of the Hand, across the inner bailey, through the stables, down the serpentine steps, past the small kitchen and the pig yard and the barracks of the gold cloaks, along the base of the river wall and up more steps and back and forth over Traitor’s Walk, and then down again and through a gate around a well and in and out of strange buildings until Arya didn’t know where she was\(^\text{21}\).

Arya becomes an experienced „user of the city”, not afraid of being left in the darkness or in an unknown district.

A similar situation takes place in Braavos, where the girl arrives after many adventures in Westeros. For Arya, Braavos quickly becomes just another system that she is obliged to – and eager to – work out. Being an alien, she hopes to find peace in this city, even if she is painfully aware that it will never be her true home. In Arya’s narrative on Braavos we can find the perfect example of person getting accustomed to the new life in a perfectly anonymous city\(^\text{22}\). From the very beginning Arya intuitively tries to observe this foreign city as carefully as she can in order to get accustomed to it and learn to live in it not only as an alien, but as a rightful citizen. She consciously renounces all her previous identities:

„Who are you?” (...) „No one,” she would answer, she who had been Arya of House Stark, Arya Underfoot, Arya Horseface. She had been Arry and Weasel too, and Squab and Salty, Nan the cupbearer, a grey mouse, a sheep, the ghost of Harrenhal... but not for true, not in her heart of hearts\(^\text{23}\).

The city gives her three new identities: an acolyte in the Temple, a seafood vendor and a beggar whose only task is to observe men\(^\text{24}\). There is a reward for such an enthusiastic attitude of an alien towards the city – Arya is allowed to participate in


\(^{23}\) Ibidem, p. 446.

\(^{24}\) Ibidem, pp. 450‒466.
trainings, as one of the citizens, to become a professional killer, the servant of “the Many-Faced God”\textsuperscript{25}. Nevertheless, in both King’s Landing and Braavos Arya exemplifies the person who has to choose between secure adaptation and insecure past identity. In King’s Landing she was either supposed to demonstrate good manners and politeness adapting to the prevailing culture, or to hide her background and true self in order to stay alive. In Braavos the situation is very similar – Arya exchanges her previous identity for new abilities and possibilities. In clash with the city she chooses to adjust her identity. Thus, in Martin’s series, to overcome the hostile anonymity of a city and alienation means to lose one’s identity, to accept a new one, imposed by a city itself.

Another narrative that is set in this place is the narrative of Samwell Tarly. As cowardly and undecided as he is, being an alien in Braavos Sam is obliged to cope with his inner weaknesses. Although Braavos existed in Samwell’s mind even before he visits it – simply because he has read about this city – it is not a place where the hero acts easily. The feeling of alienation is intensified by the exoticity of the city:

\begin{quote}
The whole city is built in a lagoon on a hundreds of feet high. They have boats instead of horses, and their mummers play out written stories instead of just making up the usual stupid farces. The food is very good too, especially the fish. They have all kinds of clams and eels and oysters, fresh from their lagoon.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

Sam intuitively feels that in such an exotic place some metamorphoses in his life will take place. He feels as an alien and is treated like one, misunderstood and mocked, but he decides to redefine, or, we might say, to define himself in the face of new circumstances. Unlike Arya, Sam feels totally lost in the city that stands for nothing more than a complicated labyrinth. Nevertheless, it is in Braavos where Sam is able to find the inner perseverance and determination, as well as unusual for him courage to defend the honor. Furious at the betrayal of Minstrel Daeron, Samwell fights with him. Equally bravely he bears the death of Maester Aemon\textsuperscript{27}. Braavos, which at first intimidated Sam, becomes a place where he changes and matures. This motif resembles, for instance, the one utilised in Elizabeth Gaskell’s \textit{Mary Barton}, where the main heroine, a countrywoman, becomes more tough and open-minded while living in a city\textsuperscript{28}.

Never before was Sam proud of himself or self-confident. The situation of being an alien in the foreign city influences Sam in a relatively positive way. He copes with the oppressiveness of the city and finds inner strength to combat misfortunes. Only in Braavos, the foreign city and as an alien, he finally uses the opportunity to reveal his inner skills and courage.

\textsuperscript{26} G.R.R. Martin, \textit{A Feast...}, p. 309.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibidem, pp. 554–555; 740–742.
\textsuperscript{28} P. Preston, \textit{Manchester and Milton-Northern: Elizabeth Gaskell and the Industrial Town}, [in:] Writing the city..., pp. 49–51.
There are in *a Song of Ice and Fire* the characters for whom hometowns are hostile just as foreign cities are for aliens. Such a character is Jon Snow. From Jon Snow’s view on Winterfell it is clearly visible that the man is forced to see this city as just a dwelling place, regardless of his more sentimental attachment to it. As the bastard son of Eddard Stark, Jon Snow is simply not allowed to perceive Winterfell as his home. Despite his father’s efforts to make the young boy’s life comfortable, lady Catelyn barely allows him to stay under her roof and repeatedly treats him as though he was alien to her. Jon’s perspective of Winterfell is then dependent on Catelyn’s attitude towards him. Jon cannot appear as a host in Winterfell during the great feast in honour of King Robert, he is alienated from it. Moreover, right after Bran’s fall and his father’s departure, Jon is definitely expelled from Winterfell by Catelyn. Winterfell was never the place that Jon was permitted to consider a part of his identity. As Pauli Tapani Karjalainen and Anssi Paasi quote Norberg – Schulz: „to dwell implies the establishment of a meaningful relationship between man and a given environment“.

Dwelling is then not only being an inhabitant in any city – it is getting some positive emotions out of this place, which in Jon’s case does not appear.

Later on, when House Stark is lost after the war, Jon receives a proposal to take control over Winterfell. However, Jon’s reaction to this unusual offer is ambiguous. The problem is Jon does not consider himself a Stark, and in his mind only Stark is worthy to govern Winterfell. He furtively desired such an option in the childhood, but he would never imagine that this can be within his reach to take power over Winterfell, as if he was not allowed to consider Winterfell as part of his life and character.

Winterfell is also the very city that was consciously rejected by one of the characters – Theon Greyjoy does not want to be perceived as a man connected to this place. His internal plan is to bear in mind the image of Winterfell as a part of oppressive and foreign system, a form of punishment for his father, Balon Greyjoy. Theon’s over ten years long staying in the city was arranged by King Robert and Eddard Stark, as the guarantee of obedience of Theon’s rebellious father. Thus, Winterfell is not named the home by the young and proud man. Theon himself prefers being the Greyjoy from Pyke and chooses to recant Winterfell as much as he can.

Nevertheless, after return to Pyke, the ancestral seat of his kin, Theon is perceived as „one of Starks”, as one of Winterfell citizens, who does not fit into society of iron people. For Theon, associating him with Winterfell becomes an insult and disgrace. Pyke is thus the site of old values and politics and also of old injuries, which Theon perceives with an ambivalent attitude: „In Pyke, it would seem, the old wars

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33 Ibidem.
34 Ibidem, p. 393.
were still being fought”\textsuperscript{35}. Theon tries to understand that this all constitutes the character of his hometown and accepts it. Theon would like to perceive Pyke as his own home, but also as his heritage and part of identity.

However, neither Winterfell, nor Pyke respond to Theon’s points of view properly. The former does not reject him regardless of his opinions; the latter, on the other hand, does. Ironically it can be stated that the oppressiveness of Martin’s cities in Theon’s case is perfidious, since no matter what the protagonist wants, a city will always act inversely.

There are two characters that, beside being the knights of King’s Guard, seem to have nothing in common: Arys Oakheart and Jaime Lannister. But they are similar in one thing – they both are rejected by the cities they need to live in.

For Arys Oakheart, one of the White Cloaks (the Kingsguard) and newcomer from King’s Landing, Sunspear resembles the concept of city as a prison. It is because of the citizens of Sunspear that Arys feels totally alienated. Those people are clearly reluctant towards the King’s Landing residents, especially after the Oberyn Martell’s death:

He could feel eyes upon him everywhere he went, small black Dornish eyes regarding him with thinly veiled hostility. The shopkeepers did their best to cheat him at every turn, and sometimes he wondered whether the taverners were spitting in his drinks\textsuperscript{36}.

Arys feels as if the city tried to punish him for what he represents. This causes that Arys decides to not provoke the city mob with his usual robes – white cloak – and wears the regular Dornish clothes to walk on the streets, perceiving this necessity reluctantly as imprisonment. He would prefer to adjust to the city and its ways; nevertheless, he still is not accepted and remains alienated.

Jaime Lannister, officially referred to as the Lion of Lannister, and unofficially the Kingslayer, tied his life with King’s Landing. Whether liked or admired, or not, he achieved a particular position among the society of King’s Landing – he is well recognized and respected as a mighty knight and member of House Lannister. He was also the person that saved the city during Robert Baratheon’s rebellion, when the mad King Aerys wanted to burn the whole city. Jaime killed both him and his servants to abort this plan. Nevertheless, the citizens remember only that Jaime was the Kingslayer\textsuperscript{37}.

However, after many months of imprisonment in Robb Stark’s camp, Jaime finally returns to the city. The first impression that the hero derives coming back to King’s Landing is the sense of amusement. He observes the common people working, the guards watching the crowd, the merchants riding their wagons\textsuperscript{38}. Nevertheless, the good feelings do not last long, since Jaime is unrecognized by anyone in the King’s Landing:

\textsuperscript{35} Ibidem, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{36} G.R.R. Martin, \textit{A Feast...}, p. 264.
\textsuperscript{37} G.R.R. Martin, \textit{A Storm...}, p. 505.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibidem, p. 846.
Riding down familiar streets with two hundred northmen, a chainless maester, and an ugly freak of a woman at his side, Jaime found he scarcely drew a second look. He did not know whether he ought to be amused or annoyed. “They do not know me,” he said to Steelshanks as they rode through Cobbler’s Square. “Your face is changed, and your arms as well,” the northman said, “and they have a new Kingslayer now.”

This passage illustrates that Jaime completely lost his – whether positive or negative – identity in King’s Landing. The city he considered his home and the place where his identity used to be established, does not recognize him any longer.

The setting is of great importance to *The Song of Ice and Fire*, and so are the Westeros and Essos cities for the setting. As C.S. Lewis claimed, the good story must have a precisely established and convincing setting, and George R.R. Martin seems to obey this rule. In his series the cities are not only the sites where events take place, but also the objects of the heroes’ actions.

There is a vast amount of concepts of cities in the series. There appear especially the concepts of cities as systems, labyrinths or prisons, which together are naturally associated with the oppressiveness. The cities, working through their governors, mobs or traditions, alienate the characters, push them to the role of newcomers, who must conform their identities to the one of a given city. In general, the cities stand for the one side of the clash that remains unchangeable, but requires some changes in the attitude of aliens. Some characters actively reply to the demands that cities set (for example Sam Tarly or Arya Stark), but there are those who are internally crushed by overwhelming influence of a given city and who would prefer to stay passive (for example Sansa Stark).

How it affects the plot of the series? First of all, it determines the credibility of the plot turns and creates a world in which there is a multitude of solutions. Most of all, it gives the heroes and heroines a chance to develop and evolve. Unless a particular relationship with a given city, the fates of every character could be much different – for instance, Jon Snow could agree to become the Lord of Winterfell, and Ned Stark would have be still alive. There are, of course, other characters in the series whose life was marked by the influence of Westeros or Essos cities. The good example is Daenerys Targaryen in Meereen – the city have been taken over by her, it is the main object of her actions, but it remains resistant to her decisions and foremost her personal ideas. Another character, whose identity have already been reshaped, is Tyrion Lannister, who sailed to Essos. In Pentos Tyrion freely resigns from the previous identity to stay safe. In Westeros the person whose relation with city is now not yet clearly

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39 Ibidem.
40 C.S. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 4–8.
41 See the chapters of Daenerys in G.R.R. Martin, *a Dance...*, passim.
42 G.R.R. Martin, *a Dance...*, pp. 18–34; furthermore, it can be observed that the role of the cities oppressive for the aliens is played especially by Essos cities, which contributes to the exotic impression they exert.
established is Cersei Lannister, whose position of Queen after “the walk of shame” is not longer valid.

To sum up, we could ask after Arto Haapala: „Does urbanity, the fact that somebody lives in a city, mark that person’s identity to the degree that it is specifically urban?” The answer is – in G.R.R. Martin’s series – yes, it does.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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**SUMMARY**

The article entitled „The cities and aliens in George R.R. Martin’s A Song of Ice and Fire is a contribution to the research of the picture of cities in literature, and presents the mutual relationship between the characters of the series and the cities they encounter. The main thesis of this paper assumes that Martin’s cities, besides serving as setting for the story, strongly influence the actions and attitudes of the heroes and heroines, often forcing on the characters a personality change or adaptation. The Westeros and Essos cities, standing as opponents of characters’ goals, either enforce adaptation on newcomers or reject them, thus resembling other literary cities (i.e. St. Petersburg in Crime and Punishment, Conan Doyle’s London, Manchester in Mary Barton). The analysis of Martin’s cities is preceded by an attempt to define the concept of alienation in city and the stream of consciousness technique.
The experience of emigration is a very difficult, life-changing event, as hard for children as for adults, no matter the circumstances. Eva Hoffman in the autobiography *Lost in Translation* shows her process of emigration and adaptation in new places. She is a Polish Jew who relocated to Canada as a child, moved to the United States to study and in consequence settled there. As an academic interested in English literature she pays attention to the role of language not only as a communication medium, but as an important part of the culture and representation of one’s viewpoint and way of thinking. That makes emigration really difficult, especially without knowledge of language and culture of the future place of living, as it was with Eva’s family – the Wydras – and many other people for many years before mass media development and widespread accessibility of travels.

*Lost in Translation* was divided into three parts: *Paradise, Exile* and *The New World*. The chapters correspond with parts of Hoffman’s life, depending on her place of living: Poland, Canada and the United States of America.

In the very book the narrator frequently highlights the distinct abscession of two life stages. Removal from Poland to Canada was for Eva a really traumatic event, which changed her life against her will. Later, the move to the USA was planned on her own, when she was an adult, and it was her dream, so there were less negative emotions, it was more calm, even liberating, as it has transpired later. The culture of the United States was much dearer to her than the Canadian one. Not until she was there did she find her peace and feel at home.

In the following interpretation I am concentrating on the feelings of the main character, so I am highlighting underestimation and idealisation of the places, without considering counterarguments, which for sure could be adduced.

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1 This article presents some problems discussed in my master’s thesis entitled *the emigration, the alienation, the experience of language* – Lost in Translation by Eva Hoffman and the Ministry of Pain (Ministerstwo bólu) by Dubravka Ugrešić, defended on 9th July, 2014 in Jagiellonian University in Cracow.
Izabela Pisarek, *Emigration as an Experience of Strangeness – Lost and Found* Eva Hoffman

**Idyllic Land of Childhood**

Intercontinental travel ties the beginning and the end of the first part of the book. This event starts the story about life in Cracow, school friendships, first love, piano lessons, fascination with literature.

Hoffman writes that her childhood ends the moment she leaves the land of her childhood, idealised and because of that named *Paradise*. She pays attention to the importance of the two-week travel, firstly by ship from Gdansk to Montreal, secondly by train from Montreal to Vancouver. Hoffman calls it “the brief *Batory* interlude”. From a psychological point of view it is confirmed by Jacek Kubitsky in the book *Psychologia migracji* [*Psychology of migration*]. The author takes notice of the fact that in the times when planes were not a popular form of transport, long-time voyage helped migrants by giving them time to think their situation over, to familiarize with the change, to say goodbye to their old life and to prepare for the new, unknown one. It was even more important, because at the times emigration was nearly irreversible. Nowadays travel through the world is far more simple and it gives migrants the feeling of comfort, that in a case of a failure they have a chance to come back to their old surroundings (even if not to the same apartment, still to the same city, language, family and friends). But in 1959 Ewa, along with her sister and parents, was leaving Cracow knowing that they would never see Poland again (because of political reasons).

Hoffman reminisces her emotional farewells with everything she left behind: friends Basia and Marek, Mrs. Witeszczak, her favourite places, the music school, piano lessons. All of them had different stories and effects, and all of them are precisely analysed in the book. The events, related without chronology, smoothly change one into another, to show different aspects of the loss and its long duration.

**New Damn Reality**

*Exile* starts at the moment of disembarkation. Travel by train is the first event in a new life, in a new world. The Rosenbergs are the first people met in a new reality. Eva’s aversion to that family and even to the view from the train is a kind of an act of rejection, a manifestation of the fact that she is not willing to accept the change.

The foreign, unfriendly world, which they arrived to, did not help them with acclimatization. Children in school were hostile and even the simplest communication was very hard because of the language barrier (no one in the family knew English). On the first day girls received new, English names: Ewa became Eva and Alina got

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3 LT, p. 95.


5 Back then written with ‘w’.

6 I interpreted them precisely in the above-mentioned master’s thesis.
Elaine. The name – one of the elementary forms of identification of a person, well known, used since birthday, strongly rooted in his or her identity – was taken away from them along with everything else. It was another, nearly symbolic gesture – new reality, life, name, identity. Just as new words did not relate straight to their meaning, but only to their equivalents in the girls’ native language (which were direct media of meaning), new names were only foreign words, not relate to anything.

Eva stood out from her peers not only because of her behaviour, but also because of her appearance. A look is easier to change, but it takes time to feel comfortable in a new form and to accept the changes. In Eva’s case it did not happen despite the efforts of Mrs Liberman and “several Polish ladies who have been in Canada long enough to consider themeselves well versed in native ways”, who taught her how to shave armpits, shape eyebrows, take care of hair, make-up and what to wear. The girl felt uncomfortable in that “packaging”. She felt put in social frameworks which she was not prepared for – unlike her Canadian peers. Firstly she tried to fit in, to reduce the risk of rejection by schoolmates, but feeling strange and foreign in her own body she neglected artificial norms for the sake of her own happiness.

A form of spending time with friends, that is, sitting in a car next to the fast food bar, also seemed strange to Eva. She would feel a lot more comfortable in Poland, with her old friends, even though she could not imagine what her Cracow friends do passing the time together. For sure, discomfort would be lesser if she had good contact with peers during conversations in informal situations. But it was not easy. Eva painfully experienced her lack of language competence when she failed to tell a funny anecdote and when she did not understand friends’ jokes. Lack of ease using English and not knowing slang strongly constrain possibilities of coming closer with other people. Jokes and ripostes require speed, rhythm, cleverness, which is tantamount to fluent thinking in the language of use. Moreover, knowledge of socio-political situation is very important in understand the context (Polish anti-Russian jokes are a brilliant example of this). Such an impact of reality is an another body blow for an immigrant – a loss of another part of his identity. Eva, who thought about herself as a witty and funny person, needed to tackle the problem of misunderstanding on the one hand and on the other hand her own expression barrier, which thus meant a loss of a sense of humour for her.

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7  Cf. LT, p. 105.
8  LT, p. 109.
9  Ibidem, p. 110.
10 At the beginning of the 19th century Wilhelm von Humboldt had noticed the relation between thinking, interpreting the world and language. In his theory the way of thinking and language are closely connected, one depends on the other and it is impossible to separate them. In this situation the lack of understanding between Eva and her new friends is completely comprehensible, because correct communication is impossible until she reaches advanced language skills and learns to “think” in English. Cf. W. von Humboldt, Roznaitość języków a rozwój umysłowy ludzkości [Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaus und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts], przeł. E. M. Kowalska, Lublin 2001, p. 93.
Another time, during a party, Eva observes relations between boys and girls. Starting with consideration about a sentence she heard from a friend and was not sure how to interpret, Eva spectates at embarrassed coquetry of girls, which seems “unnatural” to her. The thing that irritates her the most in the party atmosphere is timidity of young people, fear of making a wrong move. However, attention must be paid to the fact that her comparison might be a little inaccurate, because it is based only on Eva’s childhood image of her teenage life, dreams of how she would live in Poland. She did not have the possibility to spend some of her adolescent years in her homeland.

In different situations Eva learns that she gesticulates too much, is too rushed (when she yanks Penny’s hand) and emotional (when she grabs a friend’s arm as a sign of familiarity). She stands too close during conversations, behaves too expressively, phrases judgements too directly, which may be offensive. A lot of subtle differences come out, which in everyday life do not draw attention as long as the social norms are followed. When they are not, immediately there is a feeling of discomfort.

All these events make Eva (like any other immigrant) decide to stay as an outsider, because isolation is one of the simplest natural defence mechanisms. This retreat lets her observe her different point of view. She sees that all this time she located the centre of her world in Poland, which became only a very far point on the map and a collection of memories. Now, although she tries to look at many things like Canadians do, taking the Polish viewpoint into account gives her another perspective.

Eva was moderate about Canadians. People’s conformity, submission to society and culture irritated her. In Canada muting emotions and behaviour in accordance with social expectations are far more important than in her vision of the world.

However, not only bad things happened in Canada. Eva had a friend, Penny, got close with Mrs Steiner and her family, found another inspirational piano teacher, Mr Ostropow. She saw him as a romantic, passionate artist she wanted to emulate, but could not find a space where she would feel comfortable with this. Ostropow was an oddity in Vancouver, as it is called by Eva, but he represented all her longings and deep desires. As a Russian and an artist he was the embodiment of a truly Slavic soul: emotional, energetic, impetuous – the model of exactly the opposite of what was expected in Canada, especially from young ladies.

Nevertheless, Canada never won favour with Eva – not only because of the above-mentioned situations. The biggest fault of Canada was becoming a place of exile and that could not be forgotten by Eva. Vancouver became a symbol of the biggest storm in her life, the time of escalated deconstrifying and chaos.

It needs to be pointed out that emigration adaptation time was simultaneous to Eva’s adolescence, which even without big changes of environment and any other additional stimuli is a difficult time of searching for one’s own identity and place.

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11 LT, p. 130.
12 Ibidem, p. 131.
in the world. All these accumulated problems effected a state Eva called Big Fear\textsuperscript{14}. These are – besides teenage dilemmas – all concerns of each migrant. They may be understood as remains of a first shock reaction, which consist of sorrow because of the losses (including home, environment, friends, language, autonomy, identity\textsuperscript{15}), feeling of fear and stress, and identity crisis\textsuperscript{16}.

**NEW WONDERFUL WORLD**

A few factors had influence over Eva’s removal to the United States. Even in Poland there were snatches of information about possibilities of realising “the American dream”.

The first references about the USA were the opinions heard in Poland (“[…] this is what people sometimes say […]”; “But everyone also knows that…”\textsuperscript{17}). On the one hand there is the image showed by media: well-equipped army ready to fight and exploited workers living in terrible poverty. By contrast, between people there are rumours that in America everyone can buy what he or she wants and that shops are full of different products. A package with gifts from a friend confirms it. Even into the mass culture there rush American elements such as westerns with Kirk Douglas or the song *Rock Around the Clock*.

In Canada, the USA is no longer the symbol of prosperity and success, but a trip to New York enraptures Eva and puts her off Vancouver. That is why she decides to study in Houston.

*The New World* transpires to be a rescue from Eva’s Canadian exile. Unlike her past place of living, in the United States she feels good and finds her place in the new world. She quickly notices the diversity of a mosaic created by students from different states in one university. It gives Eva a sense of comfort and security. Her new friends are not a group of similar conformists. Eva starts seeing a wide range of personalities. Thanks to that she finally does not feel different than the rest of her peers, she is no more strange that the others, becomes an equal member of the group.

For sure her language competence has an impact on her fast adaptation. Even more important seems the fact that the above-mentioned factors help Eva regain her social status. In the aftermath of the removal the Wydras became immigrants instead of intelligentsia. As a student Eva naturally comes back to the company of educated people, meets an intellectual elite.

At that moment she discovers positive aspects of her multiculturalism. Thanks to limited language knowledge, without all the subtle complexity, it is more simple to read through literature and abstract the main thesis, ignoring details and quirkiness\textsuperscript{18}.

\textsuperscript{14} LT, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{15} J. Kubitsky, op. cit., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{17} LT, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{18} Cf. ibidem, p. 180.
The other value of this situation is a widening of perspective. The author gains additional perspective, which helps her bring out more from the text, her point of view is different than that of Americans – it is richer because of knowledge drawn from Polish culture. However, this extra perspective brings some problems too. When Eva converses with her American friends, sometimes they cannot understand one another on the level of basic values or definitions, because these values are products of culture and people are formed by the culture they have grown up in – or, in Eva’s case, by two cultures. Moreover, her American perspective is incomplete. There are things impossible to catch up on. Mass culture objects, which are Americans’ symbols of childhood, do not have a sentimental value for her. It is impossible to even know every one of them – while speaking about one of such objects, she admits that it was “before her time”.

Thinking about basic questions, Eva discusses them with Ewa. What comes to light in such situations is the splitting of opposites: Polishness – Americanness and childness – adulthood. In the case of marriage Eva has a problem with deciding if childish images about great love confront less romantic reality or if her feeling should not be called love. (Childish and Polish) dreams about being a pianist clash with a more realistic (adult and American) writer’s career.

Although it causes many problems, multicultural individuals do not want to discard the elements of the culture they do not have contact with for the culture they live in. Eva does not reject Polishness, but tries to find a balance, to crystalize her identity while remembering about the risk of assimilation on the one hand and alienation on the other hand. The cultural situation of the United States partially helps her with that. Such a big country cannot be homogenous, it consists of – as Hoffman described it – “sub-Americas.” As one of her friends says, “Being American means that you feel like you’re norm (…) and the Northeast is the norm that sets the norm.” Admittedly, she is stunned by the quantity of possibilities, but in the end it helps her find her own place in this diversified structure and reduce the feeling of standing out. Just like in Canada Eva heard from her mother that she became “English”, that is reserved, in Houston and later in New York Eva subconsciously takes up more and more American personality traits and gets used to that lifestyle. However, she formulates arguments confirming she will never be just like her peers. A good example of that is her meeting with friends, during which they are discussing the need of moving beyond culture, refusing it. Eva’s opinion is just the opposite – she feels a very intense need of going into the culture as deep as possible. Whereas her friends are looking for experiences that reach out of their personalities, Eva is checking if she can interiorize given experience, she “tries it on” her identity to get to know herself better.

Nevertheless, she will never be completely an American.

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19 Ibidem, p. 214.
We’re called upon to travel so far beyond our borders, but neither my Japanese friend nor I can divest ourselves of those irrational, instinctive reactions that we take to be our personalities, our selves. To do so would be to jump outside the borders of our skin. How, with this bifocal vision, does one keep one’s center? And what center should one try to keep? the cherishing of our particularity seems as outmoded as the wearing of many skirts. And yet, so long as we are not computer species, we cannot give up on our subjectivity, our ability to experience.\footnote{Ibidem, p. 213.}

Eva meets other Polish immigrants in New York. They talk about the actual situation in the country, share news, recall and compare the lost reality with a found one. Most of the company came to the United States much later than Eva. In this context she even heard sometimes that “she’s American”,\footnote{Ibidem, p. 256.} because she showed optimism and belief in a good solution of a dead end situation. She acts as a cultural translator when she explains the reality of the publishing market, why Americans meet with therapists, or what their relations with their mothers look like. Partly she assumes this role for the reader as well, showing differences between Poles and Americans with regard to self-awareness, everyday habits and forms of communication.

The narrator notices questing for the atmosphere they left when they emigrated from Poland, “the long evenings when the coffeehouses filled with smoke and political intrigue”\footnote{Ibidem.} as well as the “America they imagined (…) as the essence of excitement itself, a mythological excitement”\footnote{Ibidem.}, the “New York they knew only from the novels of Dos Passos and Truman Capote and funky movies featuring neon-garnish streets and implausible chases along rainy sidewalks in the night”\footnote{Ibidem.}.

**RETURN TO THE PAST**

Looking for her identity, Eva felt a need for visiting Poland. Finally in 1977, after eighteen years of emigration, she succeeded. In spite of the time distance her fellow travellers from the train, playing cards and eating sausages, seemed more familiar than businessmen in the New York subway. Her friends’ flats and the city centre did not change much. A wave of anti-Semitism and an exodus in the sixties took their toll on Jewish society that shrank and aged.

This direct verification of memories showed her all the details of the differences she has known. It is even more interesting, because firstly the author talks about changes she hardly accepted because they were the opposite of her earlier behavioural patterns, and later she observes how strongly the new culture influenced her by comparing herself with her Polish peer. Intensive gesticulation and expression, which in Poland were an indication of femininity, and which were limited by Eva formed by the Canadian role models, are a good example of it.

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Ibidem, p. 213.}
  \item \footnote{Ibidem, p. 256.}
  \item \footnote{Ibidem.}
  \item \footnote{Ibidem.}
  \item \footnote{Ibidem.}
\end{itemize}}
At the same time, thinking about another story of her life, Eva reaches a conclusion that it is impossible to define “what if...”. Each decision implicates change, all the events influence personality, a way of thinking, opinions. It is impossible to judge anything, because it is always another person in the probable story.

Hoffman needed that return to verify memories, demythologize her past and accept her fortune. That trip let Eva compare the image of the real Cracow with the one she dreamed about all these years, and made the chance of repatriation real. She disproves the myth of no return. Although she does not mention that, on the subconscious level it probably was an important element of the process – all the more because her flight back to the USA was like a second migration – a return to the moment when she was forced to leave and a chance to make that decision by herself.

**LANGUAGE**

Hoffman decided to write her book in English. It is not a surprise: she lives in the United States, the book was dedicated to the American market, written thanks to an American scholarship. Moreover, the author has been living in English-speaking countries for many years and her contact with her mother tongue is limited. Even though she is very well educated and in the USA she meets some Polish friends, her competence declines and sometimes she asks “how would you say this in Polish?”

Probably that is why she left the Polish edition to the translator.

The very fact of finding her own voice in English is not without significance. Most of her adolescent years she spent in America. English is the language of her adult life. Polish lingered in childhood; she could not express herself fully in a language so incongruent, separated from her identity by years of work and searching for her individual form of expression. It was even harder being mindful of her fascination with literature and the idea of being a writer. At the time of removal she was 14, which means she had complete language competence, only her vocabulary was still being widened. To fit in with English environment cost her a lot of pains, but finally she overcame all the language barriers.

Eva and her family did not know a word in English when they came to Canada. Probably they learnt the basics quite fast, but it was very stressful. As a sign of it Hoffman recalls that “Shut up!” was the first sentence she understood “from its dramatic context”.

If she wanted to find her voice in English, she needed to adapt it to her inner self. That is why she decided to write her first diary in English – Polish language no

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27 At the beginning of her autobiography the author thanks the American Council of Learned Societies for the scholarship, which gave her the possibility to start writing that book.

28 LT, p. 256.


30 LT, p. 104.

31 Ibidem.
longer fitted her life. It was not easy, so she sums it up as “one of the more impersonal exercises of that sort produced by an adolescent girl”\textsuperscript{32}.

Even when she could communicate fluently, she was striving for perfection. Her sensibility to language (spoken and written) makes her practice pronunciation and broaden vocabulary. Eva recalls she “became obsessed with words”\textsuperscript{33}.

All the culture questions were a huge obstacle too. Gradually she came to know the context (historical, political, social, of popular culture), idioms and proverbs better and better. She started to see the differences between the language and accent of individual people, begun to observe emotions through utterances. Their way of speaking put her off or charmed her. “When I fall in love, I am seduced by language”\textsuperscript{34}.

After many years of living in an English-speaking environment and academic work on English literature, she felt she overcame the last barrier.

\begin{quote}
I read, tasting the sounds on the tongue, hearing the phrases somewhere between tongue and mind. (...) I’m back within the music of the language, and Eliot’s words descend on me with a sort of grace.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Now she felt she could understand the text completely. The basic, natural, subconscious level of sound of language became natural for her too.

**CONCLUSION**

Emigration is a really big life change and a challenge, especially without knowing the language and culture. In that situation one learns everything from one’s own mistakes. Often the new environment does not help in the adaptation process because of its misunderstanding and ignorance of complexity of immigrants’ problems.

Regardless of time and one’s knowledge, emigration always changes the identity of a person. No one can dodge the influence of the culture he/she lives in, ignore people around him/her. Every individual needs to be understood, to have contact with peers and colleagues, to be supported by somebody – that is, to be accepted. Therefore, an immigrant needs to change his or her habits to accommodate and try other ways of thinking in order to understand and to be understood. Only when one starts to live in the culture, not beside it, he/she becomes a real part of society, not a stranger.

Eva Hoffman in *Lost in Translation* shows the process of adaptation in new realities, when everything changes. It took Eva some time and many problems to be accepted in Canada, but she never felt comfortable there. When she moved to the United States, it was much more simple to adapt, she felt in the right place. With her mixed identity, which was very different than Canadian standards, she felt

\begin{footnotes}
\item[32] Ibidem, p. 121.
\item[33] Ibidem, p. 216.
\item[34] Ibidem, p. 219.
\item[35] Ibidem, p. 186.
\end{footnotes}
much more comfortable in diversified American society. Whether she liked it or not, the other cultures influenced her identity and character strongly – she saw it perfectly during her visit to the fatherland.

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SUMMARY

The paper entitled *Emigration as an Experience of Strangeness – Lost and Found Eva Hoffman* presents the topic of emigration based on example from modern literature: *Lost in Translation*, which is an autobiography of Eva Hoffman – Polish Jew who emigrated with her family to Canada as a child. The author shows the problem of strangeness and alienation in the context of settling in a new place, the importance of language and changes of identity caused by them. The process of emigration of Hoffman is interpreted with psychological references. The special attention is given to the problem of national identity and connection with a place of residence.
Who is an outsider? Marcin Bortkiewicz’s adaptation of „The Stranger” by Albert Camus

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Introduction: „The Stranger” in the Polish theatre

Every now and then in the literary field in Poland the appeal for reinstatement of a public awareness of some author’s achievements can be heard. “A lot of books are created, always more than the literary market, theatres or libraries would be able to absorb” – Marek K.E. Baczewski wrote1.

Although my article is devoted to a lesser known adaptation of The Stranger by Albert Camus written by Marcin Bortkiewicz, I do not intend to prove that he is the most underrated talent of the Polish literature. The purpose of my article is to show comparative analysis of two literary works – novel The Stranger by Albert Camus and adaptation of this novel, Obcy według Alberta Camusa [The Stranger according to Albert Camus] by Marcin Bortkiewicz. Who is “the stranger” in the Bortkiewicz’s adaptation? What is the meaning of “strangeness” that appears in this work? What type of alienation emerges from this adaptation, designated only for two actors? To justify my thesis, I am focusing on two factors. First, there have been serious attempts of analysis of Camus’s works in Poland only since the 80s of the last century2. Referring to the theatrical reception of Camus’s works, in 1980 Szczęście Syzyfa by Wojciech Natanson was published. It is a collection of reviews and essays describing, among others, “Camus’s presence” in the Polish theatre3. It was the first and the last such publication about the role of Albert Camus in the Polish theatre. In Poland researches have been writing about Camus for many years – with varying intensity – but despite the French-Algerian writer’s presence on the Polish scene since 19574, the information concerning the place and role of his work in the Polish theatre is rather limited. The hundredth anniversary of Albert Camus’s birth in 2013 was

1 M. Baczewski, Jak umierają książki, „Opcje”, 2013, No. 3 (92), p. 185.
4 More information about the Polish premiere: Kaligula, theatre program, editor unknown, the archive of Stefan Żeromski Theatre in Kielce, Kielce 1958.
an opportunity to reflect on the writer’s presence in the Polish consciousness – his presence on the Polish scene was not a marginal issue. Second – the registration of plays based on Camus’s works in Poland, created by the Theatre Institute in Warsaw, suggests that spectacle *The Stranger*, adapted and directed by Anna Smolar in Juliusz Słowacki Theatre in Cracow, is the only Polish play based on this book ever staged on the Polish scene. To summarize – the reception of Camus’s works in the Polish theatre is still an unexplored field. At the same time he is still one of the most important authors for the independent theatres (although you cannot compare the current situation with his impact on Polish student theatres in 70s and 80s). I hope this article may partially fill this gap.

**BORTKIEWICZ AND CAMUS: COMPARISON**

Marcin Bortkiewicz, the author of the adaptation* I find interesting, is not only a writer, but also an actor and a theatre and film director. Born in 1976 in Słupsk, he graduated from the Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Directing and the University of Gdańsk. Since 1991 he has been associated with the Rondo Theatre in Słupsk. In the years 2005–2007 he was associated with Wojciech Bogusławski Theatre in Kalisz and since 2006 he has been cooperating with the Ecce Homo Theatre in Kielce. First of all, he was known as a great, award-winning actor writing monodramas. He undertook, inter alia, the adaptation of *The Stranger* (fr. *L’Étranger*), novel by Albert Camus published in 1942. To recall briefly – the title character is Meursault, an Algerian, a citizen of France, who was being judged for killing an Arab. In January 1955 Camus said:

> I summarized the Stranger a long time ago, with a remark I admit was highly paradoxical: «In our society any man who does not weep at his mother’s funeral runs the risk of being sentenced to death». I only meant that the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game.®


7. Bortkiewicz is also the author of theatrical adaptations of prose and drama of Moliere, Mickiewicz, Witkiewicz, Brecht, and Mauriac.


9. In my article, referring to the book by Camus, I use the title of this work or the word “the book”, and referring to the adaptation, – “the adaptation”.

According to the author, “he refuses to lie”\textsuperscript{11}. Because there are many interpretations of this book\textsuperscript{12}, I suggest the following interpretation of the term “lie” Camus writes of: man is on the exile in the world. The absurdity arises from the fact that the world is “the stranger” for human, but human cannot live outside of it. The sense of absurdity is deeper if the man imagines there is another world beyond the real one. Meursault, according to Camus, is convinced that absurd “here” (in the world) is the only house of the man, the house where no objective truth prevails, so that what is trying to cover up this absurd of “the meaningless life”, for example faith or rule, is a lie.

Camus divided Meursault’s story into two parts: first-person narrative view before and after the murder. Marcin Bortkiewicz divided his adaptation into three acts.

\textbf{ACT ONE}

In the Camus’s book many characters are featured, among others – Raymond Sintès, Marie Cardona, Masson, Celeste, Emmanuel, Salamano, Thomas Perez, chaplain, caretaker, lawyer, judge, defender, and prosecutor. In the Bortkiewicz’s adaptation only Meursault and the Judge\textsuperscript{13} are \textit{dramatis personae}. The first act begins with the words of the Judge:

\begin{quote}
\textsc{JUDGE}
Name, address, occupation,  
Date and place of birth.
\end{quote}

and Meursault’s response:

\begin{quote}
\textsc{MEURSAULT}
Meursault, Lyon, insurance clerk,  
In November 1913  
In the village Mondavi here, in Algeria\textsuperscript{14}.
\end{quote}

Therefore the adaptation begins at the moment where the second part of the Camus’s book starts, that is: after the arrest of the main character. It is interesting as Camus himself was born on 7 November 1913 in Mondavi and Bortkiewicz used this information to describe Meursault. It may suggest that the author of the adaptation identifies Camus-philosopher’s thoughts with the thoughts of the protagonist of the book.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{12} In this moment it is worth to recall the publications such as: G. Carey’s \textit{Camus the Stranger}, Boston – Massachussets 1979; P. McCarthy’s \textit{Albert Camus. The Stranger}, New York 1988; H. Bloom’s \textit{Albert Camus’s the Stranger}, New York 2011.
\textsuperscript{13} The names of characters featured in the adaptation are written with a capital letter.
\textsuperscript{14} As the fragments of the adaptation are translated into English by myself, I try to keep their original form.

At the beginning of the second part of the book we learn from Meursault that he was “questioned several times immediately after (...) arrest” and that it is not clear how much time has passed since the killing. The investigating judge and lawyer ask Meursault about his private life, including events that took place at his mother’s funeral (where the story begins), during the meeting with his friend Raymond (Meursault spends with Raymond the day he kills an Arab) or relating to the murder. Bortkiewicz uses the questions of interrogation mentioned by Meursault in the book. In this way he introduces the viewers to the storyline of the novel – he puts in the mouth of the hero the answers which are a repetition of the events described in the first part of the book. For comparison, we read in *The Stranger*:

(...) He asked me to give him an account of what I’d done that day [day of the murder – J.R]. As a matter of fact, I had already told him at our first interview—in a summary sort of way, of course—about Raymond, the beach, our swim, the fight, then the beach again, and the five shots I’d fired. [...] When I described the body lying on the sand, he nodded more emphatically, and said, “Good!”

and in the adaptation:

MEURSAULT
Because of my gall I made
One step forward. Arab
Not standing up pulled out a knife and showed
It to me in the sun. It blinded me
And everything swayed.
I was uptight and I pulled out a revolver
And in this crash all began.
I shook the sweat and sun off
I realised I destroyed the balance of the day,
An unusual quietness of the beach
Where I was happy,
So I shot again
At the inert body.

JUDGE
Well, well, well…".

Thus Bortkiewicz adapted fragments of the first part of the novel when the hero is still on the loose, placing them in the mouth of the Meursault who is already in prison. This part of the adaptation is surprisingly faithful to the book, of course, taking into account “the recalled past” by Bortkiewicz, but in this part occurs also

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16 Ibidem, p. 83.
17 M. Bortkiewicz, *Obcy…*, p. 7.
a theme that is absent in *The Stranger*. In the book Meursault mentions he told the investigating judge that death of his mother had no connection with the charge against him. “He merely replied that this remark showed I’d never had any dealings with the law” – he adds. Bartkiewicz decided to emphasize “the power of justice” and suggested that the Judge is in possession of the Meursault’s diary.

(he takes from the notebook a piece of paper and reads)

And in his diary, who wrote it?
“Today, my mother died, or yesterday.
I do not know”.

In the adaptation Bartkiewicz reflects with precision the sequence of events that appears in the book. In *The Stranger*, during the meeting of Meursault with the judge, the question is asked why Meursault shot the dead Arab’s body four times. Meursault does not give an answer, what provokes the judge into reaching for the crucifix. Brandishing the cross at Meursault, the judge tells him he must fully confess if he wants to be pardoned by God. Meursault tells him he does not believe in God, to what the judge replies with indignation. In the adaptation this scene, written in detail and full of dramaturgy, ends the first act.

**ACT TWO**

The second act begins with the continuation of talks about grace, whereby the confession of the repentance and devotion to God by Meursault seems to be the main objective of the Judge, what is not so accentuated in the book.

JUDGE
I have never seen
Equally confirmed soul
As yours.
The criminals, which brought
To me
Always wept
Towards to this image of the pain.

Just as in the book, the Judge offers two kinds of arguments – the impossibility of a world without God and the existence of sin, but Meursault is rejecting “the framework of theological values that embraces sin”.

Then the Judge’s and Meursault’s conversation is described, based on Meursault’s confessions contained in the second chapter of the second part of the book, when he talks about life in his cell. In the adaptation a special event takes place in prison: the visit

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of Marie. In the book, additionally, Meursault says that first, he was put in a cell with other prisoners, most of whom were Arabs, that they laughed at him until Meursault told them why he had been there and then they helped him lay down on his bed.

Meursault’s thoughts about Marie – his girlfriend with whom he spent the time between the death of his mother and the murder of an Arab – freedom and time spent in prison are written by Bortkiewicz for two people. Even lyrical, emotional confession of Meursault about the habit:

I’ve often thought that had I been compelled to live in the trunk of a dead tree, with nothing to do but gaze up at the patch of sky just overhead, I’d have got used to it by degrees. I’d have learned to watch for the passing of birds or drifting clouds, as I had come to watch for my lawyer’s odd neckties, or, in another world, to wait patiently till Sunday for a spell of love-making with Marie. Well, here, anyhow, I wasn’t penned in a hollow tree trunk. There were others in the world worse off than I.

in version of Bortkiewicz it is expressed and also provoked by the Judge:

JUDGE
Even you do not know
That if we forced you
To live in the trunk of a wilted tree,
Where your only occupation
Would be watching the color of the sky,
You would get used to that.

MEURSAULT
I’d wait for the flight of birds
Or for collision of the clouds.

At this point, after the exchange of views about the boredom in prison, the events presented by Meursault as the past in the third and fourth chapter of the book become the subject of speculation about the future. While Meursault in the book reports: “He [president of the court] now proposed, he said, to trench on certain matters which, on a superficial view, might seem foreign to the case, but actually were highly relevant”, in the adaptation we read:

JUDGE (The presiding judge)
The presiding judge will say
That he will pose the question
Seemingly foreign to your matter,
But being with it
Perhaps in a close relationship.

23 M. Bortkiewicz, *Obcy…*, p. 15.
The “game in the future” is combined with assumptions of a different roles – therefore the Judge is the presiding judge, public prosecutor, caretaker (who works at the shelter where the hero’s mother died) and also Perez (a friend of Meursault’s mother). Meursault includes the role of Raymond. The lack of defense in this “game in the future” is striking; in the adaptation it is not a scene of long and passionate defender’s speeches after the proposal of a death penalty for Meursault by the prosecutor. Although Meursault in The Stranger mentions that:

he [defender] went on in the same strain, saying “I” when he referred to me. It seemed so queer that I bent toward the policeman on my right and asked him to explain. He told me to shut up; then, after a moment, whispered: “They all do that.” It seemed to me that the idea behind it was still further to exclude me from the case, to put me off the map26,

The lack of defender who “seals the identity” in the adaptation does not make unclear the true identity of the hero. The role which “closes his mouth” is taken by the Judge.

JUDGE (Prosecutor)
Yes, I accuse
This man of burial
His mother with a criminal's calm.
(Judge)
Please do not speak
It will be better for your case27.

After these words Meursault has the chance only to interject that he was not going to kill an Arab, and that it happened because of the sun.

It’s hard to resist the impression that all characters appearing in the adaptation have their secrets: the only difference being various events happened to them. For example, referring to Meursault, a certain series of events befell him, instead of another character. When hero in the adaptation “takes the role” of Raymond, it is clear that his lot could have been different, and that he was caught in a peculiar kind of nexus which turned out to be a trap. This technique, applied by Bortkiewicz in the adaptation, is a precise expression of the situation of an individual in everyday life that was expressed by Meursault in The Stranger by Camus:

I’d passed my life in a certain way, and I might have passed it in a different way, if I’d felt like it. I’d acted thus, and I hadn’t acted otherwise; I hadn’t done whereas I had done y or z. And what did that mean? That, all the time, I’d been waiting for this present moment, for that dawn, tomorrow’s or another day’s, which was to justify me28.

26 A. Camus, The Stranger, p. 65.
27 M. Bortkiewicz, Obcy…, p. 30.
While in *The Stranger* Meursault tells his story himself as this peculiar kind of confession, we understand he does not believe that the life of an individual is unique. It is sufficient to recall his response to a proposition of the job in Paris made by his boss in the first part of the book. His comment that “one life was as good as another” implies that each person’s life is essentially equal to everyone else’s. Although the comparison of this quotation with other Meursault’s thoughts from the time he was in the prison could show his development as a character (Meursault offers no explanation for his belief in the equality of human lives in the novel’s final chapter and he identifies death as the force responsible for the constant and unchangeable nature of human life), I think these fragments of the adaptation by Bortkiewicz, who relies on several characters being played by only two actors, are the transposition of the quoted Meursault’s comment. The last scene of the adaptation also confirms this belief when Meursault confess to the Judge that he is free from death and ready to start all over again, and the Judge confesses he is also ready to start all over again.  

MEURSAULT  
I’ll let you,  
I’ll let you and affectionate insensitivity of the  
World to overwhelm me.  
I feel that we are alike.  

JUDGE  
I’m happy.  
Please come tomorrow at noon.  
(they hug each other for goodbye)  
We’ll start from the beginning.

Of course, in *The Stranger* these words are Meursault’s thoughts only, therefore the reconciliation or even interpenetrate of the fate of the two characters seems worthy of reflection. In this moment we come to the question – who is “the stranger” in the adaptation of Bortkiewicz, since with the last scene alienation no longer defines misunderstanding of society embodied by the Judge? Nevertheless, I suggest to reverse this question and ask rather who is not “the stranger” in the adaptation? It turns out that the Judge, in spite of representing different values than Meursault, does it partly only in “the speech”. The same part of his personality follows Meursault, admits that he was right and protects him. The Judge is “stranger” too, but his “strangeness” is hiding under the mask of faith and conventions. He knows that little is needed to find himself in Meursault’s situation.  

**ACT THREE**  
As we read in the fifth part of the book, while waiting for the execution in the prison, Meursault meets with a chaplain, but rejects offered opportunity of turning to God,
explaining that He is a waste of his time. This belief is also shared by Meursault in the adaptation, but chaplain is there replaced by the Judge. The faith in God, fighting against the absurdity of life where Meursault does not find place for a higher instance, believing rather in fortuity and being certain only the incoming death, is “a bucle” of the adaptation. The consequences of assuming the existence of God are reminded to Meursault by the Judge and this thread both starts and ends the adaptation. These consequences – hope, forgiveness of sins, forgiveness of yourself, in a word – the divine justice, as the Judge thinks, would have a good effect on Meursault’s fate. In the confrontation between the Judge and Meursault ending the adaptation, some of the Meursault’s thoughts described in *The Stranger* are spoken by the Judge. For example, in *The Stranger* we read:

> Actually the apparatus stood on the ground; there was nothing very impressing about it, and it was much narrower than I’d imagined. (…) What had struck me at the time was the neat appearance of the guillotine; its shining surfaces and finish reminded me of some laboratory instrument. One always has exaggerated ideas about what one doesn’t know. Now I had to admit it seemed a very simple process, getting guillotined; the machine is on the same level as the man, and he walks toward it as he steps forward to meet somebody he knows. In a sense, that, too, was disappointing. The business of climbing a scaffold, leaving the world below, so to speak, gave something for a man’s imagination to get hold of. But, as it was, the machine dominated everything; they killed you discreetly, with a hint of shame and much efficiency.  

In the adaptation it is the Judge who first mentions the guillotine, asking convicted if he knows that in reality it is placed simply on the ground. He speaks how it looks and what feelings it arouses, comparing climbing on it to being closer to Heaven. Then Meursault adds his name to the names of people who were beheaded – Robespierre, Danton and Marie Antoinette.

**CONCLUSION: LOSING “THE STRANGENESS”**

On the 30 December 2004, on the stage of Rondo Theatre in Słupsk, thanks to the financial support of the Polish Ministry of Culture, the premiere of *The Stranger* by Albert Camus in the adaptation of Marcin Bortkiewicz, directed by Stanisław Madzewski took place. The role of Meursault was played by Bortkiewicz himself, and the role of the Judge was played by Caryl Shift.

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31 A. Camus, *The Stranger*, p. 70.
32 M. Bortkiewicz, *Obcy…*, p. 35.
33 Stanisław Otto Miedziewski studied in the Łódź Film School in 1969-1973. He is the winner of many awards both in Poland and abroad.
34 Caryl Swift is the graduate of the School of Theatre and Film at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth (United Kingdom). In 1992 she began working with the Rondo Theatre. More information: *Das kuchendrama*, theatre program, ed. P. Walendowski, the archive of Wojciech Bogusławski Theatre in Kalisz, Kalisz 2005.
The play was widely advertised in the local press, it also lived to see the reviews. One of the announcement of the play seems to me to be particularly valuable, because it perfectly captures the specificity of Bortkiewicz’s adaptation and can act as a prelude to a summary of my work. The reviewer notes that this play presents the clash of two attitudes to the social order\(^\text{35}\). Indeed, in this article I paid attention to a similar case – that the particular feature distinguishing the adaptation of Bortkiewicz is emphasis on the conflict between social order, defined by Old and New Testament, and the awareness of the absurd, presented in contrary opinions of Meursault and the Judge.

However, it is not that society condemns Meursault because he does not express remorse, but that at the same time he does not believe in God. The Judge cannot forgive him that he “wants to be your god”. We feel that if Meursault accepted God, despite the fact that he committed murder, he would lose his “strangeness”. Unlike that in the book, here this is the Judge, not the chaplain, who speaks in the name of the faith. His attribute is not weight, but a crucifix and a call to repentance. Meursault is a kind of “the prodigal son” who will return to society if he confesses he believes in God. At this point it is worth recalling that Camus once referred to this character with “ironic affection” as to “the only Christ that we deserve\(^\text{36}\).

In the announcement we read that in play directed by Miedziewski “the relationship between executioner and victim, master and servant, criminal and justice begin to lose clarity and blurring himself penetrate each other\(^\text{37}\)”. From the last scene of the adaptation, when the Meursault and Judge confess they are close to each other and they are ready to start life anew, I drew the conclusion that in the Bortkiewicz’s adaptation it is difficult to identify who is the stranger, because “the strangeness” – it is the disappearance of the convictions and traditions in favour of coming to terms with the absurdity of the world that happens even in the existence of the Judge.

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The purpose of this article is a comparative analysis of two literary works – novel *The Stranger* by Albert Camus and its adaptation that has never been published – *Obcy według Alberta Camusa* by Marcin Bortkiewicz to demonstrate how the novel written by Camus was used by Bortkiewicz. The author raises the questions: who is “the stranger” in the adaptation by Bortkiewicz? What is the meaning of “strangeness” that appears in his work? the author argues that the particular feature distinguishing the adaptation of Bortkiewicz emphasises the conflict between social order, defined by Old and New Testament, and the awareness of the absurd presented by Bortkiewicz in the clash of opinions of Meursault and the Judge. Despite the presence of the French-Algerian writer on the Polish scene since 1957 and his importance for the independent theatres, the reception of Camus’s works in Polish theatre is still an unexplored field – this article, according to the intention of the author, is to be incentive to take an interest in this subject.
INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 20th century theories defining “the Other” have been gaining prominence in different disciplines within the Humanities. Works of Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Edward Said or Simone de Beauvoir were instrumental in popularizing the contemporary understanding of Otherness as a conceptual category which governs the processes of creating, organizing, and justifying identities in the context of structures of power. The Other and Otherness refer to what is alien and divergent from the norm, the concept highlights how societies create a sense of belonging, identity and social status by constructing binary opposites, that is applying principles that allow individuals to be classified into two hierarchical groups: “them” and “us”. In this process, the dominant in-group (“us”) constructs one or many dominated out-groups (“them”) by stigmatizing a real or imagined difference. Otherness can therefore be defined in many terms, such as nation, race, religion, gender or sexuality. The purpose of this article is to analyze how Otherness is experienced by male homosexual protagonists of two novels by Andrew Holleran: his 1978 debut Dancer from the Dance, and his latest book, Grief, published in 2006. The analysis aims at showing the changing nature of homosexuals’ estrangement in the United States over a period of thirty years.

1 A. Holleran, Grief, New York 2006, p. 71 [emphasis added].
The Homosexual Other

A homosexual man’s Otherness manifests itself on several levels of his identity. First and foremost, he is the Other of the heterosexual, since heterosexuality as a norm has been constructed in opposition to homosexuality\(^3\). Secondly, he is the Other of “a man”, since the traditional model of masculinity is also constructed along a series of negations and rejections: in order to become “a man”, one has to prove that he is not effeminate, childish or homosexual\(^4\). Anything that even remotely hints at femininity is prohibited, a “real man” must avoid any behavior or characteristic associated with women, as it could threaten his masculinity\(^5\). In those terms, a homosexual is not “a man” (since he has sex with men and sometimes adopts other feminine characteristics), nevertheless, biologically being a man, a homosexual is also the Other of “a woman”. Finally, unable to fulfill the roles proper to a man within a traditional society (to become a father, raise a family, prolong his bloodline), he becomes the Other of “a citizen”, living on the margins of the society, a member of the underclass.

As a result, the homosexual is inflicted by alienation. Hennich Bech claims that loneliness is the state proper to the homosexual\(^6\). The very act of assuming one’s homosexuality is usually accompanied by leaving one’s safe and self-evident world, the homosexual steps out of his fellowship (family, workplace etc.) and becomes alone. The new identity is adopted in a particular way: upon discovering one’s sexual preference, one has to identify with the label “homosexual”. The category precedes the individual and is burdened with several stereotypical associations. It is particularly dynamic, since there is no scientific agreement as to the origins of homosexuality (innate vs socially conditioned) and the resulting identification (essentialist vs constructionist positions). The word itself is relatively new (first used in the 1870s as a medical term) and has come a long way from denoting what used to be considered a pathology, to becoming a unifying term serving as a basis for a positive group identity. Finally, the most recent line of analysis tends to scrap the term altogether, in favor of more inclusive and nuanced denominators of sexual identification within the queer movement, defying the rigid binary division between the homo- and heterosexuals.

The development of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s induced the creation of the “ethnic model” of homosexual identity describing gays and lesbians as a distinct and identifiable population analogous to an ethnic minority\(^7\). In order to

\(^3\) In *the invention of heterosexuality*, Jonathan Katz notes that the modern meaning of “heterosexual” is posterior, secondary to “homosexual” which was coined earlier. (Cf. J. Katz, *the Invention of Heterosexuality*, Chicago 2007, pp. 19–21.)


secure civil rights for lesbian and gay individuals within the social system, the ethnic model represented homosexuals as a coherent community, united by a collective gay and lesbian identity, a legitimate and mainstream – albeit minority – group of citizens. This was an attempt to minimize the Otherness of the homosexual, to blend homosexuals into the common social landscape. Although generally successful, this solidification engendered processes of centralization, and marginalization of those who did not accept this unified and supposedly universal identity.\(^8\)

Growing awareness of the limitations of identity categories, dissatisfaction with the dominant binary understanding of sexual orientation, and alienation of numerous minority groups within the ethnic model led to the emergence of a new conceptual framework for the lesbian and gay identification: the queer theory. Queer denaturalizes sexual identity, recognizing it as a discursive production and rejecting the idea of “natural sexuality” in favor of definitional indeterminacy and elasticity. Therefore it opposes the former politics of identity, replacing assimilationist emphasis of similarity to other groups by a politics of difference, of non-identity – or even anti-identity.\(^9\) By calling into question conventional categories, queer attacks the concept of homosexual identification. For Judith Butler, all identity categories “tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression.”\(^10\) In the same tone, David Halperin denounces the term homosexual: “[h]omosexual’, like ‘woman’, is not a name that refers to a ‘natural kind’ of thing. It’s a discursive, and homophobic, construction.”\(^11\)

Such a radical turn away from the recently established positive collective identity had to create a backlash among those for whom the words ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ still made sense and had once proven politically efficient. The opponents of queer theory tend to see such destabilization (or erasure) of homosexual identity as a homophobic strategy depriving LGBT people of their strengths gained during the gay liberation times. The reluctance in adopting the term ‘queer’ instead of ‘gay’ demonstrates that the categories are not synonymous. Some argue that ‘queer’ will continue to connote perversion and illegitimacy. The conflict has a generational background: older gays refuse to call themselves ‘queer’ also because they cannot accept a once pejorative term as a positive self-description.\(^12\) All in all, there is no agreement whether queer identities should or will eventually replace gay and lesbian identities, and the seemingly terminological conflict reveals deeper cleavages within the LGBT community.

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8 The ethnic model’s “gay” and “lesbian” were predominantly white, the model also excluded and pathologized other non-normative sexualities (butch/femme lesbianism, transvestitism, bisexuality, intergenerational sex etc.) See: A. Jagose, *Queer Theory...*, pp. 63–65.


12 Cf. Ch. Reed, “*Queer* a Sneer no more,” *Age*, 1993, 30 June, p. 15.
The two analyzed novels do not refer directly to the political or academic sphere of discussion over LGBT issues. On the contrary, their interest is above all personal, they follow individual life stories of seemingly unremarkable characters. Nevertheless, the conflicts resulting from the problematic nature of homosexual identities described above constitute the background of both narratives. The present analysis investigates how these conflicted identities are described by Holleran and what problems turned out to be the most specific and most poignant for gays living in the United States in two different historical periods.

"DANCER FROM THE DANCE"

Holleran’s debut novel describes a group of gays living in the 1970s, whose existence is concentrated around nightlife, and dancing in many of the newly emerged gay discotheques. In the 1970s gay bars reached their zenith of popularity and visibility. Matthew D. Johnson and Claude J. Summers describe how

[a]t this period, the stereotype of gay men as obsessed with dance and with recreational drugs appeared. On weekends, in huge clubs in the major cities of North America and Europe, gay men danced the early mornings away to music that itself seemed to be inextricably connected with the gay experience.¹³

The 1969 Stonewall Riots, a milestone event in the history of gay liberation, commenced an era where gays could socialize more freely since their clubs would not be raided by the police anymore. However, social stigmatization of homosexuals was still extremely strong leading to a ghettoization of gays who were allowed “to be themselves” only in a very narrow social context. David Bergman notices that the characters of Dancer from the Dance

live in an exclusively gay neighborhood, have exclusively gay associates, spend their afternoons at the gym and their nights either at the bath houses or dance bars, and manage somehow through marginal jobs, trust funds, or the kindness of strangers to live lives of drugs, dancing, physical beauty, and sex.¹⁴

The disco-goers described by Holleran emphasize their Otherness by leading a lifestyle dramatically different from the “normal” citizens. At first, they are excited by this glamorous new existence – a sequence of never-ending parties where they are surrounded by beautiful people. However, this lifestyle turns out to be a trap, as in the long run it brings them neither satisfaction nor stability. Holleran depicts their

weekends spent in the disco as a routine which has long lost its charm. The narrator describes “the curious quality of the discotheque after you have gone there a long time”:

In the midst of all the lights, and music, the bodies, the dancing, the drugs, you are stiller than still within and (...) you wonder what these people around you are doing. They seemed crazed to you. You stand there on the floor moving your hips (...) and you are thinking, as grave as a judge: What will I do with my life?15

Disenchant by their experience in the discotheque, the characters long to change their lives but find it impossible to escape their current habits. In a passage describing their taxi trips between the city and the beach, the narrator of Dancer from the Dance wonders whether one of the small towns on their way “might be that perfect town he was always searching for, where elms and lawns would be combined with the people he loved”16. However, the dreaming tone of this description changes abruptly:

But those summer taxis drove inevitably through it like vans bearing prisoners who are being transferred from one prison to another – from Manhattan to Fire Island – when all we dreamed of, really, in our deepest dreams, was just such a town as this, quiet, green, untrodden by the snobberies and ambition of the larger world; the world we could not quit.17

Other characters express their despair at the fact that they are doomed to live a life of wandering, “like Jews or Gypsies”, once this routine is “in their blood”18. Homosexuality seems to be a curse for those who claim: “Life would be marvelous if we weren’t homosexuals”19, “I hate being gay, it’s like cancer”20, or “I would like to be a happily married attorney with a house in the suburbs, 2.6 kids, and a station wagon, in which we would drive every summer to see the Grand Canyon, but I’m not! I am completely, hopelessly gay!”21 These words demonstrate the fact that the protagonists are estranged from the homosexual identity which is supposed to be their own: they do not embrace it and wish to be someone else, they aspire to a heteronormative model of life from which they are excluded. Their Otherness has been taken to another level, since they discover and reject “the Other” within them.

The hopelessness resounding in these passages echoes the fact, that homosexuals are virtually outcasts from the American society of the 1970s. Once they come out as gay, they are severed from their families, discriminated on the job market, and have literally nowhere to go. Because of their economic and social status, the protagonists of Dancer... are forced to move to decrepit neighborhoods, like the Lower East Side,

17 Ibidem [emphasis added].
18 Ibidem, p. 249.
19 Ibidem, p. 163.
20 Ibidem, p. 51.
21 Ibidem, p. 17.
where they dwell in flats with no heating or hot water (one character refers to this as “moving to oblivion”\textsuperscript{22}) Finally, they are even expelled from their clubs: they have to abandon places which became too popular and were taken over by straight middle class.

\textit{Dancer...} depicts a community caught up in a vicious circle of self-destruction. Stigmatized as “the Other” of a normal, healthy, decent citizen of the United States of America, the characters plunge in a lifestyle which is a caricature of their own stereotypical image forged by the dominant heteronormative discourse. Unable to seek personal fulfillment within the social framework they find themselves in, and not given any alternative of assimilation that would be inclusive of their sexual orientation, they wage a counter-attack on the society (rejecting “them” who have rejected “us”) and assume their defeat in a glamorous, ecstatic, and nihilistic \textit{danse macabre}.

\textbf{“GRIEF”}

\textit{Grief} was written almost 30 years after \textit{Dancer from the Dance} and is set in contemporary Washington. There are two main characters: the narrator, a visiting professor who comes to teach for a year in the capital, and his landlord, living in a big house in central Washington. They both are solitary gay men in their fifties. The times have changed: social acceptance of homosexuality is high, most of the problems described in \textit{Dancer...} have disappeared. However, both protagonists experience feelings of estrangement which stays in close relation to their sexual identity.

Holleran suggests that homosexuality determines one’s existence forever, even if it no longer determines one’s lifestyle. The landlord, a government attorney, reminds the narrator of the “old American ideals of thrift, cleanliness, order.” He is nothing like the characters of \textit{Dancer...}, in fact, he could be a “model citizen”,

\begin{quote}
the only difference was that he was homosexual, and therefore had led a life different from the one expected of him. The homosexual part, however, was now inactive. He was now a sort of homosexual emeritus. Sex had left him in its wake.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

The landlord had gone to law school partly in order to escape a homophobic town where he had grown up. But even though he had successfully escaped the small town “there was still something about his past he could not shake, apparently, because he was still so sensitive to denunciations of homosexuality”\textsuperscript{24}. Homosexual experience is compared to a trauma, an everlasting imprint on one’s psychology. The landlord “was still angry about the milieu in which he had grown up. […] [T]here was still something anxious about him. […] He no longer had sex, but he got all the more angry when anyone challenged his right to do so”\textsuperscript{25}. The protagonist’s Otherness

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibiden, p. 122.
\item Ibiden, p. 46.
\item Ibiden, p. 47.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
expresses itself in his latent anger and anxiety, however unjustified they may seem in
the 21st century Washington.

Curiously, the characters are also estranged from their own past identities, involving the liberation movement and the gay urban lifestyle they once led. The landlord comments on the racial hostility in Washington which in the 2000s manifests itself in black people’s negative attitude towards the white population: “People like me, the ones who all marched in all the civil rights marches in the sixties, have become very discouraged […] Most of us who were behind civil rights […] have given up on the whole thing.”26. Examples of racial conflicts include an Afro-American mayor firing a white aid for using the word “niggardly” (with calling on the mayor to rehire the aid – mostly by the homosexual community because the aid was gay), and more simple everyday events like the gay gym becoming black and “not very friendly”, or the fact that a black person doesn’t move an inch in the metro to allow a white person to be more comfortable.

The unfriendly atmosphere is one of the reasons the landlord ceased going to gay bars (full of “pimps and prostitutes” or “hustlers who would just as soon slit your throat as look at you”27). Another reason is that the bars “reminded him of a life he’d led years ago in which he had no interest now”28. There are several instances in the novel where the landlord compares bars to “meat markets” and denounces the futility of casual sex and short-term romances. In one of the most poignant fragments he says:

The last time I went here, I was downstairs in the basement standing in a puddle of goo, while some guy chewed on my nipple, and I heard a little voice say: ‘After so many deaths, you’re still doing this?’29

The comment about deaths is a reference to AIDS. The story gradually reveals that even though the epidemic is virtually over, it has profoundly altered the protagonists’ lives. It turns out that the landlord lost 300 to 600 friends to AIDS, and the narrator’s friend comments:

like the rest of us, your landlord has no idea […] why he’s still here. […] He’s one of thousands of gay men who survived AIDS only to realize they are completely alone and have nothing to live for.30

The trauma of AIDS, like the trauma of past homophobia, alienates older gays from their contemporary environment. On one hand, they are still grieving from their numerous losses and cannot fully recover in order to start a new life. On the other hand, their sensation of Otherness is even more intense because for younger gene-

26 Ibidem, p. 11.
27 Ibidem, p. 37.
28 Ibidem.
29 Ibidem, p. 73.
30 Ibidem, p. 50.
rations AIDS has become a mere historical event. The narrator teaches a course on “Literature and AIDS” and reflects on the morbid and surreal character of his work:

Here I am [...] twenty years later, discussing as a historical event the thing that killed my friends. [...] I found myself thinking: I wonder when they will look up across the table and discover that their teacher is also dead. Their open, glistening faces seemed so far removed from the actual events, I wondered why they were taking the course at all.\(^\text{31}\)

At the same time, the narrator is shocked by “the matter-of-fact way in which homosexual narratives were discussed by most students”\(^\text{32}\). Homosexuality had been linked to liberal traditions of enlightenment and tolerance, “it was now an accepted part of American culture – the ongoing extension of freedom to include more and more groups” under the label of “diversity”\(^\text{33}\). The social progress resulting from gay liberation’s success has unexpectedly created an unbridgeable emotional gap between subsequent generations of gays.

There is another dimension to the generation gap dividing younger and older gays. The young remain an object of desire for the old, however, this desire cannot be pursued because younger gays do not consider older gays sexually attractive. Some try to overcome this obstacle by means of clothes or by a specific choice of potential partners but, in general, these attempts are futile and are criticized by the protagonists\(^\text{34}\). Meanwhile the older gays are also not attracted to one another, and as a result they are unable to enter into a relationship. Their loneliness is a consequence of their past lifestyle, the narrator’s friend denounces why.

[We] spent our lives having the sort of sex that was accompanied by an unwritten guarantee that it was completely dissociated from any form of emotional or social attachment whatsoever. I mean how many of us were ever really able to integrate sex with the rest of our lives? And now we realize we’re not looking for sex anymore.\(^\text{35}\)

The protagonists’ lives are therefore characterized by a somehow nostalgic attachment to the past, and an inability to develop satisfactory modes of living in the present. They gradually lose interest in the gay world they feel no longer part of, and they abandon activities which used to structure their lives. The narrator observes how his landlord has ceased going to walks, lectures, concerts, museums – “all the things

\(^{31}\) Ibidem, p. 75.

\(^{32}\) Ibidem.

\(^{33}\) Ibidem, p. 76.

\(^{34}\) The narrator’s friend gently mocks an older gay wearing a baseball cap and tight blue jeans in order to “play a role he’s too old for” (ibidem, p. 52); the landlord is fed up with “the delusion of Caucasians looking for Asian boyfriends twenty years younger than themselves” and his gay acquaintances “all looking for someone who did not exist” (ibidem, p. 57).

\(^{35}\) Ibidem, p. 55.
he’d done so many years ago and were not subject to resuscitation”\(^{36}\). His apartment reflects the same attitude (“the décor, which had seemed so cutting-edge in the seventies, now looked, incredibly, dated”\(^{37}\)), just like his attempt to find a partner: a personal ad he puts in a newspaper which the narrator judges “more of a gesture for its own sake, since most people these days were using the computer”\(^{38}\). Finally, it turns out that his other tenant, who is living downstairs with a young attractive boyfriend, is his ex-partner responsible for his nervous breakdown twenty years before. As for the narrator, despite encouragements to start a new life in Washington from both the landlord and his friend, he is unable to move on and returns to his family home in Atlanta, empty since the death of his parents.

**CONCLUSION**

The gay characters of Holleran’s novels experience their Otherness in different ways. The protagonists of *Dancer from the Dance* are “the Other” of an exemplary, healthy, successful, male citizen of the United States of America in the early 1970s. They are confronted with a heteronormative model to which they aspire, but which they cannot emulate by definition. As a result, they are pushed away from the mainstream of American life into the underground existence of drugs, promiscuity, and oblivion. Their lives are vulnerable, superficial, and characterized by an endless masquerade and longing that cannot be satisfied. The protagonists of *Grief* are “the Others” of both the heterosexual majority and the modern urban homosexual. Social progress has allowed them to come out as gay and enjoy equal rights with their heterosexual peers. However, they grew up in times when homophobia was a commonplace and their minds are tainted with past traumas. They could not flourish in their youth when their identities were developing, their relations with others were shallow and disintegrated, and as a result they find themselves alone and alienated in their adulthood. They are estranged from their ideological roots (the civil rights movement and gay liberation), and they feel ostracized by the young generation of gays who do not share their experience of discrimination and AIDS, but who also do not pay attention to them since they do not find them sexually attractive. In Holleran’s novels, Otherness remains the core of homosexual existence. One can argue that it could only be erased by the dissolution of the very notion of “a homosexual” and its context. Such perspective is not implausible\(^{39}\). Queer theorists point out that the distinction between homosexual and heterosexual lifestyles becomes less and less obvious. Reevaluation of the norms of masculinity, growing doubts concerning

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\(^{36}\) Ibidem, p. 98.

\(^{37}\) Ibidem, p. 45.

\(^{38}\) Ibidem, p. 56.

the binary division of sexual identities, diminishing role of traditional marriage and family, multiplication of socially accepted relationship patterns and modes of behavior may in the long run lead to the total extinction of “the homosexual species”, and the fact of somebody having sex with “members of the same sex” will not imply a distinct identity.

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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this article is to analyze the changing nature of homosexuals’ estrangement in the United States over a period of thirty years on the basis of two novels by Andrew Holleran: his 1978 debut *Dancer from the Dance*, and his latest novel, *Grief*, published in 2006. Otherness will be understood in terms of identity crises experienced by the protagonists who feel alienated from their social environment. While in the 1970s the sensation of Otherness was provoked by the protagonists’ clash with the heteronormative model of masculinity and social roles, in the 2000s it is caused by the generation gap between gays, including divergent experiences of homophobia, post-AIDS trauma, and new forms of discrimination, such as ageism.
According to many critics, *Una Giornata Particolare* ["A Special Day"]\(^1\), Ettore Scola’s film from 1977, is probably the most prominent work made by this significant Italian director\(^2\). Action takes place on 6 May 1938. On this day Adolf Hitler visited Rome in order to consolidate the German-Italian alliance. Scola begins his movie with a six-minute long, black and white propaganda material depicting this event\(^3\). After short documentary backdrop image suddenly becomes colorful. Location moves to one of the expressionist buildings in Nomentano – eastern Rome district, popular residential area for fascist bureaucrats and their families. While the vast majority of residents went to the parade, only few people remain. Antonietta Triberti (Sophia Loren) and Gabriele (Marcello Mastroianni) are the ones among them.

\(^1\) English translations of this and other Italian titles come from the original distributor.
\(^2\) At the beginnings Scola represented a specifically Italian genre called *Cinema medio* (*Popular cinema*), that “supplied various kinds of entertainment for the Italian people but sometimes provoked them to reflect on their own life and fairly often entered into relationship with real art”. In his earlier movies elements of his own artistic style as well as mentioned “real art” were ironical, often sociological observations, grotesqueness and visual deformations, oneiric tone, satric, country humor mixed with sensation or adventure. Scola’s most successful period was the seventies and eighties. Films such as *Drama of Jelousy* (1970), *Down and Dirty* (1974), *A Special Day* (1977), *Terrace* (1980), *The Ball* (1983) gained critical acclaim and won several international awards, see: T. Miczka, *W Cinecittà i okolicach. Historia kina włoskiego od połowy lat pięćdziesiątych do końca lat osiemdziesiątych XX wieku [In Cinecittà and its Surroundings. The History of Italian Cinema from the Mid-fifties to the Late Eighties of the 20th Century]*, Cracow 1993, pp. 82, 147, 296–300, 408–412.
\(^3\) It was based on original footage derived from The Instituto Nazionale L.U.C.E (L’Unione Cinematographica Educativa/Educational Film Union. As reported by Pierluigi Erbaggio, L.U.C.E was “one of the main instruments of Fascist propaganda, but it also represented a unique agent of modernization in post-World War I Italian Cinema”, see: P. Erbaggio, *Instituto Nazionale Luce: A National Company with International Reach*, [in:] *Italian Silent Cinema. The Reader*, ed. G. Bertellini, London 2013, p. 221. Snapshots of Hitler’s victorious passage from Berlin to Rome watched by thousands of people are accompanied by the voice of announcer who declares unity between Italians and Germans, the fascist flag and the swastika.
Antonietta stays at home although she would rather join his husband Emanuelle (John Vernon) – an average-significant official, head of department in the ministry for East-Africa – and their six children. Instead she has to clean out the apartment, because the Tiberi’s, in opposition to their wealthier neighbors, are not able to afford domestic help. Sleepy and a little distracted, she let her pet, a talking grackle named Rosmunda, fly out of an open cage. Chasing the bird took her straight to the apartment of Gabriele (Marcello Mastroianni), middle-aged suspended radio presenter, who lives on the opposite side. For Antonietta and Gabriele this unexpected meeting creates an opportunity to spend some time together, to talk and get to know each other better – to celebrate their own private “special day”.

In Ettore Scola’s funny, humane A Special Day – an acting tour de force for Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni – Antonietta and Gabriele are never really a couple, but their brief encounter lights up the screen with the kind of radiance you get only from great movie actors who also are great stars.4

writes “The New York Times” critic Vincent Canby. Mastroianni’s and Loren’s indeed act marvelously despite the fact, that their roles are radically different from what viewers become accustomed. Appearance in Scola’s movie was the biggest turnout in Loren’s career since her role in La Ciociara (Two Women) from 1960, for which she won an Academy Award5. For Mastroianni playing a homosexual created an opportunity to break his long-lasting image of a “Latin Lover”6.

Although being an intimate production based on dialogues, which can be easily adapted into theatrical play7, A Special Day, due to its complexity, went through various analyses. Most common were focused on the main characters describing them as “strangers”, “outcasts”, “solitudes”, “defeated” ones, “those who are left behind”8. For Giacomo Fichter the Italian society is as relevant as Gabriele and Antonietta9. He perceives A Special Day as a story about Italians’ conformity. Millicent J. Marcus lists a number of dichotomies on which the film is based: “history vs. story, factuality vs. fiction, public vs. private, documentary vs. feature film, […] what happens in the streets


7 R. Saltz, The Führer Visit Can’t Suppress This Friendship. ‘Working on a Special Day’ at 59E59 Theaters, [on-line:] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/25/theater/reviews/working-on-a-special-day-at-59e59-theaters.html?_r=0, [08.10.2014].


9 “Proof that Una Giornata Particolare is primarily about Italy and only secondary about Gabriele and Antonietta is in the fact that the film has three main characters, not two. The uniformed crowd that we left on the gate, reveling in a myopic certainty of its own unchallenged swagger, is the film third character”; ibidem, p. 163.
vs. what happens in the bedroom”. Tadeusz Miczka sets *A Special Day* in a broader context of the seventies – “the silver age” of Italian cinema – where films were politically and socially involved but not as significant as those from two preceding decades. In further part of this article – unlike most of the reviews and critical inquiries which focus on Antonietta and the position of women in Fascism – I will try to offer a slightly different interpretation, using the character of Gabriele as a pretext to introduce and briefly discuss the condition of homosexuals in Fascist Italy.

During the late thirties, a period in which the story in *A Special Day* takes place, there was a radical tightening in state policy against homosexuals. This shift was caused most likely due to closer relations with Nazi Germany. On the basis of German racial ideas, homosexuals have transferred from those who are not masculine enough, do not procreate or – according to the teachings of the Church – act immorally, into “an offence to the prestige of the race” that must be removed from view, if not physically. Racism was one of the reasons for that change, although not only – nineteenth-century positivist ideas (neo-Darwinism, eugenics, Malthusianism and other), religion, conservatism associated with the Monarchy, progressivism embodied in the fascist state, Mussolini’s machismo and his pro-natalist propaganda also played an important role.

Eszter Andits describes how the question of homosexuality became a high-ranked political issue. Contrary to Germany, where the sanctions against non-heterosexual practices described as “lewdness”, “severe lewdness” and “bestiality” (equivalent of sodomy) were included in paragraph 175 of the German Code Civil (1871) and broadened during the Nazi era – in Fascist Italy since implementation of the Race Laws in 1938 there were no legal acts related directly to homosexuality. The “Bachelors’ Tax” (1927-1943) imposed on the incorrigible unmarried men, which Gabriele has to pay (“Just as if loneliness is such a wealth” – he comments), was established rather to promote marriage and family than to sanction homosexuality, although most of its victims came from the LGBT community. Tax exemptions for prolific families

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11 See the chapter *Kryzys po włosku* [*Italian Crisis*], T. Miczka, op. cit., pp. 207–382.


13 E. Andits, ‘*Sore of the Nations Body*: Repressions of Homosexual under Italian Fascism*, [Master Thesis], Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, 2010. Digital version available at: http://goya.ceu.hu/search-%3F%26aandits%26aandits%21%2C%22%2C%22%2CB%26frame%3F%26FF%3D%26aandits%26eszter%26helga%26%21%2C%21%2C, [08.10.2014]. In her work Andits refers to primary sources, contemporary authors and ideologist along with scholars rather unknown in Poland, like Renzo de Felice, Enzo Traverso, Roger Griffin, George Mosse, Bruno Wannebo. Among them only Traverso was translated in Polish.

played similar role, supporting natural growth\textsuperscript{15} – Antonietta reveals to Gabrielle that she already has six children and by your seventh “they give you a bonus”. However, ideas to legally punish homosexuality appeared quite frequently. Early version of the Italian Penal Code (1930) contained article 528 which sanctioned homosexual relations with the penalty of seclusion but it was removed from the final text due to strategic reasons. Pragmatism was one of the solutions by means of which the government intended to solve the problem of homosexuality. In the confrontation of two different views of legislators – harsh punishment at the hands of a fascist state and party introducing strict moral order on one hand and the tendency to ignore homosexuality (at least legally) on the other – the second one has ultimately prevailed\textsuperscript{16}.

Paradoxically, the lack of legal sanctions against homosexuality avoided affairs which took place in countries where such legal tools were available and gained certain popularity for the gay rights movements – famous trials of Oscar Wilde perhaps are the most spectacular example\textsuperscript{17}. Giovanni Dall’Orto claims that homosexuality constituted “the realm of the unsaid, of whispers and euphemism, of circumlocution and hidden faces: a world that is there but which doesn’t exist because it isn’t allowed to emerge into the light of day”\textsuperscript{18}. The following phone conversation between Gabriele and his friend Marco, where Gabriele is the only voice we hear, faithfully illustrates this state of alienation:

I should be used to it. Already when I was a child I was locked up or alone. Of course you do matter. It’s only so absurd. They want us to feel guilty. Today I almost had, how one say that, committed a stupidity. The arrival of opposite neighbor saved me […]. Life is worth living anyway? A bird will come to remind you of it. Only it’s a special day for me today. Just like in a dream in which you want to scream but you cannot. And I want to talk, talk. You notice that? I would like to step into the street and tell a stranger everything about myself. I would like to scare him, threaten him, do something to him. Everything better than being locked here […].

From the twenties to the late thirties gays, lesbians, androgynous people, bi- or transsexuals and others were silenced and silently oppressed. As shown by Patrizia Dogliani, homosexuality “potentially damaged the virile image that fascism had of itself but […] was considered so marginal to the fascist cult of masculinity that it could be dealt with on a local level by limited powers given to the police to admonish persistent deviants and eventually place them under house arrest or subject them to internal exile”\textsuperscript{19}. “Repressive tolerance”, term derived from one of the essays written

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{15} E. Andits, op. cit., pp. 27–28.  
\textsuperscript{16} Ibidem, pp. 31–32.  
\textsuperscript{19} E. Andits, op. cit., p. 31; D. Duncan, op. cit., p. 190.}
by Herbert Marcuse\textsuperscript{20}, is a good description for this practice. However, published in 1965 it mostly referred to hidden totalitarian aspects of post-war liberal and capitalistic democracies. Besides it must be consider that despite official stillness of law, constant, sometimes hysterical, anti-gay witch-hunts filled the pages of both catholic and secular magazines\textsuperscript{21}. That has only deepened their social stigmatization.

Certain changes came along with the conquest of Abyssinia in 1935 and consolidated by implementing the Race Laws in 1938. Conquering North Africa, Italians have encountered with undeveloped domestic tribes. This contact helped them confirming their belief in the superiority of white European race. Its purity had to be protected against the threat represented by violent and primitive natives\textsuperscript{22}. This fact verifies the thesis that “dissimilarity is always understood relationally (you can always be different only in relation to something [or somebody – SZ.P])”\textsuperscript{23}. Echoes of this narrative reflect in the comic book entitled \textit{Nel regno del Pigmei} [\textit{In the Pigmy Empire}] found by Antonietta on the kitchen floor. “Surprising that such small beasts commit such beastliness” – she begins to read but quickly falls into a strange kind of drowsiness, “a clear commentary on the consciousness-numbing effect of the Fascist propaganda operation as a whole”\textsuperscript{24} – using Millicent J. Marcus words.

With the implementation of the Race Laws homosexuals figuratively turn into Africans – their (highly stereotypical) external features, like petite physique, sunken eyes, high-pitch voice or coquette behavior, became as visible as black skin. After Mussolini had formed The Italian Colonial Empire (1936) and shortly before the outbreak of expected world war, he expanded his fascist project both politically and anthropologically. In those changed circumstances homosexuals’ absence of virility and sexual “normality” began to be perceived as a serious obstacle to the recovery of Roman Empire and the proclamation of the New Man – brave, combative, masculine fascist warrior\textsuperscript{25}. Besides being charged as common and criminal delinquents, mostly linked with acts of lechery, obscenity, sexual licentiousness or prostitution, homosexuals develop now into political ones: defeatist, pacifist, burghers, individualists, decadents, non-patriots. People who can only scandalize and cannot be used in a battle, in short – the antifascist\textsuperscript{26}.


\textsuperscript{22} In 1937 was the promulgation of law against so called \textit{modumato}. It sanctioned the concubinage of Italian men with black women from conquered African territories, see: E. Andits, op. cit., p. 68.


\textsuperscript{24} M.J. Marcus, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{25} E. Andits, op. cit., pp. 19‒24.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibidem, pp. 32–35.
When the policy against homosexuals becomes an interest of the state, any private place to hide can no longer be available. The prosecution consisted many of tools: “The lucky ones – went through only the trials of diffida (warning) ammonizione (probation) but these measures very often ended up sending the diffidati and ammoniti to confinement” – reports Eszter Andits. We can conclude that Gabriele is probably an ammoniti when he says to Antonietta: “I have been living here for two months and we have never seen each other”. Millicent J. Marcus who underlines that most of the action in Ettore Scola’s film takes place in closed domestic spaces which “serve as a microcosm for the Fascist state”, notice an interesting paradox related to the design Gabriele’s and Antonietta’s apartments. While the former correspondents with current style aesthetics, “is a paragon of art deco ideals: it is light, airy, orderly, discretely moderne”, the latter represents a “state of total disarray” which cannot be cleaned or fixed now matter how badly she tried to do so.

Sparing décor of Gabriele flat and stacked books pulled out from the shelves suggest however some state of temporality and foreboding (“I heard about it yesterday. They are always doing that during those ceremonies” – he seemingly discusses with Marco the arrest of their colleague). Gabriele does not feel well in this place (“Everything better than being locked here”), he gives the impression of being captured in the area that is unfamiliar to him, to which he can’t accustom himself (“I should be used to it. Already when I was a child I was locked up or alone”), within hostile community (residents of Nomentano district are mostly fascist apparatchiks). According to Millicent J. Marcus, Gabriele is in a trap of self-sameness – “not in literal, sexual terms, but in the sense of his emotional isolation which has brought Gabriele to the threshold of suicide” It can cautiously be said that his apartment is a transit-camp.

On the other hand there are several clues pointing at least ambiguous links between Gabriele and his oppressors. As we learn, Gabriele was a member of the National Fascist Party. We cannot clearly say whether this decision was due to conformism or belief. Working as a presenter on the state radio, EIAR (Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche), he managed to hide his homosexuality for a long period of time. Gabriele confesses to Antonietta that he even got engaged with his friend from work in order to pretend that he is in a happy relationship with a woman. “She was a good friend who wanted to help me – he recalls – But I was probably playing my part too bad”.

When this attempt fails, Gabriele delivers a fake medical certificate proving that he isn’t a homosexual. As he admits, it was a mistake (“If you really aren’t one, you don’t walk around with such a certificate. You’re trying to appear different from whom you are. They force you to feel ashamed, to hide yourself”). Those mentioned actions were a sort of camouflage, an adaptation to enemy’s requirements in order to survive the worst – a reference to Jews hiding on the Aryan side arises almost au-

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27 Ibidem, p. 55.
28 M.J. Millicent, op. cit.
29 Ibidem.
tomatically. In his observations Giacomo Lichter goes even further suggesting that working as a radio host, a person who “is talking and all Italy listens” – as said by Antonietta – in some sense makes Gabriele a co-participant of state policy, “an agent of his own repression (and perhaps not only his – Sz.P.)”.

According to Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzeziński, one of the six, mutually supportive, features of totalitarian systems was its monopoly in the means of mass communication. Radio was considered as a highly efficient and all-embracing tool of totalitarian propaganda. For Daniella Coscella radio is the film’s third main character:

> The sound of the radio broadcast reporting the parade in rhetorical, dull voice runs across the audio track seamlessly – she notices – It fills the moments of silence, it overloads the moments of dialogue. As some sort of aural *dues ex machina* it interferes with, and simultaneously covers up and resolves tension. Radio functions as the zip between public and space: it opens the former, it enwraps the latter.

In fact, sounds coming out from the speaker obstruct nearly every intimate moment when Gabriele and his unexpected visitor gradually become partners:

> Fascist anthem *Giovinezza* opens proceedings just as Gabriele tries to teach Antonietta the rumba […]; Mussolini, and then Hitler, speak as Gabriele and Antonietta climaxes into mutual and open confessions of their experiences; German marching songs underscore their two moments of intimacy, the rooftop kiss and their intercourse, which climaxes to faraway cheers of *Duce, Duce* in a dissonant culmination of conformism and resistance.

Given the importance of the radio as an official voice of fascist state and party, a person who does not meet the expectations required from a men and a citizen simply cannot be used as its transmitter. Gabriele itself is (ironically) aware of his non-representativeness in following sequences:

> A: So you are talking an all Italy listens. And if you rush into laughing?
> G: There is a heavy fine for that.
> A: Did you get it?
> G: You bet. […]
> A: This is one of your colleagues? [Question about the announcer which voice we hear]
> G: Guido Lotari. He is very good, he doesn’t rush into laughing.[…]

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34 G. Lichter, op. cit., pp. 159–160.
A: Do you know Rabagliati\textsuperscript{35} personally? I imagine him like a long tall man, always cheerful.
G: Like me.
A: You don’t seem very cheerful to me.
G: That depends on a day.

A: So why were you dismissed from the radio? Just for fun?
G: Maybe because my voice was not like it should have been: solemn, belligerent, full of Roman pride. I didn’t have any Roman pride because I’m from Viterbo.

During the early years of Mussolini’s regime Gabriele’s homosexuality could be ignored (he doesn’t look like a stereotypical gay, rather like a higher middle-class representative) or dissembled, perceived as a taboo. In the late thirties it started to be visible when every private aspect, even sexuality, became a matter of public opinion. Gabriele’s career as a radio broadcaster, based on the true story of Nunzio Filogamo\textsuperscript{36} – may serve as an example of evolution in the perception of homosexuals by Italian fascists. Even in radio, the invisible medium, presenters must appear to be cheerful.

Gabriele is characterized by the warden, Signora Cecicila (another person left in the building) and by himself in his dramatic coming out (which looks more like a self-incrimination) with terms that refer both to moral and political sphere. In warden’s point of view – this figure functions as an individual representative of the absent crowd\textsuperscript{37} – he is “the one from sixth floor”, a “queer fish”, “strange guy”, “villain”, “wart”, “traitor”, “antifascist”, “bastard”. After not reciprocating Antonietta’s kisses Gabriele describes himself as a “faggot”, “gay”, “pooper”, a “defeatist”, “unusable”, “with depraved tendencies” as heard after his suspension from the radio.

Nevertheless, he successfully escapes from most of the clichés that fascist and postwar film-makers were trying to adapt to homosexuals: first seen them as strangers and antifascists, others – living and creating during biggest triumphs of Christian Democracy – as strangers and fascist or at least fascist collaborators. Germans are juxtaposed to brave, righteous and heterosexual partisans in Roberto Rossellini’s\textit{ Roma, Città Aperta [Rome, Open City]}\textsuperscript{38}. Marcello, title figure of Bernardo Bertolucci’s\textit{ Il Conformista [The Conformist]} had experienced sexual harassment in his childhood that most likely affected his political choices\textsuperscript{39}. In Luchino Visconti’s\textit{ La Caduca Degli Dei (The Damned)} Martin von Essenbeck (played by Helmut Berger – actor discovered by Visconti, who openly admitted to his bisexuality) dressed as drag

\textsuperscript{35} Alberto Rabagliati (1906‒1974) – popular Italian singer who has his own radio audition on EIAR called \textit{Canta Rabagliati (Rabagliati Sings)}.

\textsuperscript{36} Nunzio Filogamo (1902‒2002) – radio and television personality, actor, singer who was suspecting of being gay, see: D. Chansel, \textit{Europe On-screen. Cinema and the Teaching of History}, Council of Europe 2001, p. 91.

\textsuperscript{37} G. Lichter, op. cit., p. 163.

\textsuperscript{38} D. Duncan, op. cit., p. 187.

queen imitates Marlena Dietrich’s Lola from *Blue Angel* (1930) at the beginning of the movie, before inserting a Nazi uniform at the end. There is another scene in this film illustrating The Night of the Long Knives from 1934 in which SA members are discretely murdered during their homosexual orgy – for Visconti, who himself was homosexual, this scene expresses his fear of being punish for his “deviation”.

Gabriele looks like an average man but thanks to his brilliancy and complexity he stands above mediocrity. Despite having certain predispositions he does not represent the type of persons – factual people and literary figures – described by Andrzej Waśkiewicz as “strangers by choice” who – like Seneca, Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Emile Henry David Thoreau or Richard Feynman – “feel that their true homeland is not from this world”. “People with whom they come into contact mostly don’t understand them, stay away and even despise them – explains Waśkiewicz – They, however, do not bother or worry. They are in fact strangers but not alienated (…)”. Gabriele is eager to be a part of the society but the society rejects him. “The man from the sixth doesn’t oppose fascism” – he responds to one of the accusations made by the warden – “Fascism opposes him”. He is both alienated and a stranger or, to be precise, he is alienated which makes him a stranger.

In his case closer figures are a boy, a mocker, a man on the margin and a sodomite (within the meaning of Pier Paolo Pasolini). Gabriele often express boyish spontaneity which remains in opposition to rigid, puritanical, military-organized fascist community. He is learning how to dance rumba “just like that”, gets on the abandoned scooter and begins to ride around Antonietta’s apartment, stealthily eats a chocolate bar found during her short absence. Gabriele resists to artificial habits strongly promoted by the regime as when he consequently says the forbidden form *lei* instead of favored *voi* which upsets Antonietta and makes Gabriele some kind of a rebel in her eyes. His most powerful and damaging weapon is however his continuous ability to laugh:

Comedy, in Pirandellian terms, implies a slightly skewed perspective, the *avvertimento del contrario*, an awareness of the discrepancy between appearance and substance – writes Millicent J. Marcus – As long as Fascism presents itself from a rigorously frontal perspective, insisting on the perfect alignment of image to its referent, then the regime’s truth claims will remain unassailable, but the minute that the vantage point strays from dead center, the minute that it becomes even slightly off-kilter, then the Fascist trappings of power can veer dangerously close to the ludicrous.

Gabriele skillfully mocks explicit symptoms of Antonietta’s indoctrination. “Poor horses and poor women” – he jokes while looking at the pictures of Mussolini’s steed, whose names (Ned, Aprile and Fru Fru) she perfectly remembers, in her scrapbook

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42 M. Marcus, op. cit.
full of misogynic quotes and images of the Duce – “They say he mounts a horse in the morning and a woman in the evening”. He stands astonished next to her handcrafted portrait of Mussolini made of buttons but makes a scathing comment moment later: “Since the introduction of the zipper, we have to think up something for the buttons”.

He decides not to joke while listening to Antonietta’s story about the day when she saw Mussolini passing her on a horse at Villa Borghese (“I was completely ablaze – she mentions – [...] I felt my knees buckle. Then everything around me started to turn and I fainted. That day I noticed I was expecting Littorio”). This scene, when a galloping ruler is believed to have supernatural abilities, just as medieval kings in France and England, surely has a comedic potential. This time however Gabriele remains serious. In a tale of a nearly illiterate woman charmed by fascist propaganda, who – in act of pure bigotry or conformism – names her youngest child Littorio (just like lictorian fasces, the most important symbol of Italian fascism), drama exceeds comedy.

In her essay *Choosing the Margin as a Space for Radical Openness* (1989), bell hooks claims that one of the main privileges of being on the margin – where marginality is understood not as a condition “one wishes to loose – to give up or surrender as part of moving into the center – but rather of a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one’s capability to resist” – is “the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, to new worlds”. Referring primarily to the situation of African American (as herself) in the second half of twentieth century, books is indeed aware that this particular term is more associated with violence than with the possibility of choice. Gabriele did not choose to be on a margin, he was violently marginalized, although he gained the capability of seeing things better. His most common reaction to the absurdity of Fascism is ironical laughter. The government is well aware of demystifying power of laughter, so the radio presenters must be entirely serious; laughing during live broadcasts is severely fined. Thanks to his specific position and awareness, Gabriele sees in Antonietta a partner in misery. He urges her to realize her own marginalization and oppose against it.

Even if Gabriele laughs, it is mostly laughter through tears. “I have little reason to laugh” – he responds to Antonietta’s accusation that he “laughs about everything”. In *A Special Day* there are moments when laughter isn’t possible, when it seems to be forced or even inappropriate, like when Gabriele’s speaks to Marco: “Let’s just laugh.

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43 In Federico Fellini’s *Amarcord* women gathered at fascist rally in Rimini desperately wanted to be touch by the Duce, there is also a surrealistic wedding before gigantic flowered statue imitating Mussolini’s face who blessed the newlywed, see: M. Kornatowska, *Fellini*, Gdansk 2003, pp. 223–252.

44 Form of notation preferred and suggested by the author.


about it. Crying can be done alone, but not laughing. Do you recall that time in Ostia with that watermelon? Now come on, please, laugh. What a sad friend have I chosen.”

Gabriele is a tragic figure, a person marked by death, fully conscious of the approaching end. He fills most of the features that Rocky O’Donovan assigns to a sodomite, whose portrait Pier Paolo Pasolini has creatively discussed in his later works: screenplays Saint Paul and Porn-theo-Colossal, novel Petrolio, films such as Salò O Le 120 Giornate Di Sodoma [Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom] and I Racconti Di Canterbury [The Canterbury Tales]:

To be a sodomite means to stand still (like the angels at the gate of Eden) at the center of an experience of annihilation that has taken place or is about to take place. Read in this manner, the inhabitants of this inhospitable place [the Sodome – SZ.P] become the messengers of the end itself. Similar to angelic spokesmen of divine will, the sodomites both recall and announce the annihilation. Their presence and their language speak annihilation. It is almost superfluous to remember that, throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance instance of natural devastation were related to the presence of sodomites within the wall of city.

Intentionally forgo having children in a country where fertility was particularly emphasized, homosexuals were seen as advocates of a particular kind of apocalypse – a demographic one. They did not want to fight and were not able to multiply. Therefore, the authorities decided to send them to the internment camps, like Sardinia where remained Marco and soon go Gabriele, or to other places of detention. In Passolini’s works the annihilation often takes apocalyptic dimensions, in A Special Day we observe an apocalypse of a single person. Gabriele’s introductory scene well illustrates his feeling of imminent disaster. We see a man writing letters arranged into several stacks, which turn out to be adverts but might as well be farewell notes. There is a pistol lying next to him, but Gabriele decides not to use it. Knocking on the door frightens him; he expects a visit from fascist policemen but feels relieved after seeing a stranger woman at his doorway. The sentence was deferred but not cancelled. At evening, during the same “special day”, two mysterious men in coats invade his apartment forcing him to leave. His fatalism finally finds its verification.

Giacomo Lichtner in his essay about Concorrenza Sleale (Unfair Competition) – another Ettore Scola’s film from 2001, where he returns to the subject previously rose in A Special Day – mentions two separate approaches to film as a historic source:

47 The term “sodomite”, as used by O’Donovan, gains its second, distinctive meaning. Similar situation occurs with the term “queer” (as we remember, the warden describes Gabriele as a queer fish) where offensive description is taken from the language of the oppressor and placed in the academic discourse. Błażej Warkocki hopes that the same will happen with his phrase “homo niewiadomo”, see: B. Warkocki, op. cit., pp. 9–10.


49 The action of Concorrenza Sleale takes place in 1938 (just as in A Special Day). Main characters are two concurring Roman tailors – Catholic Umberto Melchiorri (Diego Abantantuono) and his Jew-
“[…] one that looks at film as a cultural artefact and a source in the study of the cultural history of the period in which it was produced (Solrin 1980); the other that looks at film as historiographical artefact with unique and emotional and narrative qualities that make it a source in the study of the period the film represents (Rosenstone 2001)”. Lichtner proposes an alternative solution which combines these two approaches: “Film chief value as a source is in its double historicity: that is a film’s ability to comment both on periods and, simultaneously, mediate between them, both reflecting and affecting popular perceptions of the past (Lichtner 2008)”50. He claims that the one and another Scola’s films have those abilities, although A Special Day fulfills its binary role more competently.

I agree with Lichtner’s statement. As I tried to describe in this article, in A Special Day Ettore Scola – together with his long-term film partner, screenwriter Ruggero Maccari and through a role brilliantly played by Marcello Mastroianni – presents a convincing image of a gay seen as a stranger. A stranger who for a long time was treated as if he officially doesn’t exist, but at the same time was sharply opposed as the one who undermines the ideals of virility and masculinity. Suddenly he becomes visible in a very sinister way: as a threat for the fascist state and fascists’ aspirations to create a New Man. Confronted with a powerful enemy (“All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state”51 – Mussolini declared in 1928) Gabriele isn’t however a passive victim, he takes a wide range of activities – from those resulting from conformity to subtle acts of resistance.

Furthermore, A Special Day fits well within the character of its times. In the seventies directors and writers more often and boldly undertook the issue of homosexuals and homosexuality52. Since then homosexuals again become visible but in a radically different way than in the late thirties – not as strangers anymore but rather as compagnons de voyage [fellow travelers]. Over the years, with varying degrees of success, experiencing failures and stumbles we are trying to understand them, capture their perspective and thus to enrich our own.


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In this paper I focus on *Una Giornata Particolare (A Special Day)*, a film made in 1977 by Italian director Ettore Scola, with Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni in starring roles. Character of Gabriele (Mastroianni) will serve here as a pretext to present and briefly discuss the condition of homosexuals in Fascist Italy. In the late thirties of 20th century, a period in which the action of the film is played, there was a radical shift in the state policy toward homosexuals. With the implementation of racial law, homosexuality – which previously wasn’t legally sanctioned, however strictly opposed by alternative methods – becomes a political matter. Scola’s film well illustrates the state of alienation felt by homosexuals often treated as strangers (and with the end of the thirties also as enemies of Fascism and fascist imagination of a New Man) both by state and society.
Margery Kempe is one of the characters that are truly hard to classify due to their extra-ordinariness. Nowadays, “saint women”, medieval mystics, women who experienced revelation, are often considered to be hysterical. In some regard, it is the result of the still very present Freudian influence. In Margery Kempe’s case the association is not even that far-fetched. How else could we treat a woman whose life story is marked by such deep irony? Despite her strong resolution to give her life to Jesus and live in purity it was her revelation that bore the stigma of repressed sexuality. She experiences her first vision after a nervous breakdown connected with the birth of her first child. In The book of Margery Kempe there is a description of what nowadays is called postpartum depression. She is visited by demons telling her that she is unclean. The confessor refuses to listen to her. The rescue comes in the form of Jesus. Christ marks her as a person whom he will have a very special relationship with. Not until after many years is she able to force her husband to live in chastity with her and that is when she gives her life to Jesus completely. She experiences a number of visions, the symbols of her anointment are uncontrollable crying and tears. She starts to wear white, the symbol of virginity, and sets off on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Yet, she is far from assuming the role of a typical “saint woman”.

Woman’s role in the Middle Ages was firmly set. In this case, as in many others, the determinant of values was dualism. The order that was for many years present was the one described by Saint Augustine in De Doctrina Christiana. A woman cannot cast a spear or shoot a bow, yet she is excellent at managing a household. She knows nothing of the affairs of state, yet she knows everything there is to know about bringing up children. To her – not to her husband – belong all the issues

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concerning household. To her husband, on the other hand, belongs all that is public. Adding to this picture wife’s obligation to serve her husband would create the image of a medieval “good wife”. The only socially accepted exception were women devoted to God – virgins, nuns and anchoresses. It seemed that there was no place for any deviations. If so – where does Margery Kempe belong? On the one hand, she is not able to blot out her role as a wife and mother; on the other hand, she experiences revelation and receives the – dubious in her case – status of a “saint woman”. She renounces her carnality only to find she is not able to escape her sexuality completely. Despite celibacy with her husband she still feels desire. What is more, her religious experiences are at the same time erotic ones. In her visions it is Jesus whom she has sexual relations with. It is not without reason that nowadays Margery Kempe is often adored by some followers of different feminist theories. It cannot be doubted that her story is one of a kind when it comes to attempts to escape social conventions. I shall venture to sketch the portrait of Margery Kempe as a woman who not only transgresses norms but is also trapped in her own womanhood.

The list of paradoxes connected with the character, revelation and the book of Margery Kempe seems to be never-ending. The Book of Margery Kempe is considered to be the first autobiography in the English language. However, there are some doubts and even her authorship of the book is questioned, as it was only dictated by the mystic. For that reason it’s hard to find any chronological order in it – it is rather a series of stories told by Kempe at the end of her life. The narration mode is also to be questioned as it is third-person narration, not first-person. Kempe describes herself as “the creature”. In my opinion what it indicates that The Book... does not truly belong to the autobiography genre, rather it displays mystic’s attitude towards herself. On the one hand it seems to be an evidence of great humility. On the other – it may be explained by Kempe’s wish to distance herself from everyday life and standards she had to obey. By talking not about herself but about “this creature” she was able to emphasise her allegiance to God once again and at the same time to renounce her mundane perspective. As it turns out her project did not succeed completely. In some sense Margery Kempe’s chronicle also fits under the tradition of spiritual autobiography that was introduced by Saint Augustus. At the core of such an autobiography lies a presentation of author’s subjective experience, connecting all the events of their life to their religious development. Such attitude seems to fit Margery Kempe perfectly, yet what should be highlighted is that in her case it is extremely difficult to separate her everyday life from her religious experiences. Kempe not only considers all of her life’s events as bearing religious meaning, but also strongly believes that all of that is spiritual as well as real, almost tangible. According to Kathryn Summers such an attitude was unusual even for mystics.

Whereas mystics like Julian of Norwich and Richard Rolle carefully distinguish between bodily and imaginative visions, Margery portrays her experiences in “real” terms more often than in symbolic ones.

The most interesting feature of Margery Kempe’s revelation is that her religious experiences are in truth physical experiences that are strongly connected with not only carnality but also femininity. They seem to be a form of protection from the status given to women in the medieval times. In her religious devotion to Jesus, Margery treads the grounds unknown to men. Mystic’s body can be treated as a sort of a seal. Yet, it should be understood in two ways. In the case of anchoresses such as for example Julian of Norwich this seal was supposed to separate a person from the outside world as not to allow it to interfere with the life devoted to God. However, it can be clearly seen that Margery Kempe was not isolated from the outside world. In her case this seal was rather a metaphor of enclosing the revelation in the boundaries of the body, quite literally, considering how strongly her revelation was connected to carnality. I would like to emphasize once again, that in my opinion the nature of her visions was strongly connected to her attempts to escape the role she was forced to play.

The greatest problem Margery Kempe had encountered was her status as a woman. As was said before, there were only two roles that a woman was able to choose from: either a wife and a mother or a woman devoted to God – and that was inevitably bound with virginity. The latter issue was one that Margery constantly struggled with, as she considered herself unworthy of Jesus.

Ah, Lord, maidens are now dancing merrily in heaven. Shall I not do so? Because I am no virgin, lack of virginity is now great sorrow to me. I think I wish I had been killed as soon as I was taken from the font, so that I should never have displeased you, and then, blessed Lord, you would have had my virginity without end.³

And yet, it had not been a problem impossible to be solved, as Jesus, appearing in Kempe’s visions, repeatedly promised her that her lack of virginity does not diminish her in his eyes.

(…) Daughter, rest assured that I love wives also, and specially those wives who would live chaste if they might have their will, and do all they can to please me as you do. For though the state of maidenhood be more perfect and more holy than the state of widowhood, and the widowhood more perfect than the state of wedlock, yet I love you, daughter, as much as any maiden in the world. No man can prevent me from loving whom I wish and as much as I wish, for love, daughter, quenches all sin.⁴

However, Kempe’s attitude was met with immense social anxiety. A case in which a woman already married and a mother of fourteen aspired to sanctity was unprecedented. Such original attempt to break from social conventions shows above all Kempe’s great courage. After the marriage her body became her husband’s property. By refusing to fulfill her duties towards him she was at risk of being called a “bad wife”, that is a woman not worth respect. Yet, she was determined to force her husband to promise her celibacy. Many such attempts were quite dramatic.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 84–85.
'Margery, if there came a man with a sword who would strike off my head unless I made love with you as I used to do before, tell me on your conscience – for you say you will not lie – whether you would allow my head to be cut off, or else allow me to make love with you again, as I did at one time?' ‘Alas, sir,’ she said, ‘why are you raising this matter, when we have been chaste for these past eight weeks?’ ‘Because I want to know the truth of your heart.’ And then she said with great sorrow, ‘Truly, I would rather see you being killed, than that we should turn back to our uncleanness.’ And he replied, ‘You are no good wife’.

On Margery Kempe’s part, the struggle for the promise of celibacy was an attempt to gain back control over her own body, and through that over her own life. Kempe decided to start wearing white and become a “virgin” again. This time she would be married only to Jesus. Although there is the question of her true motives. Perhaps she truly wanted to simply “break free”. Then again in the Middle Ages virginity was very highly esteemed. Margery Kempe does not wish to renounce carnal desire, what she wants is to be regarded as the one married to Jesus. As a mystic and a virgin she would be much more respected. Nowadays, it seems more like a cynical PR decision. Moreover, her contemporaries found her self-imposed celibacy and sainthood dubious and rejected her on all spheres of life throughout her whole life.

The very nature of Margery Kempe’s relationship with Christ may prove to be the solution to paradoxes connected with her position as a woman – a saint, a mother and a wife, and a woman unable to surrender her carnality. When he visited Kempe in her visions, Jesus mostly adopted the position of a husband standard for medieval times. Yet, there were also exceptions.

‘For it is appropriate for the wife to be on homely terms with her husband. Be he ever so great a lord and she ever so poor a woman when he weds her, yet they must lie together and rest together in joy and peace. Just so must it be between you and me, for I take no heed of what you have been but what you would be, and I have often told you that I have clean forgiven you all your sins. Therefore I must be intimate with you, and lie in your bed with you. Daughter, you greatly desire to see me, and you may boldly, when you are in bed, take me to you as your wedded husband, as your dear darling, and as your sweet son, for I want to be loved as a son should be loved by the mother, and I want you to love me, daughter, as a good wife ought to love her husband. Therefore you can boldly take me in the arms of your soul and kiss my mouth, my head, and my feet as sweetly as you want’.

Clearly, in this fragment Jesus represents at the same time characters of a husband and a son. Still, what is just as interesting, is what kind of relationship is described. As Kathryn Summers notes, what we have before us is an erotic representation of re-

5 Ibidem, p. 58.
6 One of many amusing fragments of the Book is the one in which Kempe recalls a situation when she was ready and able to give herself to a man (other than her husband), who during her pilgrimage offered to have an intercourse with her. Overcome by desire, one night she came to his room, yet it turned out he was only joking. What is more, he stated that he would rather be cut to pieces, thrown into a pot and cooked.
8 K. Summers, op. cit., p. 6.
lation with divinity. Yet, his representation is strongly rooted in what Kempe, as a mother of fourteen, surely experienced during her own married life. It is another proof of originality of Kempe's revelation – although a vision of divinity, it is still strongly connected to mystic's carnality and rooted in her everyday life experiences. Another matter worth bringing up is how the figures of Christ as a groom and a child become interchangeable. In her visions Margery Kempe is not only able to satisfy her own sexual needs while remaining a “saint woman”, but also is able to fulfill the role of a wife and a mother that she has rejected in the real life. According to Liliana Sikorska there are two reasons for such behavior. One is the psychoanalytically understood repressed sexuality. The other an attempt to break the fetters of the role imposed on medieval women by transferring issues connected with it to a spiritual plane.

And yet, Margery Kempe's attempt to transgress social conventions does not end there. One of the best examples of her true conviction is the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In the eyes of the society she remains a townswoman, a mother and a wife. However, she has decided to take up a lonely journey through Europe to get to the Holy Land. But there is no understanding for her. Extravagant in her believes and not fitting socially she has trouble finding the right company to travel with. Even when she finally joins a group of pilgrims she is an outcast. Her companions do not understand her behavior and her life decisions, and are annoyed by the signs of her faith. When they want to sing and drink – she wants to pray. When they confront her about her inconsistency she is able to give only one excuse: that what she does is to comply with God’s wishes for her. In Rome, on her way back, she gives out all of her money to the poor and is forced to beg on the streets.

Margery Kempe's behavior and devotion do not raise understanding. Signs of her devotion often seem to mark her not as a saint but as a scapegoat. Despite her deep faith she often behaves in a controversial way. She is unpredictable, exceedingly emotional and obsessed with herself. Her unconventional ways of expressing religiousness results in her being accused of heresy, and during the times when Lollardy was punished by death, that is not something one wished for. Clericalists has been often fascinated by her person, yet at the same time they felt threatened by independence she gained. Her behavior during religious experiences is also a reason for increased uneasiness. Despite her respect for the Church, sometimes she experiences fits of uncontrollable tears even during Mass. One of such attacks happens to her when walking down a street she passes a small child. The child reminds her of Jesus.

She had so much feeling for the manhood of Christ, that when she saw women in Rome carrying children in their arms, if she could discover that any were boys, she would cry, roar and weep as if she had seen Christ in his childhood. And if she could have had her way, she would often had taken the children out of their mothers’ arms and kissed them instead of Christ. And if she saw a handsome man, she had great pain to look at him, lest she might see him who was both God and man. And therefore she cried many times and often when she met a handsome man, and wept and sobbed bit-

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9 L. Sikorska, op. cit.
10 Ibidem.
Another sign of her special connection with God is that at one point she seems to be able to speak languages. An Italian priest whom she meets in Rome seems to understand her in spite of not being able to speak English.

Then they asked her confessor if he understood what she had said, and he straightway in Latin told them the same words that she said before in English, for he could neither speak English nor understand English except from her tongue. And then they were astonished, for they knew that he understood what she said, and she understood what he said, and yet he could not understand any other English person. So blessed may God be, who made a foreigner to understand her when her own countrymen had abandoned her, and would not hear her confession unless she would leave off her weeping and talking of holiness.12

It is time to once again ask the question: how should Margery Kempe be treated? Should she be considered a “hysterical woman”? Certainly, her social behavior is a sign of inflated emotionality and obsessiveness. It is not without meaning that her first vision is rooted in a nervous breakdown after giving birth to a child. The visions themselves also bear a sign of repressed sexuality. However, would reducing Kempe to such simple categories or denying her importance be justified? I believe not. Till this day she remains one of the most fascinating women in history. She is an extraordinary example of someone who was able to escape social conventions and bring about a major change in perceiving womanhood. During times when women were not meant to be independent she was able to refuse to confirm to what was expected of her and follow her own road, road of her revelation. Yet, not without cost as for the major part of her life she was excluded from the society. For every person that tried to understand her point of view there were five that despised her and thought her either mad or hysterical. In The book... she describes not only her revelation and relationship with Christ. She is also a very acute observer of her contemporaneity. It is also important that she seems to be fully conscious of her actions and motives behind them. After all, what is known of her life is what she decided to reveal. Was she able to create her image the way she wanted? Now, that is a different matter. Especially that there is much yet to be discovered about the times in which she lived. Readings of The Book of Margery Kempe are dependent on values and views of people interpreting it. The Book... was lost for literally centuries before it appeared again at the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays, it is difficult to look at Kempe from any other perspective than psychoanalysis of feminism. Yet, in her times even the text itself was treated differently, its role had different meaning than today.13 The comments on

11 M. Kempe, op. cit., p. 123.
the margins of the manuscript show focus on the value of revelation itself, excluding interpreting Margery Kempe's motives. What remains certain is that Kempe's figure is not to be underestimated. Even if at times she seems to be more like one of Chaucer's satirical characters than a “saint woman”.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


**SUMMARY**

Margery Kempe is one of the most fascinating medieval mystics. Yet, she is virtually unknown. My aim is to sketch a portrait of her person, as to bring her closer to a modern-day reader. Even compared to other mystics Margery Kempe seems to step out of line. As a wife and a mother of fourteen she experiences revelation and decides to live in chastity and give her life completely to Jesus. She is not only devoted to him, she becomes his wife. Her revelation is an attempt to leave behind restrictions coming from her position as a medieval woman. She does not renounce desire and sexuality, she simply switches the plane she experiences it on from the mundane one to the divine. Throughout her whole life she is in a way a social outcast. I shall try to present her as a woman trapped in her own role and her own sexuality, relating her problems and attempts to psychoanalytical repressed sexuality and emancipation of women.
Katarzyna Kleczkowska

THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK. ANIMALS AS OTHERS IN ANCIENT GREEK THOUGHT

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You (...) said with great readiness that there were two kinds of living beings, the human race and a second one, a single class, comprising all the beasts (...). But indeed, (...) if there is any other animal capable of thought, such as the crane appears to be, or any other like creature, and it perchance gives names, just as you do, it might in its pride of self oppose cranes to all other animals, and group the rest, men included, under one head, calling them by one name, which might very well be that of beasts.¹

The problem of a strong distinction between humans and all other species belonging to the animal kingdom is nowadays one of the main subjects of a relatively young discipline, known as animal studies. The issue of the disparity between two groups – humans on the one side and a medley of all other animals, from an elephant to a fruit fly, on the other – has been raised in more and more philosophical treatises². It is well proved that our modern outlook on human-animal relations, based mainly on an exclusive view on man, has been compiled of the ancient Greek philosophy and the Judeo-Christian theology³. Thus it seems evident that in classical antiquity the man-animal distinction should be at least as well defined as nowadays. However, as Richard Sorabji demonstrates, our modern attitude to animals comes mostly from Christian interpretation of the works of Aristotle and the Stoics, which in fact were only „one half, the anti-animal half, of the much more evenly balanced ancient debate”⁴.

As evidenced by the fragment of Statesman by Plato quoted at the beginning of this essay, in ancient Greek philosophy the problem of man-animal distinction was not rigid and could be raised as a matter of discussion. It does not mean that the differences between humans and animals were disregarded or did not exist in the ancient Greek thought. As John Heath noticed, animals „have often provided the fundamental metaphor of Otherness”⁵. Being this element of the environment, which is most similar to man, animals were an ideal starting point for defining humanity

¹ Plato, Statesman, 263c-d.
by an opposition – in the same way as the ancient Greek men defined themselves in contrast to women, barbarians, slaves or metics (resident aliens). The difference between humans and animals was, however, variously defined depending on an author or period. Nowadays the best known are the definitions proposed by Aristotle and the Stoics, which focused on man’s intelligence, but in fact they were only ones of many proposal for definition formulated by ancient Greeks. The main aim of this essay is to analyse other ideas of human-animal differences, with a particular emphasis on speech (connected with reason) as the main feature by which Greeks distinguished man from other species.

The fundamental problem we have to face while studying the attitude to animals in ancient Greek thought is the incompatibility of modern terms used for animals with those present in ancient languages. The term ‘animal’ – having the same or very similar meaning in most European languages – is nowadays understood in a few ways. In a biological sense, an ‘animal’ means any living being who belongs to the kingdom Animalia. This term includes also humans. In everyday non-scientific usage, however, the word ‘animal’ encloses all living beings except humans and plants. The classical term that is often translated into English as an ‘animal’ is *zoon*. This word, however, had far broader meaning, as it primarily indicated any ‘living being’ (compare with the word *zoe* – ‘life’). It meant as well ‘animals’, ‘humans’ and sometimes even ‘plants’. Therefore ancient authors (including Aristotle) very often used a term *zoon* to indicate man; if they had the need to distinguish a human from other species, they usually named beasts as *alla zoa* what meant ‘other animals’. In Greek there were also other terms nowadays translated as ‘animals’, but with narrower meaning, as they did not encompass some species, for example fish or domesticated animals. Among them particularly worth mentioning is the term *therion*, which means ‘beast’, ‘wild animal’ and its far rare synonym, *knodalon* (‘beast’, ‘monster’). Both of these terms could be used to indicate a brute man, or a man who behaves like a wild animal. Hence these words, unlike *zoon*, were often negative.

What is interesting, the term *zoon* is relatively late. Before the time when this term came into use in the 5th century BC to indicate animals, no generic word enclosing all animals could be found in Greek. The utter lack of the term ‘animals’ in the archaic Greece might indicate that the relations between man and animals radically changed in the classical period, as then arose the need for this very word. Indeed, some scholars suggest that the history of an ancient attitude to animals should be divided into at least two periods: the first would encompass the pre-Socratic thought

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6 “All things live which partake of heat - this is why plants are living things (*zoa*)”; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 8.28 (trans. R.D. Hicks).

7 The term *therion* has the same Indo-European root as Latin *ferrus* (‘wild’, ‘brute’). Slavic terms for ‘animal’ have the same root (nowadays understood as a generic term, the same way as in English), e.g. *zwierzę* in Polish.

(and include also the epics) and the second – the philosophy of the great thinkers of classical period, especially Aristotle and the Stoics\(^9\).

Even if in archaic period the generic word for all animals had not been yet known (or had been used too rarely to remain in written sources), the first Greek authors were able to express the animal otherness from humans. Probably the first author, who defined the fundamental difference between man and animals, was Hesiod, a Greek poet living in the 8\(^{th}\) or 7\(^{th}\) century BC. In his didactic poem titled *Works and Days*, Hesiod addresses his brother, a landowner:

> But you, Perses, lay up these things within your heart and listen now to right, ceasing altogether to think of violence. For the son of Cronos [Zeus] has ordained this law for men, that fishes (*ichthysi*) and beasts (*thersi*) and winged fowls (*oionois peteenois*) should devour one another, for right (*dike*) is not in them; but to mankind he gave right (*diken*) which proves far the best\(^10\).

Hence the human uniqueness consists in the awareness of *dike* – ‘right’ or ‘justice’. According to Steven Lonsdale it means that the fundamental difference lies in an ethical sphere, as men do not prey on their own kind\(^11\). It seems, however, that the Hesiod’s message was slightly different: the world of man is well organised – people do not use violence if it is not necessary as the law will punish them for every offence. Beasts, however, have no rules besides the law of the stronger (*ther* and *oionos* are different kinds of predators).

There is also another aspect worth noticing in the quoted fragment. According to Hesiod it was son of Kronos, Zeus, who ordained this law for man. In the Greek tradition Kronos was the one who ruled in the golden age of man, while Zeus – in the iron age. The iron age, the epoch in which the author lived, was the time of violence, suffering and hard work, while the golden one was the mythical epoch of stability and prosperity. The idea, also included in *Works and Days*\(^12\), symbolised not only the initial happiness of the mankind, but also peace and harmony with all beings. The message of the cited fragment is therefore ambiguous: people are superior to animals, as they have the justice to prevent an excessive violence which is common in the world of beasts, but, on the other hand, the justice was not necessary if people lived in the golden age, in common peace. In this magnificent epoch there were no differences between man and animals, especially taking into account that in that

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\(^12\) Hesiod, op.cit., 109–128.
time all animals could speak\textsuperscript{13}. There was also no need for animal killing, as the earth itself nourished them with its fruits\textsuperscript{14}. The idea of an utopian world with common vegetarianism and no animal sacrifices was a popular motif in the Greek comedies, among which perhaps \textit{Wild Beasts (Theria)} by Crates was the best known. The author described a world with no animal sacrifices, no meat-eating and no need for slaves, as tables would set themselves for feast\textsuperscript{15}. To the audience living in the 5th century BC, all these phenomena must seem equally ridiculous.

The basic source of the knowledge of the archaic Greece are undoubtedly the Homeric epics. In \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey}, written in the 8\textsuperscript{th} century, animals are mentioned many times, especially in the similes, in which the great poet compares the acts of human heroes to the behaviour of animals. In the epic simile, in fact, a human being seems to be „at least for a moment in time, like another species in behaviour and character”\textsuperscript{16}. As Otto Körner suggested, the precision of the Homeric description of animals’ behaviour and psychology might result from the fact that Greeks in the time of Homer lived in closer proximity to animals than did the Greeks in classical period\textsuperscript{17}. What is worth mentioning the motif of a lonely shepherd was a very popular theme in the Greek myths and early Greek literature. As Lonsdale noticed, this motif shows a very important aspect of human-animal relationships in the archaic period - an idea of reciprocity: the man provided protection to his flock and the animals (sheep and a dog) were the only company of the shepherd\textsuperscript{18}. It could be also the reason why in the Homeric epics the difference between humans and animals seems to be much less evident than in later philosophical works. It does not mean that Homer did not distinguish man and animals. Irrespectively of all possible differences, however, one thing was undeniable: both humans and animals are living and both are mortal, in contrast to everlasting gods. As Stephen Newmyer wrote:

\begin{quote}
The Homeric concept of “otherness” posits a sharper distinction between the divine and the mortal than between human and non-human: in the world of Homeric epic, human beings are reckoned to be more like other animals than they are like the gods\textsuperscript{19}.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} D. L. Gera, \textit{Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization}, Oxford 2003, p. 19; Plato, \textit{Statesman}, 272b-c. What is interesting, it seems that Greek fables began with the conventional phrase: „When the animals spoke”; Xenophon, \textit{Memorabilia}, 2.7.13.
\textsuperscript{14} This idea was also very popular among contemporary and later philosophers and religious followers: vegetarianism was a rule in Orphism and Pythagoreanism, but many other thinkers (like Empedocles, Theophrastus, Seneca, Ovid, Plutarch, Plotinus, Porphyry) also stick to a meat-free diet. Plato, although apparently not a vegetarian, presented a meat-free diet as an ideal in his \textit{Republic} (372b-c.).
\textsuperscript{15} K. J. Reckford, \textit{Aristophanes’ Old-and-new Comedy: Six essays in perspective}, T. 1, Chapel Hill 1987, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{16} S. Newmyer, op. cit., s. 508.
\textsuperscript{17} O. Körner, \textit{Die homerische Tierwelt}, Munich 1930, p. 2. See also: S. Newmyer, op. cit., p. 508.
\textsuperscript{18} S. Lonsdale, op. cit., p. 149.
\textsuperscript{19} S. Newmyer, op. cit., p. 508.
Paradoxically, even the animal sacrifices could be interpreted in that way: if we assume that primarily animals were offered in replacement to their owners\textsuperscript{20}, it suggests, that for the gods there was no evident differences between humans and animals.

On the other hand, some Homeric similes may be interpreted as an emphasis of the differences between the world of Greeks and the uncivilized world of other nations. As Deborah Levine Gera notices, Trojan forces are compared by Homer to bleating lambs\textsuperscript{21} and clamorous cranes\textsuperscript{22}, which might suggest that barbarian language sounds to Greek like an animal one\textsuperscript{23}. By this comparison both barbarians and animals are put in contrast to Greeks, the only ones who possess the proper language. Greeks do not deny that barbarians have their own tongues, but their dissimilarity to Greek was one of the main reasons for treating barbarians as strangers and inferiors. Even the term barbaros – in antiquity not entirely pejorative – is echoic of unintelligible speech of foreigners\textsuperscript{24}.

Although the barbarians’ tongues grated on Greeks’ ears, they were – after all – similar to man languages whereas animals’ ones did not sound like any human tongue. Communication with barbarians (with the help of translators, in broken language or even non-verbal gestures) was possible to Greeks, but it was unable to be done with animals. The inability to communicate with animals became the literary motif in \textit{Odyssey} with almost calamitous overtone. The Cyclops Polyphemus, cheated and blinded by Odysseus, dreamt that his ram could speak and tell him where the cunning Greek hid himself. So Polyphemus says: „If only thou couldst feel as I do (\textit{homophroneois}), and couldst get thee power of speech (\textit{genoio eipein})”\textsuperscript{25}.

The importance of speech in ancient Greek, however, did nor arise only from the necessity of communication. The main term for speech was \textit{logos}, which had an abundance of other meanings, from ‘computation’ to ‘law’ or ‘fable’. \textit{Logos} indicated also ‘reason’ – the term, which in ancient Greek seemed to be inseparable from ‘speech’. The ability of speaking was the best evidence of having reason. In other words, there was no speech without reason and no reason without speech. In ancient Greece as well as in Rome, the rhetorical talent was the most desired gift of gods, often highly paid with long hours of oratorical practices or even harsh physical exercises. It was charisma and eloquence (in tandem with ability of proper pronunciation and intonation) which ensured high status, political career and impact on the people. The significance of speech in the word

\textsuperscript{20} As Edmund Leach noticed: „Before the sacrificial animal is killed the donor of the offering invariably establishes a metonymic relationship between himself and the victim by touching the victim on the head. The plain implication is that, in some metaphorical sense, the victim is a vicarious substitution for the donor himself”; idem, \textit{Culture & communication. The logic by which symbols are connected}. \textit{An introduction to the use of structuralist analysis in social anthropology}, Cambridge 1986, pp. 88‒89.

\textsuperscript{21} Homer, \textit{Iliad}, 4.433‒438.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibidem, 3.1‒7.

\textsuperscript{23} D. L. Gera, op. cit., p. 2.

\textsuperscript{24} The term is not only Greek, but of Indo-European origin (compare Sanskrit \textit{barbara} - ‘stammering’, ‘non-Aryan’).

of ancient Greeks and resulting from it inferiority of animals is best demonstrated in the sublime orations of Isokrates (5th/4th century BC), for example:

For in the other powers which we possess we are in no respect superior to other living creatures (allon zoon); nay, we are inferior to many in swiftness and in strength and in other resources; but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts (theriodes zen), but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech (logos) has not helped us to establish.26

Hence for Greeks the intelligible speech was the exclusive prerogative of humans27. In very anthropocentric Greek mythology, in contrast to the myths from many other cultures (especially shamanism), animals took almost no part in the myths and were never seen as smart or cunning28. The most perspicuous exception were Aesop’s fables, in which – worth noticing! – animals usually had an ability to speech. Animal fables conventionally took place in the golden age29 and it seems that at that time animals were perceived not only as talking, but also as wise beings. In the aforementioned Statesman by Plato the Stranger regretted that people did not live in the golden age, as the possibility to converse with animals would be a salutary experience to philosophers – for a unique knowledge of every species could be added to the general store of wisdom30.

In one of the Aesop’s fables, quoted by Callimachus (3rd century BC), animals angered Zeus, complaining about his rules. As a result, the god took away the animals’ speech and gave it to man, what presumably indicated the end of the idyllic golden age and the beginning of the distinction between humans and animals31. Deprived of speech, the animals became reasonless beings and consequently reason was the main feature, by which man was distinguished from other species. In Euripides’ account of the development of human civilization, the leading part had been played by an indefinite god, who separated humans from beasts (theriodes): “Having first placed intelligence (synesis) in us, then he gave us speech (glossa) – the messenger of logos – so that we could come to know the discourse”32. The idea is very similar to that of the fable cited by Callimachus and also to the Hesiod’s view.

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26 Isocrates, Nicocles of the Cyprians, 3.5-6.
27 D. Gera, op. cit., p. 182.
28 I mean the mythological archetype of cunning trickster, who was an animal in many mythologies (e.g. coyote, or raven in native American stories).
29 D. Gera, op. cit., p. 20.
30 Plato, Statesman, 272b-c.
31 D. Gera, op. cit., pp. 31‒32. It does not mean that in the golden age people did not speak, but their language skills were similar to animals’ ones. When Zeus bestowed humans with animals voices, people acquired additional language skills, while animals became completely deprived of speech.
The ability to speak was so important that it could even be the main factor to decide whether one creature belongs to human species or animals. It should be remembered that the world of ancient legends was inhabited with a whole host of legendary people whose appearance and manners were far different from those of ordinary humans. One of that mythical nations were Kynokephaloi (‘dog-headed’), half-man and half-dog people from Ctesias the Cnidian’s account of India (5th century BC). While Ctesias designated Kynokephaloi as humans (anthropoi), the Roman author who wrote in Greek, Claudius Aelianus (2nd/3rd century CE), admitted them among ‘irrational beings’ (alogoi), “for their speech is inarticulate, unintelligible, and not that of men”. ‘Irrational beings’ is here the synonym of ‘animals’. The term alogos is the negative form of logos and means both ‘mindless’ and ‘dumb’. The same synonym was used in the title of a polemical dialogue Peri tou ta aloga logo chresthai, traditionally attributed to Plutarch (1st/2nd century CE) and conventionally translated as Beasts are Rational. This translation does not reflect a pun putted in the original title, which should be translate rather as ‘About the irrational beings, which use reason’.

If an ability to speak (and thereby having reason) is the feature, on the basis of which humans and animals were decisively distinguished, one question arises: should people treat disabled persons similarly to animals? It was the problem that in antiquity was raised only by Porphyry (3rd century CE), but in modern debates becomes more and more popular (known as ‘an argument from marginal cases’ nowadays at first putted forward by Peter Singer). Porphyry, in a letter to Firmus Castricius, noted:

And is it not absurd, since we see that many of our own species (antropon) live from sense alone (aisthesai monon), but do not possess intellect (nous) and reason (logon), and since we also see, that many of them surpass the most terrible of wild beasts in cruelty, anger, and rapine, being murderous of their children and their parents, and also being tyrants, and the tools of kings [is it not, I say, absurd,] to fancy that we ought to act justly towards these, but that no justice is due from us to the ox that ploughs, the dog that is fed with us, and the animals that nourish us with their milk, and adorn our bodies with their wool?

Porphyry challenged also the opinion that speech reflected reason:

And if this be the case, is it not absurd to call the voice of man alone [external] reason, but refuse thus to denominate the voice of other animals? For this is just as if crows should think that their voice alone is external reason, but that we are irrational animals, because the meaning of the sounds which we utter is not obvious to them; or as if the inhabitants of Attica should thus denominate their speech alone, and should think that those are irrational who are ignorant of the Attic tongue, though the inhabitants

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33 Photius, Bibliotheca, 72 (48b).
of Attica would sooner understand the croaking of a crow, than the language of a Syrian or a Persian. But is it not absurd to judge of rationality and irrationality from apprehending or not apprehending the meaning of vocal sounds, or from silence and speech? For thus some one might say, that the God who is above all things, and likewise the other Gods are not rational, because they do not speak.

It should be remembered that in general Greek writers did not deny that many animals could communicate within their own species, but they predicated that the man speech was more subtle. A Stoic philosopher, Diogenes the Babylonian (3rd/2nd century BC), noticed in his missing tractate On Voice that:

While the voice or cry of an animal is just a percussion of air brought about by natural impulse, man’s voice is articulate and (...) an utterance of reason, having the quality of coming to maturity at the age of fourteen.

Aristotle wrote that the human tongue is freest of all animals and therefore could articulate the various sounds. A very interesting observation about anatomical differences between man and animals, that enable humans to speak, was also made by Xenophon (5th/4th century BC):

Though all creatures have a tongue (glottan), the tongue of man alone has been formed by them to be capable of contact with different parts of the mouth, so as to enable us to articulate the voice and express all our wants to one another.

Xenophon described also other differences of the anatomical character:

Man is the only living creature that they have caused to stand upright (monon ton zoon anthropon orthon anestesan); and the upright position gives him a wider range of vision in front and a better view of things above, and exposes him less to injury. Secondly, to grovelling creatures they have given feet that afford only the power of moving, whereas they have endowed man with hands, which are the instruments to which we chiefly owe our greater happiness. (…) For all other creatures they have prescribed a fixed season of sexual indulgence; in our case the only time limit they have set is old age.

And, in the end, he mentioned also mental differences. He puts an emphasis on the human soul, which surpasses the animal one, especially when taking into account the man’s religiousness:

Nor was the deity content to care for man’s body. What is of yet higher moment, he has implanted in him the noblest type of soul (psychen kratisten). For in the first place what

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37 Ibidem, 3.5.
39 Aristotle, Parts of Animals, 660a.
40 Xenophon, Memorabilia, 1.4.12 (trans. E. C. Marchant).
41 Ibidem, 1.4.11–12.
other creature’s soul (allou zoon psyche) has apprehended the existence of gods who set in
order the universe, greatest and fairest of things? And what race of living things other than
man worships gods (ti de phylon allo e anthropoi theous therapeuousi)? And what soul is
more apt than man’s to make provision against hunger and thirst, cold and heat, to relieve
sickness and promote health, to acquire knowledge by toil, and to remember accurately
all that is heard, seen, or learned? For is it not obvious to you that, in comparison with the
other animals (talla zoa), men live like gods, by nature peerless both in body and in soul?
For with a man’s reason and the body of an ox we could not carry out our wishes, and the
possession of hands without reason is of little worth. Do you, then, having received the
two most precious gifts, yet think that the gods take no care of you?242

The idea is slightly similar to Hesiod’s and Euripides’ one: the deity implanted man
with the feature which distinguished him from other animals. Although Xenophon
listed also other differences, the possession of the soul was the most important of
them, as due to it man was able to worship gods. In all these fragments we can see
that man became more similar to gods than to animals and therefore his position in
a word of living beings was much more exclusive than it used to be in Iliad or Odys-
sey43. What is however the most interesting in this fragment, Xenophon emphasised
that human psychical and physical abilities are inseparable. It means that even if
animals had had reason, they could not use it because of physical limitations.

The belief in gods (as well as justice, like in Hesiod’s idea, and intelligence) was
also the distinctive factor in Plato’s dialogue Menexenus. As Plato noticed, man sur-
passes all other animals in intelligence (synesis) and as the only living being regards
justice (dike) and gods (theoi)44. Another thinker, who also defined the differences
using an argument of intelligence and understanding, not directly related to speech,
was Alcmaeon of Croton (5th century BC):

Of those who do not explain perception by similarity, Alcmaeon first defines the differ-
ences among animals. For he says that humans differ from the other animals because
they alone understand (syniesi), whereas the others perceive (aisthanetai) but do not
understand. He supposes that thinking and perceiving are distinct, not – as Empedo-
cles holds – the same thing45.

Alcmaeon was a Greek physicians and - according to Newmyer – his observation
“probably arose from his anatomical investigations on the human sense organs and
was intended as an assertion of scientific fact, as he sought to isolate the seat of hu-
man intellectual faculties”46. As William Guthrie noticed, “the word xynienai means
literally ‘to put together’, and traces of this basic meaning probably survived in the

42 Ibidem, 1.4.13–14.
44 Plato, Menexenus, 237d.
45 Theophrastus, On the Senses, 25, [after:] E. B. Cole, Theophrastus and Aristotle on Animal Intelli-
gence, [in:] Theophrastus: His Psychological, Doxographical, and Scientific Writings, ed. W.W. Forten-
46 S. T. Newmyer, op.cit., p. 510.
mind of a Greek writer of the fifth century”\textsuperscript{47}, therefore the quotation of Alcmaeon should be understood as “all animals have sensation, but only man can make a synthesis of his sensations”\textsuperscript{48}. However, Plato went even further in his studies and in \textit{Cratylus} he suggested that also the very term ‘man’ (\textit{anthropos}) should be derived from his specific features, which distinguished him from animals:

The name “man” (\textit{anthropos}) indicates that the other animals (\textit{alla theria}) do not examine (\textit{episkopei}), or consider (\textit{analogizetai}), or look up at (\textit{anathrei}) any of the things that they see, but man has no sooner seen - that is, \textit{opope} - than he looks up at and considers that which he has seen. Therefore of all the animals man alone is rightly called man (\textit{anthropos}), because he looks up at (\textit{anathrei}) what he has seen (\textit{opope}).\textsuperscript{49}

To sum up, one of the most important feature by which Greeks distinguished humans from animals was the ability to speak, which resulted from the specific Greek understanding of \textit{logos}, the term enclosing both speech and reason. But there were also several others definitions of man which more or less strongly contrasted humans with animals. The kind of such definition depended on the epoch in which it was formed and the reason why it was posed. We could agree with some scholars, who suggest that in the time of Homer, the difference between humans and animals was not so evident as in the later times. But the total lack of distinction between species in ancient Greece was characteristic only to the mythical ages. The authors, especially in the times of Homer and Hesiod, willingly invoked the age of primarily similarity of humans and animals. Both the golden age from Hesiod’s \textit{Works and Days} and the heroic age from Homeric poems, were perceived as times much more glorious than the epoch in which the authors lived.

In the philosophy of classical Greece and later one, the distinction between man and animals was clearly defined. It was – most of all – result of the philosophical exploration of the essence of humanity. The Greek men defined themselves in opposition to many other people deprived of political power and perceived as ‘others’ – women, slaves, foreigners. The definition of whole mankind needed a broader reference point – animals. There is probably why since the 5\textsuperscript{th} century we could find several terms enclosing all animals but humans. It should be remembered, however, that the distinction between humans and animals was also the result of a scientific curiosity about species diversity, like in the case of Aristotle, who researched many kinds of animals, finding differences not only between humans, animals and plants, but also among particular species of animals. What is worth noticing, Greeks often used the argument derived from the physical, not only psychological, features of humans such as the difference in the anatomical structure of human tongue (Aristotle) or the upright posture (Xenophon).

\textsuperscript{48} Ibidem, The word \textit{xynienai} is related to the term \textit{synesis} (\textit{x} in place of \textit{s} because of an Attic dialect), translated above (in the fragment by Euripides) as ‘intelligence’.
\textsuperscript{49} Plato, \textit{Cratylus}, 399c, trans. H.N. Fowler.
There was probably also another reason for defining the human-animal distinction. With the development of poleis, advancing specialization of professions and the separation of citizens from both wild and domesticated animals, killing animals became less and less natural in the eyes of many Greek thinkers. On one hand, it became needful to prove human superiority to animals and resulting from it moral consent to animal killing for humans’ needs. On the other hand, however, it caused that in the Greek thought the contrary view arose. Some philosophers, especially Plutarch and Porphyry, tried to demonstrate that arguments used to prove animals’ inferiority to humans might be easily refuted. It should be therefore remembered that many of arguments used by modern ethicists in debates on animal rights, could be actually dated as far back as two millennia ago.

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**SUMMARY**

The essay is concerned with the topic of the difference between humans and animals in ancient Greek thought. Starting with the lexical problems in studying ancient terms indicating animals, the author presents various definitions of man formulated in contrast to animals, treated as inferior beings. She focuses on the term *logos*, understood both as reason and ability to speak, which the animals were deprived of according to most of Greek thinkers. The author shows also how the idea of man uniqueness has changed from the archaic period to the classical one. At the end of the essay several reasons why the ancient philosophers define man in opposition to animals are suggested.
Understanding cultural differences within the context of medical encounters: nonverbal dimensions of communication

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Introduction

Due to the development of the global economy, increased geographical and occupational mobility, as well as a workforce shortage in healthcare affecting many countries around the world\(^1\), the migration of medical staff has become commonplace\(^2\). Consequently, the demographic profiles of medical personnel in many healthcare institutions have become unprecedentedly diverse. Alongside this trend, increasingly mobile patient populations have created a need for medical graduates to be able to recognise and meet the specific needs of more ethnically diverse patient populations than ever before. Healthcare providers’ inadequate awareness of and sensitivity to the background and cultural needs of their patients may result in misinterpretation and the eventual feeling of alienation in the patient role. Therefore, heightening medical practitioners’ awareness of various culture-specific practices or beliefs is one of the mechanisms for eliminating or substantially reducing the sources of alienation that care consumers experience in culturally unfamiliar healthcare settings.

In order to increase the efficiency of intercultural medical encounters, providers should be mindful of a vast range of health practices or beliefs concerning medication and treatment. However, they also ought to be aware of various lifestyle habits, gender and family roles, or different needs concerning childcare, relationships, and dietary practices in dissimilar cultures. Intercultural awareness helps to form and maintain a non-alienated physician-patient relationship in which both parties unite in the common goal of overcoming specific medical problems. It creates a good rapport and minimises discomfort which can result from cultural differences that divide healthcare consumers and medical staff.


The aim of this paper is to present a number of intercultural factors which may have a bearing on the patient-physician relationship during medical encounters. The article will focus specifically on the importance of increasing healthcare professionals’ awareness of the nonverbal dimensions of communication, as these might be interpreted differently in various cultural contexts and may, therefore, become potential sources of misunderstandings between health professionals and their patients. Awareness of nonverbal tenets of communication in diverse cultures is one of the components of intercultural competence which may be helpful in transforming the patient role in a non-alienated direction, as it is helpful in responding to healthcare consumers’ needs and concerns and addressing their perspectives more fully.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN HEALTH CARE PROVISION

It is common knowledge that many cultures interpret facial expressions, gestures, posture, the physical distance between communicators, degree of eye contact, or paralinguistic properties of speech differently. Understanding the subtleties of nonverbal communication and applying them during the process of medical treatment and care is, therefore, essential to deliver more culturally competent medical care. As not all aspects of nonverbal communication are universal and their use may result in misinterpretation or even cause unintended offence, the way medical staff members communicate nonverbally may have implications for patient outcomes. It might increase their levels of satisfaction with the care they receive, instil a sense of safety, or lessen distress. Moreover, “[n]on-verbal skills signalled through eye contact, posture, position, movement, facial expression, timing and voice can assist in demonstrating attentiveness to the patient and facilitate the formation of a helping relationship.”

This means that nonverbal signals, including body positioning and movements, visual communication, facial gestures, vocal tones, and even the use of time may help to establish and maintain a good rapport with the patient.

Conversely, medical providers’ ineffective body language may be regarded as embarrassing, overpowering, or even threatening. It may have the potential to exacerbate an already tenuous medical provider-patient relationship and, in consequence, increase patient stress levels or even make healthcare consumers and their families feel alienated. As they may feel unable to communicate meaningfully with medical staff, patients are likely to experience feelings of distress and anxiety, which may be manifested by reluctance to seek medical attention from practitioners representing diverse cultures. Thus, individuals whose cultural perspectives are not considered or respected in the medical encounter frequently experience a sense of alienation from medical providers and feel that they have very little or no control over their medical

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Consequently, alienated healthcare consumers’ tension may exacerbate their symptoms or hinder their healing process and have a negative effect on health outcomes.

On the other hand, nonverbal cues provided by healthcare consumers during medical encounters are of considerable diagnostic importance. As they may become the window into the patient’s emotional well-being, they contain vital information for physicians to apply in the process of medical diagnosis and treatment. They may express a variety of physical and emotional states, including discomfort, disorientation, suffering, fear, anxiety, and sensitivity to the touch. Therefore, decoding nonverbal signals accurately is critical in healthcare consumer-provider interactions, as it helps to respond to patient needs more effectively. Not only does it aid physicians in the process of diagnosis, but it also contributes to better mutual understanding, thus maximising the quality of care that patients receive.

Based on the above, it seems reasonable to conclude that nonverbal communication is essential for successful patient-physician encounters. Practitioners’ inability to adequately decode nonverbal signals, particularly those sent by healthcare consumers representing diverse cultural backgrounds, may significantly contribute to patient dissatisfaction with their healthcare experiences. It may have a bearing on the patient-doctor relationship and it may foster feelings of mistrust or create a sense of alienation between them. This may ultimately deter patients from seeking medical care, as their dissatisfaction with healthcare services may be reflected in a failure or refusal to comply with and adhere to recommended medical treatments. In addition, inadequate cultural competence among healthcare professionals may also expose some of them to the risk of legal liability for malpractice or medical errors, which may even result in closing their medical practice. The significance of intercultural skills in medical practice and their effect on patient adherence is emphasised by many other researchers, including Langer, Ahmed and Lemkau, and Antshel.

Evidently, there exist a number of issues concerning the use and interpretation of nonverbal communication that may become potential points of difference or barriers to effective interaction in the health services arena. Among those that require special attention in cross-cultural medical encounters are proximity, eye contact and physical touch.

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1. PROXIMITY

One of the aspects of nonverbal communication that medical personnel need to be sensitive to is personal space. It can be used to express intimacy, concern, affection, neglect, anger, and other forms of nonverbal messages which may differ across many ethnically, culturally and racially diverse groups. As the level of physical distance that individuals need to feel comfortable varies, an increased awareness of personal space is crucial to provide health care across cultural barriers. Individuals from some backgrounds prefer to be approximately an arm’s length away from another person when they interact, while those representing other cultures may expect either closer proximity or more distance. Similarly, some patients feel more comfortable when their practitioners minimise the level of interpersonal space in the medical encounter to indicate attention and interest. Moreover, they tend to respond more positively when the doctor assumes an open body posture. It is frequently pointed out that forward leaning, open body posture, and maintenance of a closer interpersonal distance are among physician behaviours generally appreciated by healthcare consumers. This, however, cannot be applied to all cultural groups.

Many patients may feel uncomfortable with the clinician leaning forward or being too close, as they may believe that closeness is necessary only when performing specific medical procedures. Buetow, who recognises the significance of patients’ cultural and social background in the medical encounter and emphasises the need to ascertain their personal preferences concerning space, observes that “those [healthcare consumers] in contact cultures, such as Latin Americans and southern Europeans, tend to be more comfortable with informal interactions in physically closer spaces than those in noncontact cultures, such as Asians and northern Europeans.” Consequently, people from contact backgrounds frequently feel more reassured when being closer to the healthcare professional when they interact during the medical encounter. Moreover, they often regard close proximity as an indicator of a friendly and caring personality. Patients from noncontact cultures generally need more physical distance and might perceive the lack of it as overwhelming, intrusive, or even threatening. Closeness, in such cases, may be interpreted as a violation of personal space.

Butts and Rich, in their guidelines on ethics for nurses exposed to multicultural environments, include a few other examples concerning personal space in health care that correspond to specific nationalities or ethnic groups:

- Individuals from China, who require an interpersonal distance of approximately 1.5 metres, prefer side to side rather than face-to-face communication.
- Patients from Poland prefer more distance when interacting with strangers, including healthcare providers, while appreciating close proximity with family members and friends.

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• Romani people demonstrate a preference for extremely close proximity to others, closer than in many high contact cultures\textsuperscript{11}.

Personal space, therefore, is highly variable and medical professionals need to develop an awareness of its meaning in different cultural groups. Physical distance between healthcare providers and consumers has the potential to affect patients’ demeanour, as individuals with greatly valued personal space may experience discomfort when interacting with physicians who are too close. They may feel threatened and even express aggression when their comfort zone is violated. This, in consequence, may lead the physician to misinterpret the patient’s behaviour or emotional state. Personal space boundaries need to be acknowledged and considered in medical interactions and, to the degree possible, reflected in the spatial arrangement of the interview room in order to reduce the potential for misunderstanding and an adverse effect on the medical encounter.

2. EYE CONTACT

Another component of nonverbal communication that may have a bearing on clinical interactions is eye contact. Its significance varies between cultures and may communicate different things to people representing various cultural backgrounds. Misra-Hebert observes:

> In the mainstream US culture, we often assume that a person who does not maintain eye contact is not being truthful or may be suffering from depression. In many other cultures, direct or prolonged eye contact with the physician may be thought to signify disrespect on the part of the patient; thus, eye contact may be avoided\textsuperscript{12}.

Thus, in many cultures eye contact is considered an indicator of direct and honest communication. It can be used to demonstrate respect or a sense of emotional connection. Maintaining eye contact is frequently considered a nonverbal communication strategy employed to establish a foundation for trust. In healthcare contexts it may also be applied to signify the gravity of verbal statements, which is of considerable significance in the context of delivering bad news to patients and their families. Avoidance of eye contact, on the other hand, might create the impression of withholding information, dissembling, or avoiding closer interaction. Not infrequently, it may also be interpreted as a psychiatric symptom. Such interpretations, however, may be incorrect in cultures where maintaining direct eye contact implies equality and avoidance of it is one of the indicators suggesting respect. Galanti elaborates on the significance of avoiding eye contact in different patient populations:

> Lack of eye contact in American culture may indicate many things, most of which are negative. A physician may interpret a patient’s refusal to make eye contact as a lack


of interest, embarrassment, or even depression. However, a Chinese patient may be showing the physician respect. If the patient is female and from a Muslim country, and the physician is male, she may be trying to avoid sexual impropriety. A Navaho patient may be trying to avoid soul loss or theft\textsuperscript{13}.

Clearly, insufficient eye contact may be assigned different meanings. It may communicate discomfort or a lack of confidence, but it may also be a sign of respect in the presence of someone in a position of authority. It is sometimes perceived as a sign of disinterest or an indication of emotional detachment. Maintaining eye contact, however, is also ascribed multiple interpretations. In some cultures, looking directly into someone’s eyes may communicate disrespect or a lack of appropriate deference to a person of higher rank. It may also appear confrontational or suggest aggressiveness and hostility. Moreover, in the context of communicating with patients of the opposite sex, eye contact between men and women is regarded as highly inappropriate among many cultures. It may be considered threatening and disrespectful, or it may be interpreted as an intrusion of privacy. In some cultures direct eye contact between men and women may imply a sexual interest, and become a source of discomfort among many female patients. Consequently, many of them are likely to experience a sense of alienation from medical treatment and avoid interactions with healthcare professionals.

Furthermore, some ethnic groups hold a profound belief that the eyes are the window to the soul. They perceive engaging in eye contact as disturbing, intrusive or impertinent and they frequently feel that prolonged eye contact could endanger the spirits of both parties. The fear of inadvertent soul loss evokes feelings of emotional distress and vulnerability and causes some patients to avoid interacting with medical staff on a personal level. Therefore, healthcare professionals need to develop an awareness of the subtleties of nonverbal communication in order not to misinterpret the significance of eye contact. They also need to take measures to ensure that appropriate communication is both transmitted and received and, consequently, the scope for misunderstandings is minimised.

3. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Touch is a critical part of healthcare practices and an integral component of medical examination. Essentially, “therapeutic touch is pivotal in certain areas of modern and traditional medicine, including physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractice, and acupressure”, while it also has the potential to “bridge the emotional and physical gap between a physician and patient”\textsuperscript{14}. Thus, apart from being an invaluable tool in the process of medical diagnosis and therapy, touch is used to communicate emotions. It refers to the process by which a medical professional investigates the body of a healthcare consumer during physical examination and includes all types of physical interaction that is crucial for the provision of care within different medical speciali-


ties. However, touch is also used to offer comfort, reassurance, or encouragement. It also has the potential to express care, compassion, and sympathy.

Although the importance of touch is emphasised in medical practice, it may become a potential source of misunderstanding in care delivered across cultural barriers, as the use of physical contact may be relatively easily misinterpreted. Inappropriate use of touch, even if unintended, may exert a negative impact on the therapeutic relationship and it may cause healthcare consumers to feel vulnerable. Therefore, apart from a number of rules concerning gender interactions and individual variations regarding people's comfort level when being touched, healthcare consumers need to be aware of some cultural patterns. Hartog and Hartog emphasise the following cultural variations in how physical contact is regarded:

The most obvious problems involve examination of private parts by the opposite sex, especially among Muslims, some Roman Catholics and Orthodox Jews. But less obvious are concerns in some cultures about the sacredness of the head, which should not be touched casually. […] Gypsies have especially strong feelings about the separateness of the upper (sacred) and lower (profane) areas of the body. One cannot first take a pedal or femoral pulse and then touch the chest, head or arms.

Thus, physical contact between members of the opposite sex, especially the touching of females who are not married or blood kin, is to be avoided in some cultures. In such scenarios, patients may frequently be observed to request a nurse or physician of the same gender. Alternatively, they may require the presence of a same gender chaperone during medical procedures. On other occasions, a male physician may be requested to examine a female patient in the presence of her husband. Furthermore, representatives of some ethnic groups may be careful not to have some parts of their bodies touched, as this may be perceived as an insult. If an examination or procedure requires touching sensitive body areas, an explanation of why a particular exam is clinically important may be necessary to make patients at ease. In other cultures physicians need to be careful to examine the highest part of the body first, as the lower body is deemed impure. Additionally, some individuals may put a greater emphasis on privacy and personal modesty, and they may feel very uncomfortable exposing any part of the body which is not directly under examination. Hence, during medical examinations and treatments patients of some cultures may insist on having some areas of their body covered.

**CONCLUSION**

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary medical practice is that it is exposed to the inevitability of communicating in multicultural environments. Therefore, me-

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dical practitioners nowadays need to be able to interact with individuals representing diverse social and ethnic backgrounds and deliver care across cultural borders. However, interactions with culturally varied healthcare consumers reflect a highly complex issue, as inadequate awareness of and respect for some culturally-specific beliefs and practices may become a source of tension in the patient role. Failure to acknowledge patients’ cultural needs is one of the causes of their emotional distress involved in being hospitalised or participating in intercultural medical medical encounters. Moreover, individuals whose cultural needs are not considered or respected acknowledged during medical encounters may feel alienated and avoid interactions with medical professionals. Therefore, the ability to understand and use nonverbal communication in diverse cultural contexts is one the critical components of providing medical care today. It serves a substantial role in preventing the consequences of misunderstandings and miscommunication and, consequently, helps healthcare professionals to reduce one of the potential barriers to accurate medical diagnosis and treatment. Significantly, the knowledge of various aspects of nonverbal communication, including proximity, eye contact, and physical touch, enables medical professionals to respond effectively to the needs of the diverse populations that they attend to and helps to reduce the feeling of alienation in the patient role. It enhances the quality of medical care by improving the healthcare provider-patient relationship and increasing the efficiency of the clinical encounter.

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As the inevitability of cross-cultural communication is recognised in many healthcare institutions nowadays, medical professionals need to be able to communicate with culturally diverse members of the healthcare team and, most importantly, provide effective care and treatment to patients from different cultural backgrounds. Healthcare personnel need to be able to diagnose and treat all individuals, irrespective of their social, ethnic or cultural origins, and thus awareness of patients’ culture-specific beliefs is integral to medical practice. The present paper focuses on the importance of understanding cultural diversity in the context of health care provision. It seeks to explore some of the differences in nonverbal communication which may arise in cross-cultural clinical encounters.
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NOT EXOTIC ENOUGH? IMPLICATIONS OF THE DUALITY OF CUBAN FOODWAYS ON THE TOURIST MARKET

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The collapse of the Soviet Bloc in 1991 determined a series of radical changes in Cuba. The country no longer had the help of the global power supplying gas and aliments in exchange for the sugar. Eventually, Cuban sugar had to be sold on the global market, which meant a significant decrease in the country’s income. Along with it came the problem of the strengthening of the US trade embargo. What this meant for the Cuban society was a dire lack of everyday products, especially aliments, soap, gasoline et cetera. Fidel Castro characterized this moment as a “special period during times of peace”\(^1\). Cubans faced extreme poverty and it seemed inevitable that changes to the political and economic system needed to be introduced.

Among these changes brought about by the government were the new policies regarding tourism which had as a direct consequence heavy investments in tourist facilities. As of 1994 the country reopened for tourists, a new Ministry of Tourism was formed and the majority of funds was devoted to the renovation and recreation of the tourist facilities in the country. In order to facilitate commercial exchange the dollars were legalised to be later on replaced with the second official currency – the convertible peso (CUC). Cuba experienced a significant increase in the number of foreign visitors, which shortly resulted in the creation of special areas where only tourists or hotel employees were allowed access and the island shortly became de-nominated as a country of tourist apartheid.

The tourist sector has been in the past two decades the one with the most dynamic expansion, depicted as a model industry for its ability to generate foreign currency and investment. Moreover, it created an opportunity for individual businesses to develop, especially in form of casas particulares (family rent houses) and paladares (small private diners). This implied several changes regarding foodways as there appeared the necessity to create facilities that would satisfy the rapidly growing tourists’ needs – many different restaurants, bars and supermarkets appeared, with prices not affordable for the locals, where fresh fruit, seafood and other products were served. Transnational tourism came to reflect an asymmetrical distribution of power be-

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\(^1\) Periodo especial. Sitio del Gobierno de la República de Cuba, [on-line:] http://www.cubagob.cu/otras_info/minfar/periodo_especial.htm [5.05.2014].
tween, but at the same time became a rather influential substitute for what sugar used to be – a monocrop that serviced the accumulation of foreign capital. The main aspects emphasized in the promotion of tourism in Cuba, including in the official campaign created by the Cuban Ministry of Tourism, are strongly related to already pre-existing representations of the island: 3S tourism (sun, sea and sand), “authentic” nature and active tourism, the entertainment industry (placing a strong focus on performances of the Cuban National Ballet and Tropicana Cabaret) and the overall lure of the tropics.

While some countries in the Caribbean and Latin America place very strong emphasis on culinary traditions as part of a larger project of identity construction and representation on the global tourist market, cuisine does not appear to be the major attraction in Cuba – numerous guides mention little diversity of dishes, the best example being Lonely Planet Havana Guide: “Habana is not renowned for its cuisine and, although the food here isn’t universally awful, don’t bank on it being a highlight of your trip”\(^2\). Many others are also pointing out the rather unsatisfying quality of the restaurants\(^3\). Interestingly enough, what Cuba does not capitalize on as a tourist experience seems to becoming more and more popular in the US, especially Miami where numerous restaurants serve this cuisine and Cuban chefs are becoming increasingly popular\(^4\).

The main focus of our paper will be Cuban foodways accessible to tourists, in the broader context of the “structured” touristic experience compared to the alimentation accessible to Cubans. Drawing on Dean MacCannell’s concept of staged authenticity\(^5\), we suggest a possible division into front stage – available for tourists, presented in travel guides, different advertising materials et cetera and the back stage which is either accessible for tourists but omitted for various reasons or requires a deeper relation with the locals. We argue that this front stage experience is structurally integrated in a broader system of representation that articulates an image of otherness that is strongly exoticized. However, since Cuban cuisine only partly fits this idea of otherness largely defined in Western terms, we will show that some aspects are being selected and to an extent reshaped as to respond to tourist expectations, whereas others are completely ignored and not integrated into the pre-packed for the tourist market image of the island and its inhabitants.

A TOURISTIC APPROACH TO FOOD CULTURE IN CUBA

Tourists can access food in Cuba in a number of ways, but there appear to be at least three institutionalized means created to provide alimentation for the visitors: casas

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particulares, paladares and restaurants. It is very difficult to find any mention of street vendors or small fast-food restaurants where one usually pays in moneda nacional and even if they are described, the authors will discourage from visiting them. Even usually enthusiastic about everything Lonely Planet Havana guide does not leave much hope for the visitors with notes such as “Food culture in Cuba or the apparent lack of it – is a direct consequence of the country’s período especial”, yet the author praises the paladares and some of the Habana Vieja restaurants.

Casas particulares offer accommodation and in some cases also alimentation (mostly breakfast, dinner in some places). From the data collected in the field it seems that officially one is obliged to get a separate permit and pay additional tax in order to serve food, although such limitations are sometimes omitted by the hosts and the breakfast is served anyway. It is also possible to serve dinner although such houses are rather hard to be found both in Havana and Varadero – their hosts usually said that it is due to lack of time, whereas the houses visited in Matanzas did offer such a service (price range 7-10 CUC).

The price range for breakfast is usually around 3-5 CUC, although at times it may be included in the price of the room itself. Such breakfasts consist of eggs (fried, mashed or any other form), fresh fruit – for example pineapples, guava, papaya, jugo – fresh fruit cocktail with generous amounts of sugar, bread (with butter, cheese etc.) and coffee which milk and sugar can be added to – all prepared and served either by the host or by their worker at an hour set by the tourist. What one receives usually depends on the price paid, usually the fresh fruit being the last addition to the service. The breakfast is one of the major selling points of a casa particular, upon asking, the hosts may boast about the quality of it. During the field research, we have even encountered opinions that the extra charge was because the hosts offered fresh eggs, fresh fruit and great coffee, whereas breakfast included in the price of the room meant low-quality, spoilt food.

Many of the hosts and informants claimed that a very important aspect of renting a house was creating a family atmosphere for the visitors. Nevertheless, breakfasts are never shared with the hosts, who serve and prepare them: the ones who sit at the table in the living room are the tourists. At times, one will seat with other visitors allowing contact and conversations.

Dinners are also offered in many casas, although it is not a general rule and it is not so often that tourists choose this option over eating in a restaurant. Meals will

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6 Hotels also offer meals (half-board or all inclusive) but our focus here will be on individual tourism and semi-structured mass tourism
8 B. Sainsbury, ibidem, p. 17. It is important to note that the guide contradicts itself all the time, first telling about plain and uninspired cuisine to pass to addictive dishes later on.
9 The prices differ depending on the location and if it is a high season or low season. In historical parts of Havana and Matanzas they will cost around 25 CUC whereas in Varadero they get up to 35 CUC.
10 Interestingly enough upon asking about what the breakfast consisted of in different casas butter was underlined as an important aspect.
usually cost a bit more than in a restaurant, due to the fact they need to be prepared individually with freshly bought products. This may mean a better quality of the food, sometimes even the hosts will get mentioned in the guides as tremendous cooks which adds to the value of a *casa particular* itself.

Leading a house and cooking is structured in the majority of cases as a gendered activity. In most cases it is the women who receive guests in a *casa particular*, prepare beds, clean their rooms and of course prepare meals, both breakfast and dinner. This evokes a feeling of being in a family and cared for. Accordingly, many houses receive names after the hosts, or rather hostesses who rent them, especially their diminutives (Cecilia – Ceci, Fara – Farita, Sara – Sarita etc.). The meals, therefore, are bound to be prepared with motherly care and love, adding genuine value to them.

The second most popular place mentioned in the guides are *paladares* – family owned restaurants. They come in two varieties though: some are places dedicated to tourists and have more of a restaurant feel and the others formed in a more fast-food, diner fashion serve mostly Cubans. There are significant differences between the two – most *paladares* in Habana Vieja are fancy small restaurants with moderate prices arranged mostly on ground floors of colonial houses there. All this, is supposed to attract tourists craving for the colonial experience and palatable Cuban dishes. Most of the guides recommend *paladares* to a much greater extent than restaurants (with few exceptions). In the streets one can find numerous hustlers inviting to dine in a *paladar* and try the *comida criolla*, Cuban cuisine as it is called in its place of origin. On the other hand, outside of touristic clusters the *paladares* are affordable diners for Cubans and the food served is not as fancy even though the menu will not really differ from the touristic one with *ropa vieja, arroz moro* etc.

Most of the restaurants are state-owned\(^{11}\), yet the quality of service may significantly differ between one and the other. They usually mix Cuban cuisine with some others and serve Italian favourites such as spaghetti or pizza. It is important to note that Cuba is a place where when it comes to fruit and vegetables, they serve only seasonal products. With no doubt though, the restaurants will mostly serve a wider variety of meals than usual *paladares*\(^{12}\). Still, the major selling point of many restaurants may not necessarily be the food but the atmosphere (many are located in beautifully restored colonial buildings), the music (with bands playing live to accompany one’s meal) and the drinks. Even though the taste and palatability of the meals remain important, it is Cubanness that is actually served. As noted by Wieczorkiewicz: “it is untrue that in the restaurants meals are sold and tours in the tour agencies; both institutions offer an integral experience”\(^{13}\).

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\(^{12}\) Although it is not uncommon to hear that half of the products on the menu are out.

Typically, the meal will consist of meat or seafood, rice and viandas, usually fried plantains or yucca. Both the restaurants and paladares offer a variety of seafood and fish, even though both of them do not necessarily form an important part of comida criolla. If there is one thing that accompanies every meal, then it is definitely rice, in different varieties – mixed with black beans in the form of moros y cristianos, white with a sauce to accompany (also prepared from beans) or yellow because of the spices used.

As pointed out by Garth\textsuperscript{14}, rice has remained, for generations, central to Cuban cooking, as well as beans, viandas and pork. Although throughout the years several other ingredients have been integrated into Cuban cuisine, these very ingredients are infused with the most profound sense of cultural identity in Cuba. This might explain, to a certain degree, why most Cuban restaurants or paladares attempt at capitalizing not on Cuban food per se, but on comida criolla, identified as being profoundly Cuban.

However, we believe there are deeper implications to the above mentioned “structured” touristic experiences, and they become visible by exploring what we referred to in the beginning of this paper, following MacCannell, as the “backstage”. Sidney Mintz argues that the development of Caribbean cuisines is a sign of political and social change, as food provides a site for self-articulation, agency and creativity\textsuperscript{15}, and Cuba is a good example in this respect as it articulates two very distinct positions regarding class, social and racial differences in the years before and after 1959.

\textbf{A DIFFERENT KIND OF CUISINE}

Contemporary Cuban cuisine is described most often in terms of fusion, hybridity, diversity and ethnic mix, a strategy that is particularly appealing for those looking to promote and sell Cuban food as an exotic product, placed against the large spectrum of Cuba’s more popular tourist products (such as dance, sandy beaches, old cars, rum, cigars and communist heritage).

But even if this discursive valorization is increasingly visible, it is not always supported in practice and the roots of these discrepancies are to be sought in pre-revolutionary times, as argued by Folch in her analysis of Cuban cookbooks\textsuperscript{16}. Her main argument is that in most pre-revolutionary cookbooks nonwhite Cubans appear only as comical decorations, never as potential producers or consumers of the recipes presented in the cookbooks, thus adding a new layer to the myth of a white, European Cuba.

The Revolution of 1959 brought about not only a series of political, social and economic changes, but also marked the beginning of a new era in terms of cultural policies as part of a larger political project. Nationwide, and especially in the capital, this new project was aimed primarily at erasing the memory of the US and the image

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. H. Garth, \textit{Cooking Cubanidad: Food Importation and Cuban Identity in Santiago de Cuba}, \textit{[in:] Food and Identity in the Caribbean.}, ed. H. Garth.


of Havana as a city of bourgeois excess: “It is clear that the newly edited image of Habana Vieja focuses on the city’s historical and artistic colonial culture. This is a cleaner romanticized image that boasts a wider market appeal. But more importantly, it is an image that has completely erased the era of North American domination”\(^\text{17}\).

Within this wider project, the Cuban revolutionary government also claimed having achieved the ideal, raceless society. “Discrimination stems from the economic and social exploitation which exists in capitalist societies. It existed in Cuba, but here there was not a change of men, but of systems. And when socialism was established, economic and social exploitation, and consequently racial discrimination, disappeared”\(^\text{18}\). Post-revolutionary concern with the issue of racism indicates that the matter was serious enough as to require state and any attempt from the intellectuals at indicating the prevalence of race related issues was harshly dealt with. Reopening the discussion about race was seen as a threat to national unity, especially since the government claimed to have “solved” the racial problem, which over a very short period of time turned into a nonissue\(^\text{19}\).

Folch points out that while prerevolutionary cookbooks assumed a type of elite knowledge / skill acquisitions, much of the communication and transmission of food traditions remained oral and in most elite houses cooking was done by Afro-Cuban women who, as previously argued by Sidney Mintz were the ones to have created Cuban cuisine\(^\text{20}\).

It is important to point out that in 1962, under the Cuban socialist state, a food rationing system was established, based on ration cards (libretas) distributed to Cuban citizens for the purchase of basic food items. Products included in the libreta vary according to age and gender and they are distributed in local convenience stores, at subsidized prices. Although the prices have been kept more or less stable from the inception of this system, many recent ethnographies\(^\text{21}\) note the increasing difficulties Cubans are dealing with especially since the institutional changes brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union. “The Cuban food system is no different; the state continues to provide basic food staples at extremely low prices through the food rationing system, but as the food available in the ration diminishes and the prices for additional foods elevate, complaints increase”\(^\text{22}\). At the same time, the acquisition of these products has become increasingly difficult, in a system where fewer and fewer things are available on the market and require time, money and connections in order to acquire the food necessary for the household. In most house-

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20 Cf. S. Mintz, op. cit.
22 H. Garth, ibidem, p. 98.
holds (both casas particulares and regular households) the gendered division of labor is very common, although in some cases men are in charge of one aspect – usually food acquisition mostly due to their higher mobility related with the fact that they are not obliged to cater to every tourists’ needs.

Another aspect worth pointing out is the contradiction between the way food is treated in a socialist economy – as a basic entitlement – and food as a desirable commodity in the market economy. According to the model of food sovereignty, Cuban citizens work towards the production of a national supply of goods, out of which the state gives, in return, a “just” due. However, a shift in discourse is visible in the national system of distribution, as illustrated below by the different takes on citizen / state relationship:

Today, citizens think it is right to expect everything from the state… and they are correct. And this is precisely the result of a collectivist mentality, a socialist mentality (…) Today, they do not need to rely on their own efforts and on their own means as in the past. The fact that today people expect everything from the state is in keeping with the socialist consciousness that the Revolution has created in them23 (Fidel Castro).

A rather different opinion was stated by Raúl Castro in explaining what egalitarianism means:

There is a misunderstanding of what egalitarianism means. In socialism there is equality of rights, but the rest depends on personal effort. Each person must live in keeping with his / her contribution to the society.24

This is by no means the only contrast visible in Cuban society when it comes to foodways – while the national system of distribution remains widely isolated, some sectors of the Cuban food economy, through their connection to the tourist market, are necessarily linked to the global markets.

Since the early 1990s, however, domestic spaces for food production and consumption have collided with spaces determined by the global world of commodities. Spatial coincidences between the two different economies and currencies do not mirror moral concurrences, however, and the discrepancy between the two creates and renews inequalities between insiders and outsiders.25

Not only are these inequalities perpetuated up until today, but their direct implications in the everyday lives of Cubans that do not have constant access to foreign currency are being overlooked. Although it is no longer forbidden for Cubans to access restaurants and hotels, many of them find it impossible to afford frequenting such pla-

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ces. Furthermore, given the fact that the average wage in Cuba is still around 15 CUC monthly, cooking for a large family requires a great degree of creativity and improvisation skills that actually do give Cuban cuisine the spice and flavors the official tourist discourse tends to overlook. One of our informants in Matanzas mentioned several times the need to be flexible and creative in thinking how to put together the day’s next meals, as resources are scarce and there is never enough of anything, yet the family must be fed and provided with enough energy to be able to work and function properly. When discussing the ability to work and the aliments that give enough strength and energy, sugar was constantly brought up as the most important energy provider.

The belief in the virtues of sugar may be linked to the 19th century practices described by Goucher of producing sweets on every island of the Caribbean, from Jamaica to Cuba, and selling them door-to-door or in corner shops and taverns and also providing sugar as “gifts” to workers, as it added energy to field labor. In discussing the “ritualization” of the sugar, Mintz notes that one of the reasons behind it was the fact that sugar provided swifter sensations of satisfaction than complex carbohydrates did and, at the same time, “as sugar became more homey, it was endowed with ritual meanings by the ones who consumed it – meanings specific to the social and cultural position of the user.”

CONCLUSION

The above shown duality of Cuban foodways, in our opinion, goes beyond the simple fact of staging and creates a multilayered conception of Cuba and everyday foodways with meaningful implications to the tourist industry. As the cuisine makes use, to a great extent, of ingredients common in Western countries and does not have a really strong, spicy or any other distinctive taste that can be extended to define and represent “national cuisine”, it appears to lack the exotic appeal it might need in order to be transformed into a fully functional tourist product. Therefore the tourist industry does not capitalize on the everyday practices of Cubans but instead reinforces the ideas about poverty and lack of resources that become synonyms of lack of taste and refined cuisine in Western terms. Instead, foodways accessible to tourists are either “whitened” (like Mediterranean French and Italian cuisine in exclusive restaurants) or reduced to comida criolla. As such, the creativity that lies beyond Cuban cooking and the food itself fail to satisfy the needs and expectations for exoticism. The lack of resources remains the focal point of the discourse regarding food.

While Cuba remains possibly one of the countries with the most complex systems of representation, built around a very consistent set of symbols with multiple ramifications, foodways seem to fail to comply to this rather normative construction of the exotic and promotional campaigns and strategies, including the official campaign of the Cuban Ministry of Tourism, focus more on the unforgettable experien-

ces on sunny beaches, where tourists can relax while sipping mojitos and daiquiris and enjoying Cuban cigars or discover the cultural richness by touring in an old American car and attending music and dance performances.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


SUMMARY

Taking as a starting point adjacent observations to our fieldwork conducted in Cuba (looking at the institutions of casas particulares – O.L., 2014 and the construction and performance of race in Cuban rumba – R.A., 2011 – 2014) we look at Cuban foodways accessible to tourists, in the broader context of the “structured” touristic experience, compared to the alimentation accessible to Cubans. We suggest that there is a certain duality that is characteristic of contemporary Cuban culinary practices, with deep implications to the touristic modes of visualization and experience and to the multiple discourses regarding food production and consumption. We look at Cuban cuisine and discuss whether it can be understood as part of the discourse on “otherness” which conforms part of the tourism discourse surrounding the country.
MUslim as “Others” in India
In the Debate about the Creation of a Unified Indian Nation

Does the existence of a different law for the followers of Islam pose a threat to national integration?

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When India regained independence on the 15th of August 1947, the question of what this new country should look like was raised. One of the most vividly discussed matters was the idea of uniting all Indian citizens into a single nation. However, many believe that it cannot be done in a country where law is not the same for everyone – as it is in the case of India. Especially the legal provisions that apply only to Muslims are attracting a lot of negative attention.

Firstly, it should be explained why not all Indians are governed by the same set of legal rules. The reason for that is a system of so-called “personal laws”. They regulate a variety of issues related to private and family life, such as marriage, divorce, guardianship, adoption but also inheritance, succession, sometimes prostitution or child labour and religious matters. Originally, personal laws were called “rules of the specific communities” where customs and traditions were the sources of a desired behaviour of their members.

During the British dominance on the Indian subcontinent, the system has slowly begun to evolve into a law closely connected to particular religion. That was the result of British policy of non-interference, with its most important declaration presented by General Warren Hastings in 1772:

That in all suits regarding inheritance, marriage, caste, and other religious usages or institutions, the laws of the Koran with respect to the Mohammedans and those of the Shaster with respect to the Gentoos shall be invariably adhered to. On all such

1 P. Bilimoria, Muslim Personal Law in India: Colonial Legacy and Current Debate, [on-line:] https://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/cases/India.htm [22.07.2014].
2 Period from the 18th century (or even the 17th) till the first half of the 20th century.
3 Shaster: it is the word used for sacred books which contained all ceremonies and dogmas of Brahmin religion. Mainly it was commentaries to the Vedas.
4 This word was used for Hindus.
occasions the Molavies and Brahmins shall respectively attend to expound the law and
they shall sign the report and assist in passing the decree.  

At present times there are five personal laws recognized in India. Those are the laws
of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parses and Jews. The application of the specific pro-
visions depends on religious identity of an individual, or even more so on the religi-
ous identity of the group which he or she belongs to. There is, of course, a possibility
of conversion and, what comes with it, change of the regime of law.

However, there are many voices against that system. As it was previously men-
tioned, one of the arguments of opponents is the conviction that personal laws hinder
the creation of Indian nation. For that reason the majority of members of the Con-
stituent Assembly argued for the inclusion of Article 44 in the Constitution which
was enacted in 1949. The aim of this provision is to obligate the State to create
a single, uniform Civil Code for all Indian citizens, which would put an end to
the existence of personal laws. However, the discussion surrounding this issue has
been continuing for the last 65 years and it is highly unlikely that it would end any-
time soon. The various reasons for which the goal of the Article 44 has still not been
achieved will not be examined in this paper. What I would like to focus on, is why
Muslims and their personal law have started to be perceived as a threat to the new
Indian nation by those who are in favour of the creation of the uniform Civil Code.
Is it true that a change in law is going to unite the citizens of India? Does law have
a power to unite Hindus and Muslims?

The 15th National Census conducted in 2011 showed that 13,4% of the Indian po-
pulation is Muslim which means that there are more than 138 millions of people in
India who profess Islam. They are the largest religious minority in this country even
after the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The followers of this religion are not newco-
mers to this land. They have been present on the Indian subcontinent for hundreds
of years. Despite this fact, they are now considered to be “the Others”: those who do
not fit in the new Indian society, those who are standing in a way of the moderni-
zation of India, those whose women are the only ones suffering from maltreatment,
those whose laws are outdated and should be changed as soon as possible or bet-

6 Article 44: “The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the ter-
ritory of India.” the Constitution of India, 1949, [26th of November 1949].
7 What should be highlighted in the margin, is that the creation of the uniform Civil Code is under-
stood here as the creation of the unified law in the matters regulated right now by personal laws.
The law which regulates contracts is already codified and applies to all the Indian citizens irrespec-
tive of their religion. That is why the expression Civil Code can be misleading. It would be much
better to talk about the Code of Family Law.
Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/religion.aspx].
ter yet – completely abolished. How did it happen that from all the personal laws the Muslim law attracts the most negative attention?

In my opinion, it is firstly a consequence of the ongoing conflict between Hindus and Muslims and between India and Pakistan. Another thing is that Parses and Jews are relatively small groups and their “otherness” is not perceived as such a threat. Christians make for a slightly more complicated case – many of the arguments that are used against Muslims are used against them as well – however, they are still a small minority\(^9\) in comparison to Muslims. Moreover, their personal law does not contain as many controversial provisions as the Muslim one. I will come back to this issue later in the article; for now, let us shortly examine the beginnings of the Muslim law.

During the Mughal Empire when the Muslims held power in India, the Islamic private law, which governed similar matters as personal laws, was applied to subjects who were Muslims; non-Muslims could follow their own customs and practices. In reality, however, many Indian Muslims remained faithful to Hindu customs, the reason for which was that the majority of Indian Muslims were converts from Hinduism and the State authority never forced them to abandon Hindu accretions\(^10\). It would seem that during those times the categories of “Hindu” and “Muslim” were not strictly defined. It was during the British dominance in India when the actions had been taken to restore the pure Muslim law and to clearly distinguish Muslims from the rest of Indian society.

On the 7\(^{th}\) of October 1937, the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act was enacted. Section 2 of this act states that in all matters regarding succession, property of females, marriages and divorces, guardianship etc., the Muslim personal law, understood here as \(\text{Shariat}\)\(^11\), is to be applied to Muslims. At this point, the existing customs which had been practised by Muslim communities and which have now proved to be incompatible with the provisions of Muslim personal law, were overruled\(^12\).

The idea behind the creation of this act was a desire to discard everything that was not based on the four traditional sources of Islamic law: \(\text{Quran}\) (the word of God), \(\text{Sunnah}\) (the record of the life of the Prophet), \(\text{Qijas}\) (legal analogy) and \(\text{Ijma}\) (consensus of the community). While there is still some place left for the custom, it cannot be superior to the rules laid down in the four main sources of law, with a small exception that there is a possibility that the custom will sometimes override legal analogy\(^13\).

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\(^9\) 2,3% of the population according to 15\(^{th}\) National Census of India [on-line:] http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/religion.aspx [10.11.2014].


\(^11\) However, it is important to note that the word \(\text{Shariat}\) does not mean “law” but rather “a road to salvation” which covers the entire human life and has a divine origin.

\(^12\) \(\text{Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application} \text{Act, 1937, Act No. 26 of 1937, [7^\text{th} of October 1937].}\)

\(^13\) G.C. Rankin, \(\text{Custom and the Muslim Law in British India}\), Transaction of the Grotius Society, Vol. 25, 1939, pp. 93–94.
Certain scholars claim that this act was created in accordance with the opinion of the Muslims\textsuperscript{14} and that it was a consequence of the non-interference policy of the British\textsuperscript{15}. On the other hand, this law completely ignored not only the differences between various Muslim sects but also the fact that there were Muslim communities which followed customs of the Hindu origin even after having converted to Islam\textsuperscript{16}. In turn, from British point of view the objectives of this act were to make the governance of Indians easier by unifying their law and to incite the conflict between Hindus and Muslims so that they would not unite against the British\textsuperscript{17}.

As it can be seen here, in this case the law was used as a tool to more clearly distinguish Muslims from other members of the Indian society, by purifying their behaviour from the traditions and customs which origins were to be found in Hinduism. From now on the Muslim minority in India was expected to follow only purely Islamic rules. Still, let us not forget that it all happened on the legal level and it is entirely possible that not much has changed for the rural communities in their everyday life.

There is one more important occurrence in the area of law that should be mentioned here. Just after India has gained its independence, the Hindu personal law was modernized. Thanks to the initiative undertaken by one Jawaharlal Nehru, who believed that the unification of the law should be conducted slowly and should begin from the majority\textsuperscript{18}, the four acts, known as the Hindu Code Bill, were enacted. Those acts brought a significant change, since the Hindu personal law has never before been codified (with the exception of a few small-scale acts enacted by British). Before the creation of the Hindu Code Bill, the personal law of Hindus were, essentially, customs followed by particular communities and could vary even between neighboring villages. This new law introduced few considerable changes such as prohibition of bigamy or provisions aiming to improve situation of the Hindu women.

Another important matter is how the category of “Hindu” was defined. For the purpose of the Hindu Code Bill, a person is considered to be Hindu when he/she is not Muslim, Parse, Christian or Jew. That is why those four acts apply to Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs as well. This was done to unify as many people as possible and to bring the idea of one nation closer\textsuperscript{19}. Of course, that did not bring the desired unity and various communities still feel their otherness and emphasize it, like for example

\textsuperscript{14} Ibidem, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibidem.
Sikhs\textsuperscript{20}. However, the tolerance for Sikhs and Jains is in overall higher because they are seen as indigenous to India, despite the fact that they deviate from Hinduism\textsuperscript{21}. As for the Buddhists, they have almost completely disappeared from the country; moreover, they were always rather respected\textsuperscript{22}.

Even though the unity was not achieved by including as many people as possible under single law, the opponents of Muslim personal law seem to forget about it. For them Hindus, Buddhists, Jains etc., already sacrificed their diverse customs and traditions in the name of the higher cause. They agreed for the unification and modernization of their laws in order to get rid of the differences that do not allow them to achieve national unity and to bring the new Indian country closer to the western standards. Firstly, one needs to remember that the Hindu Code Bill was prepared and enacted by the people who were educated in British law or sometimes even studied in England\textsuperscript{23}. Reforms were therefore introduced by the elite who did not always take into consideration the opinions of ordinary members of the Indian society. Their goal was to modernize India, understood often as imitation of European and American solutions. In that case, it is a high time for Muslims to follow in the same direction because their outdated law cannot drag India away from becoming a civilized country anymore.

One of the issues which attracts the most criticism is the lack of prohibition of polygamy in Muslim personal law which, in the opinion of many, poses a danger to “public morals”. Moreover, the law of Muslims is held responsible for the bigamy still practised among Hindu men who can avoid criminal prosecution by converting to Islam\textsuperscript{24}. While the false conversion can be a problem, the report – “Towards Equality” – from 1974 showed that actually more Hindus (5,06%) lived in polygamous marriages than Muslims (4,31%)\textsuperscript{25}. That implies that polygamy is practised by Hindu men despite the prohibition in Hindu personal law and even though they remained Hindu. The problem here is that the contemporary situation is unknown because there is no recent research on that topic. There are also voices that the prohibition of bigamy in the Hindu Code Bill had actually a negative impact on the position of women\textsuperscript{26}. One more interesting comment is made by Werner Menski who claims that the prohibition of polygamy was introduced in the Hindu Code Bill only because of blind copying of western solutions. Over time, the approach to the poly-

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ibidem.
  \item Smt. Sarla Mudgal, President, ...\textit{ vs Union of India & Ors}, 10\textsuperscript{th} of May, 1995, [on-line:] http://judis.nic.in/supremecourt/qrydisp.asp?tfsm=10742 [10.11.2014].
  \item For more details see: F. Agnes, op. cit.,
\end{itemize}
gamous marriages has changed and they are still possible for Muslims because those relationships are actually not so negatively perceived anymore. Of course, the polygamy cannot become legal, once again, for Hindu men because the international public opinion could react adversely to that. However, what is possible is to not so strictly respect the prohibition which is allegedly happening in Indian courts\(^{27}\).

Another often invoked allegation is that Muslim personal law discriminates women while the Hindu Code Bill liberated them from male domination. Whilst it is true that there are many provisions in the Muslim law which are unfavourable for women and that in Hindu personal law a lot has been done to provide equal treatment of the sexes, the reality is that all Indian women are struggling with their weaker position because Indian society is still incredibly patriarchal. It is literally impossible to explain the whole issue in this article so I would like to only point out that it is important to always look deeper than the formal level of the letter of the law.

Apart from different laws, the lack of tolerance for Muslims is caused by the perception of them as not true “Indians”, as strangers on the Hindu land\(^{28}\). It does not matter that for the majority of Muslims, Indian subcontinent was their home for generations. It could be said that it was the Islamic religion which had come to India, not Muslims.

The aversion towards this community is caused inter alia by the fact that they do not have their main places of worship on the Indian subcontinent. Because of that it is assumed that they may have some extra-territorial connections or loyalties. What is more, Muslims ruled in India for more than 300 hundreds years during the Mughal Empire and many Hindus still cannot make their peace with that. That is why some Hindus, especially those involved in the hindutva movement, call for the hinduization of this religious minority\(^{29}\). Even the judges of the Supreme Court of India, in the Sarla Mudgal case, raised the argument of the existence of Pakistan and the possibility for all the Muslims to move there. However, if they decide to stay they have to reckon with the fact that in India there is a place for only one nation and no one can remain separated because of religious beliefs\(^{30}\).

The abolition of Muslim personal law is perceived as an important part of the whole process of national integration. Uniform Civil code is supposed to be a cure for the “otherness” of the followers of Islam. The unity of Indian citizens can be achieved only through homogenization of the society in which heterogeneous groups do not exist. This way of thinking is often reminded by politicians in their struggle for power\(^{31}\).

That kind of rhetoric intensifies the sense of otherness in Muslims and their conviction that their personal law has to be preserved to protect their distinct identi-

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\(^{28}\) G. Austin, op. cit., pp. 15, 21–22.

\(^{29}\) Ibidem, p. 21.


\(^{31}\) G. Austin, op. cit., pp. 15, 19.
It is like a vicious circle. They are afraid that the new, unified law will be based mostly on the Hindu tradition, law and religion because it is often heard that Hindu values, as the values of the majority, should be the ones to prevail.\(^3\) The All India Muslim Personal Board\(^4\) does not mitigate the whole situation. Mostly because Muslim personal law is seen as the source of their power which they could lose if the uniform Civil Code was enacted.\(^5\)

The most crucial question here is: what really impedes the creation of a united Indian nation? the existence of Muslim community governed by different set of rules in private and family matters is highly unlikely to be the answer. First of all, it has to be noted that nation needs to be built around common things, values, experiences or goals which people can identify with. How can it be done in the country where the society is diversified on almost every possible level? the existence of different personal laws is only a minor part of the whole picture. In India there are hundreds of various languages and dialects, different ethnicities, different systems of beliefs, various customs and traditions which are still practised. The unification in the field of law will not abolish those existing differences. A Muslim will remain Muslim even if the rules of succession will be the same for him as for Hindu. On the other hand, the enactment of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act contributed, to some extent, to the distinction of the followers of Islam from the rest of the society. However, it seems to me that this act only emphasized the differences and did not create new ones.

What is the most important is that legal level is only the formal level and can be sometimes very distant from the reality. India is the country where still 23% of the population is illiterate\(^6\) and where millions of people live in extreme poverty. They often do not have any idea about the changes in law which are undertaken by the State. The only thing that matters is what is happening in their small community, the village they live in. For this reason, next to the formal Indian law exists also an unofficial law. The most important here are old usages, customs and traditions practised for generations. How, then, are people going to unite due to unification of law if the large number of them will not even know that something has changed?

Moreover, law is only a small part of the whole culture. It can inspire or support a change but it cannot alter social reality on its own. It does not have any magical power to control people and their behaviour. If the law is to be effective, it must be

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\(^3\) Ibidem.


\(^5\) It is a non-government organization, created in 1972 in India, which task is the protection of the applicability of *Shariat* law to the Muslims living in India and in consequence to oppose the abolition of Muslim personal law.

\(^6\) G. Austin, op. cit., pp. 15, 21–22.

adapted to the reality, to the specifics of every society. Personal laws regulate private and family matters where in most cases without the initiative of the individual the State cannot intervene to bring the compliance with the legal rules. There is therefore a risk that the uniform Civil Code would be a dead law.

My opinion is based on the fact that in India there was always a place for diversity. The ideas of homogenization sound almost unnatural there. Hinduism itself, which was established on the Indian subcontinent, has never been a unified system of beliefs and practices. The tolerance for diversity is one of its main characteristics and virtues. So perhaps there lies another path in front of the Indian country. Particularly because the unification ideas in the field of law are often motivated by the conviction that western solutions are the most appropriate. This is the aftermath of the idea of the universality of European and American values, while it is important to remember that India and its citizens went through a different history and had created their own culture to which legal arrangement should be adjusted.

I do not know whether Indians will ever feel whole as a nation, however, I believe that it is possible without depriving India of its diversity. Being a Muslim does not exclude being an Indian as some may think. Moreover, nation is formed through the long historical process and cannot be created in one day. Therefore, the abolition of personal laws will bring only dissatisfaction among minorities instead of national unity. I am not trying to say that the legal changes are not required at all in India or that they are pointless. I just think that reforms within Muslim personal law and undertaken at the initiative of Muslims or in consultation with them could be far more effective instead of creating uniform Civil Code.

Coming back to the issue of Indian nation, how can Muslims begin to perceive themselves as a part of the Indian society if they are constantly accused of not being “true” Indians even though they have lived in this country for generations? It seems impossible. Answering the question included in the title of this article, the existence of Muslim personal law is not a cause of the difficulties encountered during attempts to create Indian nation. Therefore, the abolition of this law will not bring national integration. The perception of the personal law of Muslims as the source of all evil is the result of the ongoing conflict between Muslims and Hindus, which has been present in the Indian reality for decades, rather than the veracity of the allegations against it.

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India is the country where there is lack of a full unification of the law. In some matters, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Christans and Parses can behave according to their own rules contained in the so-called “personal laws”. However, after India regained independence the question arose whether these differences of the legal provisions will not stand in the way of the creation of the new, Indian nation. Especially, the law of the Muslim community is consider here as an obstacel which should be removed. The reason for that is the perception of Muslim personal law as one of the main manifestations of the “otherness” of the followers of Islam which abbolition is supposed to put an end to that and bring the desired unity among Indian citizens. However, is it really possible to create a nation simply by introducing changes in law?

**SUMMARY**

Anna Drwal, *Muslim as “Others” in India in the Debate about the Creation...*
The fundamental purpose of the article is to confront cinema and its aesthetical dimension with the psychoanalytical concept of the gaze and its place of belonging in the process of experiencing films. My key argument holds a general theoretical viewpoint that locates cinema within the frame of actively participatory political medium rather than simply aesthetical or artistic one, produced and ready to be watched.\(^1\) The implemented understanding of this productive element bears a political dimension that exists in every cinematic production. The notion of politics in terms of cinema is however radically different from the common imagination and suspiciousness that cinema can act as a tool of propaganda or that films serve us (the spectators) the fantasmatic images that legitimate dominant, political discourse of power. Moreover, I decline the understanding of political cinema as focused on the narrative aspects or referring predominately to the spectrum of themes and stories it presents. In other words, cinematic politics is not a matter of content that can vary and be consciously constructed or selected by the authors. It is fundamentally grounded in the form of cinematic images that are never simply out there to be looked at. In this sense political dimension of cinema lays in its productive potential and the possibility to construct new forms of existence and experience by reshaping and redefining actual forms of temporal and spatial organizations within social field and everyday life. This political productivity can lead to both subjection and emancipation, depending on the intentions and effects it wishes to carry.

Cinematic ideology as a practice of subjection may continue to function safely and relatively smoothly when it is hidden not in the content, where it may be clearly spotted, analysed or denied but as an invisible substance structuring the cinematic

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\(^1\) This understanding of political potential of cinema derives inspiration from the works of Jacques Rancière, who has coined the concept of “politics of aesthetics” in order to search for possible relations and similarities between political discourse and artistic practices. Cf. J. Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics, trans. G. Rockhill, London, New York 2004.
form. Moreover, ideology in cinema should be understood not as content but a form itself, the way mechanisms of human perception grasp, understand and experience images and transfer visual into cognition or affection. Not being aware of its mechanisms, subjects fall into ideology by entering into its logic as seemingly conscious and free consumers. In other words, the success of ideology is its invisibility that does not allow spectators to fully understand its logic. It is not simply the logic of ideology that is implemented to cinema as such but the mechanisms infiltrating subjects in a way that they appear to them as natural and neutral. In terms of experiencing films the question that remains unanswered is as follow: How does spectator perceive the moving images and becomes absorbed perceptively and affectively with them? How the cinematic gaze is structured in its desire and what/who structures it? The question of “how”, related to the form and abstract understanding of experiencing cinema as such is prior here to the question of “what” that refers to the narratives and all particular elements of cinematic mise-en-scène. This shift towards epistemological examination is crucial if one is willing to follow the path of political potential of cinema (or art as such). It is never possible to give an answer of its essence as the possibility of its productive existence is grounded on the idea of ongoing process of becoming, changing prevalent conditions and implementing new mechanisms that have not existed before.

This notion of politics of cinematic aesthetics is understood similarly to the theory of Rancière. Nevertheless it will be applied here in a different manner in order to study cinematic gaze from the contemporary psychoanalytical perspective. The key idea however remains the same as in Rancière’s works and is based on analysing how fundamental aesthetical dimensions of (cinematic) images and the ways we watch them are politically engaged and structured by the relations of power, language and knowledge (the Lacanian Symbolic). To support the argument I will exemplify the key point of cinema being necessarily political in its aesthetical dimension by providing Lacanian psychoanalytical notions of “the gaze” and problematizing its common understanding. The above concept is helpful to understand how cinematic experience is structured in complex relations between film, spectator and the process of looking, experiencing and engaging with moving images.

My ambition is to prove that besides – or rather on top of – somehow obvious ideological or fantasmatic potential, cinema is a politically active actor and affects not just the way we perceive cinematic images but above all the way we, as subjects, are perceived, experienced and structured through the cinematic mode of thinking. The core concept around this idea will be introduced in the Lacanian notion of the gaze that does not belong to spectators as it actively participates in the process of forming images. In this sense I suggest one should locate cinema within its political potential and define it as an active participant in the process of constituting cinematic experience. Thinking of cinema as of just moving images gives a general, rather shallow meaning of what cinema is and defines it within the universe of visual and aesthetical forms without understanding their foundations. Within the history of film thoughts there has been an ongoing debate between two main tendencies. On
one hand theorists searched for the essence of film in its similarities with the reality (Andre Bazin, Sigfried Kracauer, Jean Epstein) and on the other they defined film as art only if it can produces differences between what is real and what is constructed (Rudolf Arnheim, Jean Mitry, Béla Balázs). One must though look beyond (or into) the visual surface in order to be able to see the relations of powers that structure the visual (also the gaze and the image) and understand that cinema is not just to be thought of or ready to be defined but it also has ability to think and produce in its own sense. There is no need to locate cinema within only one order of production as its condition of possibility relies on the impossibility to fulfil just one wish (become closer to reality or become pure artistic practice). This is how the idea of cinematic production and the notion of the gaze should be perceived: as a combination of contradictory movements, constituted of material reality and artistic practices and existing always in between them in a compulsory paradoxical tension. The tragedy of the gaze and the desire that it forms is that it can never be completed as they belong to two different registers that can never meet. What we want to see and what appears in front of our eyes cannot fully and eventually connect as there is no transcendent way to fill the gap between the possibility of the senses and that of the reason. In order to examine this task, I will delineate theoretical frame that will consist of the Lacanian psychoanalytical concepts, helpful to discuss the relation between the gaze, cinema as such and spectator and bind them in their political, productive potential.

By discussing the political potential of cinematic images I would like to concentrate above all on the political understanding of the aesthetics and relate one to another by examining their connections with the support of the notion of the gaze. This opens a possibility to criticize the work of ideology that serves as a fundamental mechanism for our imagination, desire and emotions when we are absorbed with films. Before I proceed to discuss the possible ways I see this idea might be implemented into practice I will clarify my approach by submitting and explaining the key terms that are linked to the main argument. First of all I will justify the ethical grounding that stands behind the proposed argument and directly leads towards it.

**THE REAL ETHICS OF CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE**

The ethical engagement in cinema, in order to be better understood in its political dimension, can be introduced through the psychoanalytical concepts coined by Lacan. Though none of them directly refer to cinema as such, in the recent history of film theory a number of authors, such as Todd McGowan, Joan Copjec or Slavoj Žižek, have proved that they might be favourably applied to film thought benefiting both. By following and rebuilding Lacanian theory and making it function in the field of cinema studies they have all also accepted the ethical background, clearly demonstrated by the French psychoanalytic in his major works.

Claiming that the ethics of cinematic experience coincide with the ethics of Lacanian psychoanalysis is to accept the necessity to remain open for the possibility
to encounter the Real. In his VII seminar – *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* – Lacan explicitly expresses his ethical imperative by stating that one should save the importance of experiencing the Real despite the inevitable encounter with trauma and inexpressible, metaphysical experience of sublimity. He situates his theory primarily in the ethical standpoint, describing it as a „practice that is only a preliminary to moral action as such - the so-called action being the one through which we enter the Real.” This experience is only possible if we agree to step away from the pleasure principle (Freudan *Lustprinzip*) and try to reach beyond the Symbolic structure that organizes our social and cultural reality. The trauma of the Real is for Lacan the core, irreducible essence of life, comparable to the Kantian notion of *das Ding*. Becoming close to it is similar to the experience of sublimity both in pleasant and unbearable way. In other terms, this experience relies on encountering the fundamental lack in the constitution of subjectivity that structures both the Symbolic and the Imaginary.

If psychoanalysis is for Lacan above all an ethical project, it is precisely because of the irreducible, absolutely primary imperative to maintain this rather painful sensation that our psyche, in the natural tendency it has, would prefer to forget. Agreeing to accept this core strangeness and understanding that the other is not simply an actual subject that is transcendent but rather a subjective, imaginary construction based on “forgetting the Lack” is crucial to understand the whole ethical dimension of Lacanian psychoanalysis. How can we then relate this notion of ethics and encountering the non-symbolic Real with the cinematic experience? Who would be the other in the act of watching films? As cinema is an art that is based on images and movements I believe the link can be found in the notion of the gaze.

The first psychoanalytical film theorists in the 70’s (such as Jean-Louis Baudry, Jean-Louis Comolli, Christian Metz, Laura Mulvey or Stephen Heath) referred to Lacanian psychoanalysis by basing on his short text called *The mirror stage as formative of the I function*. They compared the nature of cinematic experience with the particular moment in the 18-month child’s life when it recognizes itself in the reflection of a mirror and experiences imaginary control over its body. The consequence of this comparison was the admittance that cinema’s position is above all located

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2 “The Real” is one of three orders that form subject, language, reality or cognition. The other two are the Symbolic and the Imaginary. They can all be perceived from both ontological and epistemological perspectives. “The Real” is the truth of reality beyond its symbolic meaning. It can be understood as a core grounding for our existence that we do not have access to and that is always there without its meaning or the rupture in the language as it is impossible to produce a signifier that would simply name the Real. More about Lacanian triad, see: S. Homer, *Jacques Lacan*, London, New York 2002, pp. 15‒95; or T. Eyers, *Lacan and the Concept of the ‘Real’*, New York 2012.


within the Lacanian Imaginary order. The relation between the subject and the object was unidirectional and simplified to one dominant power, situated on the side of a spectator. An active spectator consciously controls the screen with its perception and derives pleasure from voyeuristic experience that is related to the idea of being in power of the perceived images. Experiencing films – according to the early psychoanalysts – as a complete Imaginary session is perfectly structured by the work of ideology that does not leave any empty space for possible rupture in its functioning. At the same time they understood the concept of the Imaginary as the ideal practical embodiment of the Symbolic.

The problematic moment in the above early psychoanalytical film theory is that all of the theorists completely omitted the key ethical value of Lacanian psychoanalysis and forgot about the importance of the Real that also exists in the cinematic experience. They have formed rather idealistic theoretical model that omitted the essential fact that enables any ideology to function; no ideology is finally completed and can only persist by overcoming ruptures that are inevitably implied within their logics. At the same time, all three orders from Lacanian psychoanalysis – the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic – are treated by them in separation and without overlapping. This allowed them to abandon the Real as well as construct an abstract, idealistic definition of stable and omnipotent ideology (as the Symbolic) that totally completes the Imaginary.

There is an important reason why Lacan used the image of Borromean rings to visually represent his triad. Each element does not only affect one another but all three also co-exist in a sense that if one of the orders is violated, it influences all the others. Slavoj Žižek understands the Lacanian Real not simply as something that stays in opposition to the Symbolic order of the language. “There is no clear division to the world of things and the world of words, the reality and the semblance (the appearances)”7. In other words, under the mask of language there is nothing more primary, there is no das Ding in Kantian sense. If we violate the structure of language we lose the sense of reality at the same time. The Real is possible only as a rupture in the Symbolic as well as the Symbolic is constructed to avoid encountering the Real. Finally, the Imaginary is the mediation between the two that does not simply try to connect them or separate them but exist only in this space of impossibility where the first two cannot meet.

This definition of the relation between the Symbolic, Imaginary and Real should not be confused with the postmodern interpretation given for example by Jacques Derrida in a famous statement that “there is no outside-text” (fr. il n’y a pas de hors-texte)8. Žižek’s definition of the Symbolic does not avoid metaphysics and is not radical in its constructivist position. In his understanding the form of the Real can only be spotted through the notion of the Symbolic. To be more precise, it cannot be simply spotted in language itself, rather in the rupture, negative side of it that shows the empty space as a result of the incoherence between the signifier and the signified. There is an irreduc-

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ible gap between the content and the act of speech and only by noticing this gap we are able to gain an access to the Real. The Real itself can be accessed only through a kind of “negative theology” from the inside of the language. Restrictions existing within language (mainly taboos, social restrictions that a person cannot say whatever it wishes, et cetera) that may radically captivate subjects, paradoxically because of it, allows them to feel the fullness of existence and in consequence enables us to successfully function in practical everyday life. Žižek summarised it in the following words: “if one can say everything and there is no internal limitations of what may be verbally expressed, the external boundary that separates ‘a word’ from ‘a thing’ also disappears and everything becomes an effect of discourse.”9 Our identity as human beings is based on this idea of being also someone else, struggling to identify with the Symbolic order but also carry on producing sense of who we are and how we can position ourselves in the existing symbolic structures and in opposition to the Real.

**THE CINEMATIC GAZE**

Following the above insight to the Lacanian core concepts I will now proceed to give an understanding of how the ethical paradigm of cinematic experience in relation to psychoanalysis (and in opposition to early psychoanalytical film theorists) should form its appearance. The key figure that I will base my approach on is an American film theorist, Todd McGowan. In his book, *The Real gaze, film theory after Lacan* (2007),10 McGowan suggests that the use of psychoanalysis in cinema should not be simply criticized and denied as some of the American theorists did in the early 90’s (like David Bordwell and Noel Caroll and their concept of the Post-theory).11 He rather suggests to criticize the achievements of the theorists of the 70’s and construct psychoanalytical film theory from scratches by going back to the original texts of Lacan that haven’t been previously exploited in the field of film theory.

The key term in McGowan’s book is the gaze and he refers to it by giving its new, psychoanalytical redefinition. To be able to better understand its meaning we should contrast it with a term look and then combine with the work of desire in cinema. The term “look” in cinema belongs to a spectator and stands in opposition to the gaze that belongs to the object of desire – in this case, a cinematic image. Early film theorists, that were using psychoanalytical concepts, have focused their attention on the active role of look and underestimated the role of the object that spectator is looking at and is also constructed by. McGowan suggests that we should focus our attention primarily on the ways films structure the position of spectators and enable them to become a part of cinematic experience rather than seek for the work of ideology in the position of spectator.

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The first step for McGowan is to establish a concept of the gaze from the position of cinema and its images. The gaze – he states – “is not the spectator’s external view of the filmic image, but the mode in which the spectator is accounted for within the film itself. Through their manipulation of the gaze, films produce the space in which spectators can insert themselves.”\textsuperscript{12} The activity of spectator is reduced to be a subject of desire, however the mechanism of desire is not something that spectator produces but rather enables and is involved in as its element. It is in the role of the gaze to assign the direction and sense for desire and reverse the common understanding that it comes from the subject and is directed towards the other (the object of desire).

The opposition of active spectator and passive image becomes blurred and it opens up new possibilities for discussing the status of cinema in relation to the Lacanian triad. With the central position of the gaze McGowan transfers Lacanian understanding of how desire functions and how fantasies are produced in the cinematic experience. He locates the gaze in the Real dimension of cinema that has been omitted by the early theorists. In the XVI seminar Lacan gives his understanding of the meaning of the gaze that is crucial for McGowan:

The gaze is something that the subject (or spectator) encounters in the object (or the film itself). It becomes an objective, rather than a subjective, gaze. Lacan’s use of the term reverses our usual way of thinking about the gaze because we typically associate it with an active process. But as an object, the gaze acts to trigger our desire visually, and as such it is what Lacan calls an objet petit a or object-cause of desire.\textsuperscript{13}

The term \textit{objet petit a} indicates that this specific object isn’t simply the thing what the subject is looking at. It is its negative side, that is the rupture that allows the subject to look. To look does not mean to be in charge of everything that shows up in front of our eyes or decode what is physically visible. \textit{Object petit a} as a gap within the field of look is what fundamentally structures the possibility to see. As Lacan have put it, “the \textit{objet a} in the field of the visible is the gaze.”\textsuperscript{14} McGowan follows this understanding by claiming that:

this gap within our look marks the point at which our desire manifests itself in what we see. What is irreducible to our visual field is the way that our desire distorts that field, and this distortion makes itself felt through the gaze as object. The gaze thus involves the spectator in the filmic image, disrupting the spectator’s ability to remain what Metz calls “all-perceiving” and “absent as perceived.”\textsuperscript{15}

McGowan’s respond to the unexploited theoretical potential of psychoanalytical thought is not a complete rejection of its heritage, but on the contrary, returning to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibidem, 7.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibidem, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{15} T. McGowan, op. cit., p. 6.
\end{itemize}
Jakub Morawski, *The Gaze of the Other – Psychoanalytical Understanding...*

its roots. According to the American theorist, only such a practice enables us to critically redefine new conditions of possibilities for psychoanalytical film studies and to rediscover its real political potential with the help of previously unused Lacanian terms. For this purpose, McGowan decides to revise the assumptions of the criticized theories by using theoretical tools that were, according to him misused, and then he went back straight to the Lacanian thought.

**POLITICAL POTENTIAL OF THE GAZE**

McGowan breaks from the early Lacanian film theory by pointing out the political potential in it. He transforms the notion of the gaze by illustrating how spectator is not in position of what she or he is looking at and not even how this affects the act of understanding and looking at images. Subjects lose their privilege and are embodied in the gaze as its structuring element and not the possessor. The gaze is a prepared space for the spectator to fit into and it is in this particular spatial configuration that desires are produced and cinema attracts the audience. Understanding this structure does not have an emancipatory potential as such but as a critical examination of the construction of cinematic experience points out where we should search for political understanding of cinema. It is not in our (both spectators or critics and film directors) force of controlling images by producing them or looking at them but on being able to confront our own position as the one already implied by the gaze that is in a sense external to our experience. As McGowan has put it, “the gaze is nothing but our presence in what we are looking at, but we are nothing but this gaze.”

As the object-cause of desire is not an actual material thing within the cinematic images, the gaze is organized around the impossible, non-existing object. What is important here to grasp the political meaning of the cinematic gaze, that spectator’s role is not to “fall in love with” the images and treat them as a magical world of fantasies and fiction. On the contrary, the possibility of the gaze in its paradoxical status is to understand that the object petit a does not exist in any given form or matter and only this absence enables its existence. Contemporary psychoanalysis teaches us a radically different lesson that corresponds to the Kantian idea of the sublimity. We must grasp the gaze in its lack of sense, uncanny status, beyond the Symbolic and on the way to encounter the Real. It does not have to make us stop desiring the images. On the contrary, it allows us to better understand what we desire and how desire is possible, not only in terms of experiencing films but in general. In this sense cinema corresponds to the reality by explaining how human desire, fantasies and projections are constructed in everyday experience and how the gaze is possible in its reverse side of the visible. In cinema we do not desire what we can see on the cinematic screen as what enables both desire and the gaze is the unseen – the absence that can never

16 Ibidem, p. 201.
be embodied in the actual forms. What we desire from the cinema is the Other that is never there, is unreachable but at the same time forms the gaze that is willing to grasp it. The paradoxical nature of The Other at the same time forms productive potential of cinema. There is a fundamental rupture between the status of The Other as an object of desire and the aim of desire to possess it. As the Other exists only in its Symbolic and Imaginary status it can never be reached as it is not an actual object but a projection of the subject who is willing to possess it as it was a material thing. The impossibility of the end of desire is not however a tragedy of subjects who can never get what they want but enables the act of desire to stay in an ongoing process of production. The real tragedy would paradoxically be the final success of desire, meeting with its object and eventually ending the necessity for further production of fantasmatic scenarios. There is no ready script for desire to be transferred into visual images and no fantasy that can be always perceived as a fantasy. In order words, there is nothing that cinema desires, except of continuously be desired.

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SUMMARY

In the article I am introducing the concept of the gaze derived from Lacanian psychoanalysis by relating it to the cinematic experience. The key standpoint that sets the argument is that the relation between the spectator, cinematic images and the process of experiencing films should be redefined in order to grasp the productive and political potential of cinema. To give a better insight of my theoretical approach I am giving an understanding of how spectators are constructed by the Other – the gaze, desire, the Symbolic and the Real orders, that does not belong to them but at the same time enables to form their identity and position themselves between the gaze, the image and the object of desire. Although I am only focusing on cinema, it serves as an example of a broader theoretical approach to psychoanalytical studies of how subjectivity is constructed in relation to the impossible, invisible or non-existent.
Joanna Puchalska

THE SCOURGE OF THE LAND AND SEA – AN AWFUL OUTLAW OR A ROMANTIC HERO?

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As long as people sailed through the rivers and the high seas, there were those who tried to gain wealth by depriving others of their possessions. The existence of the sea rovers or, more precisely, sea robbers, is intricately connected with the developed commerce and conflicts among different communities and countries. In peaceful times in well-organized states piracy is usually viewed as an abomination and pirates are social outcasts living on the verge of normal communities under the strict official rule. They are the violent strangers, dealing with death and destruction, bringing flames, slavery and plunder. Hence the sea robbers are the aliens – cruel, colorful, constantly drunk, and, to some extent, free. They are definitely very different from the ordinary folks.

In this article I would like to explain the difference between pirates and corsairs and present, in short, the tradition of Western piracy. The important factor of sea roving was the daily existence of mariners which distinguished typical sailors from land dwellers. I would like to describe the reality of life aboard the ship in the golden age of sail. It might be helpful in developing a better understanding of the romantic allure of piracy which survived to our very days.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe in his probably most famous work, Faust, put into the mouth of Mephistopheles memorable words:

I know a little of navigation:
War, trade, and piracy, allow,
As three in one, no separation.

And indeed: he was right. Nowadays – in the 21st century – the dire risk of being robbed while at sea does not want to cease to exist. In fact only in 2011 there were at least 437 pirate incidents recorded worldwide. It is not only a problem of huge container ships which are kidnapped for ransom. It might be said that this kind

3 A good illustration of this kind of incidents might be the 2013 movie Captain Phillips which is based on the true story of hijacking of the American vessel Maersk Alabama in 2009.
of actions are a specialty of the Horn of Africa residents. However, even the regular yachtsmen on different waters are endangered, especially when they abandon their vessels during perilous weather conditions. Although in the international law acts the pirates are called *hostis humanis generis* – enemies of mankind – and countries have the right to fight the threat of piracy it is still extremely difficult to overcome. And the economic losses are estimated to be billions of dollars yearly.

According to Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a pirate is anyone who commits illegal acts of violence against another ship for private ends with the aim of personal enrichment and who carries out the attack outside the country’s territorial waters.

It is clearly visible that this definition of piracy is rather narrow since many attacks take place in the harbors or on the coastal waters. Historically pirates were also attacking land and the cities but they were doing it from the sea. And thus we came to a terminological problem. Tom Bowling, the author of *Pirates and Privateers*, states that “a pirate is a sea-robber, an exploiter of weakness. If a pirate has the power he will take what’s yours”. However, not all sea rovers were pirates. Beside the term ‘pirate’ we know of corsairs, privateers, filibusters, freebooters and buccaneers, not to mention local names given to those who indulge in this type of crime business. Not all of the terms mentioned above meant people carrying out illegal actions. Or, at least, they were not considered illegal by specific countries.

Generally speaking, the privateer or corsair was a legal pirate. ‘Privateer’ derived from the private man-of-war, while ‘corsair’ has French roots of cruising for purchase. The captain who wanted to become one had to obtain for his ship and crew a letter of marque or a letter of reprisal from the state’s government and he was free to attack ships of the enemy country during wartime. This practice has existed in Europe as a part of maritime warfare since the Middle Ages and it became widespread on the oceans in later times. It was often applied by the weaker countries against powerful enemies which possessed strong navies – this was observed during the reign of queen Elisabeth I when the English sea dogs were struggling with rich and well armed Spaniards in the 16th century. Later on, in late 18th and early 19th century, privateering became very popular on the East Coast waters of the United States since the young American nation was un-

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4 Such cases are reported among others in the publication of P. Gelder, *Total Loss*, London 2001.
5 Some shipping companies recruit armed security teams and employ them on the vessels cruising through the most dangerous waters of the Indian Ocean.
6 D. Petrovic, op. cit.
8 For example 18th century Thames River’s pirates were called *Mudlarks* – ibidem, p. 14. Japanese pirates ravaging Japanese, Korean and Chinese coasts for several centuries were known as *wako, waegu* and *wokou* respectively – S. Turnbull, *Pirate of the Far East*, Oxford 2007, p. 4.
able to organize a fleet which could rival the British\textsuperscript{11}. The aim of the privateers was to capture the enemy merchant vessels and seize all valuable cargo. The ships were often kept as prizes and sometimes even served as the corsair’s cruisers in their later careers.

It is not surprising, however, that these acts of lawful robbery were not seen as such by the crews of the intercepted vessels or their authorities. Even though letters of marque stated clearly that the privateer is in fact performing his duty when he was caught by the enemy, his fate often was no different to that of a mere pirate. And that was simple – hanging. It shows that the practice of privateering was not a safe business but it had certain bonuses for mariners. The majority of the loot was shared among the crew and the discipline on board were not as strict as on a regular warship. The cruises for prey were generally shorter than transoceanic travels, therefore daily conditions for the crew members were better and the contracts lasted for a specific duration, not infrequently only for one trip. In England becoming a privateer could also save the able seamen from being forced to serve aboard HMS ships with far worse financial gains, if any\textsuperscript{12}.

The problem with the armies of privateers surfaced during the time of peace. When the war ended, they were stripped of their, often quite profitable, professions. Furthermore, as a consequence, several corsairs ended up as pirates attacking anything they could conquer. They became outlaws hunting for the loot.

And the spoils are roots for the other names of the pirates – filibusters and freebooters – which mean those who fight for booty. These terms come from the corrupted Dutch word \textit{vryjbuiter}\textsuperscript{13}. Conversely, a ‘buccaneer’ had a more peaceful meaning. This term comes from a type of grill for smoking the meat used by inhabitants of the Antilles’s backwoods during the 17\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{14}. Those hunters took the opportunity and started to raid Spanish ships and thus became the notoriously famous pirates of the Caribbean.

However the opposite way of action was still possible. During the golden age of sail and piracy some extraordinary pirate leaders became royal pupils and admirals, promoted to nobility. And some even turned their backs on their former comrades and transformed into pirate hunters. Francis Drake is a splendid example of the former case. Initially, this English steersman and smuggler crossed the Atlantic Ocean to capture Spanish gold. After the successful raid, he came back to his country and found the favour of queen Elisabeth I. In another expedition Drake not only attacked the Spanish ships – he managed to cross the strait which was subsequently named after him – but also took over several Spanish towns and caught the galleon carrying tons of silver. With that he gained not only wealth and fame, but also the nobility. Later sir Francis Drake became the second-in-command during the fight with the Great Span-

\textsuperscript{12} Cf. Ibidem, pp. 15, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{13} Cf. B. Little, op. cit., p. 222. Some authors claim that the word \textit{filibusters} derived from the small ‘filbotes’ (fly boats) they sometimes used – A. Konstam, \textit{Scourge of the Seas. Buccaneers, Pirates and Privateers}, Oxford 2007, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{14} Cf. A. Konstam, \textit{Scourge of the Seas…}, op. cit., p. 21.
ish Armada. The latter instance might be illustrated by the figures of Woodes Rogers or Henry Morgan. Woodes Rogers was born in an affluent seafaring family. In 1709 he took part in a privateering expedition during which he saved the mariner Alexander Selkirk. Afterwards he served as governor of the Bahamas and was fighting with the local piracy. Before the times of Rogers, there was also another man who gained his name through ruthless actions. Henry Morgan originally was a buccaneer. However, his highly successful raids against the Spanish settlements in America – especially Porto Bello in the present-day Panama – ultimately brought him fame in England, nobility and the title of vice-governor of Jamaica. And nowadays we can enjoy the rum which bears the name and picture of sir Henry Morgan on its label...

As I explained, piracy could lead to successful careers in the state governments and it did not meet with condemnation as a rule. In fact, at some historical moments piracy was not perceived as a reprehensible crime at all.

The European antiquity is usually described as a time of great Greek philosophers or the era of dominance of the powerful Roman Empire. However, it was also the time of incredible growth of various forms of sea robbery. To the ancient Greeks it was as common a practice as trade and many literary and historiographic works give us clues that it was not disgracing. Quite the contrary – piracy was a claim to fame because of the bravery, agility and resourcefulness of men who chose such an occupation. Moreover, it was not uncommon for merchants to attack their fellows if the opportunity presented itself. Ancient pirates were stealing not only cargo and ships, taking crews as prisoners and selling them to slavery, but they also attacked numerous temples and cities for rich spoils and abducted local people for slave markets. In Homeric poetry several characters – among them Achilles and Odysseus – perform such acts of robbery and they are not criticized. Piracy in the Mediterranean Sea still lasted when the Romans worked hard to make it Mare Nostrum. In fact even Caesar himself was caught by the pirates in his early career and was forced to pay a handsome ransom.

Similar events became a rule during the Viking Age in Northern Europe when significant part of the Scandinavian society indulged in sea roving. For various German tribes war, fighting and fame constituted the true purpose of existence and they were quite happy to plunder their neighbors who confessed akin ideology since “success in war was key to power and status”. And later Vikings were no different. The name which is nowadays

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16 Who later became the model for Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe.
commonly used to describe those people comes from the Scandinavian word ‘viking’ which meant a pirate raid. These Norsemen most often sailed the Baltic and Northern Seas on their famous longships propelled by sail and oars. Those vessels were sleek, long, thin and fast and they drew little water which enabled the crew to penetrate rivers and safely strand the ship when attacking coastal settlements or monasteries. If a Viking warrior was successful and talented, he could win much more than just a peaceful dwelling in the country as an aged man. If he claimed to be a descendant of a fine aristocratic family, had enough charisma and money gain along the renown through numerous fights, he could even become a king. Such was the case of Olaf Tryggvason who gained wealth and fame during Viking raids and became the ruler of Norway at the end of the 10th century. To some people just the title of a sea king – the commander or a band of sea wolves – was enough. They were the kings without land.

The twilight of the Viking Age did not extinguish piracy in Northern Europe – after all Slavs were receptive students. However, in the high Middle Ages this practice slowly started to be perceived as disgraceful, cruel and godless. When the Hanseatic League dominated the Baltic Sea, it had a menacing enemy – the Vitalian Brotherhood whose members originally worked as privateers. In the late 14th century they were so powerful and successful in plundering various merchantmen, that a couple of Scandinavian monarchs asked the master of the Teutonic Knights to intervene. The Order had a mighty fleet and it easily conquered Gotland – the main stronghold of the pirates. Even if the Teutonic Order acted against the pirates, it does not mean that other knights were not interested in piracy. In the first quarter of the 16th century the Knights of St. John were granted the territory of Malta. It was a great base for a naval military order. The Order was not only fighting with Muslims who had well-developed privateering practices which concentrated on Christian slaves who were used, among others, as oarsmen in galleys. In fact their activities were not different than those of their enemies. Admittedly, the Knights were freeing Christians serving on Muslim vessels – except for those who managed to accept Islam – the converts were killed. Nevertheless, at the same time they were attacking trading ships and they were capturing non-Christians for enslavement.

25 While plundering England Olaf become a Christian and later he brutally tried to force his subjects to accept Christianity.
26 Cf. J. Haywood, op. cit., p. 32.
29 Muslim pirate leaders were often granted admiral’s titles in Ottoman fleets or high positions in the state administration – Cf. M. Perzyński, op. cit., pp. 108, 117–119, 122.
Mediterranean pirates for tens of centuries were using galleys. These ships were propelled mostly by oars and sails were used only in favorable winds. They were sleek and fast and carried many men able to fight on board of the attacked vessels. Such galleys were effective on close basins with many islands to hide from strong gales but they were not proper to use on the open oceans. Atlantic waters were crossed by more sturdy sailing ships. During the golden age of sail and piracy in the 17th and 18th centuries many different types of vessels existed and not all of them were used for long trans-oceanic voyages. The popular culture tends to show the Caribbean pirates sailing on huge three-masted warships while in reality they usually used much smaller one-masted vessels called the sloop or two-masted schooners31.

A privateer [or a pirate ship] had to be seaworthy, capable of cruising the enemy sea lanes regardless of the weather conditions. Crucially, she must be capable of handling well in strong breezes with more sail than was commonly carried, and able to sail as close to wind as possible32. Armament was less important, although a privateer had to have sufficient firepower to overawe any merchant ship it came across. The idea was not to fight enemy warships or well-defended merchantmen in a conventional sea battle, but to capture the enemy by intimidation, preferably without damaging her hull or cargo. As most privateers had a comparatively large crew compared with their mercantile opponents, boarding was the favoured recourse if the enemy chose not to surrender on demand. This large crew was required to man prize vessels [...]33.

Pirates and privateers were using vessels for various actions but generally their goal was to gain wealth. They could do it by stealing property either at sea from the intercepted vessels or by attacking settlements on land. Killings, cruelty and rapes definitely were not the primary objectives. Yet sometimes it was necessary to get rid of dangerous or useless people for example to save food supplies. An exemplary form of brutality might have also been employed for intimidation. We should not forget that pirates in general were not against slavery and if the opportunity arose they stole “living goods” and sold them themselves. However, the capacity of their vessels was usually restricted and thus they often took prizes or just the most valuable collectibles. Sometimes the spare property was simply destroyed. Sea rovers were also interested in food, water and alcoholic beverages. Even though they usually did not spend extended periods at the open sea supplies were of course crucial to sustain their very existence.

In fact sea roving could be an extremely dangerous and unhealthy way of living. It did not only mean the possibility of dying in a physical confrontation with the prey or navy – to die by the sword, bullet, cannon fire, ordinary fire, flying splints of wood, drowning, by being crushed by the falling yards and rigging or, if caught by

31 In Europe pirates and privateers also used smaller vessels such as cutters and ketches.
32 It was needed for speed since sea-rovers wanted to outmaneuver and outsail their prey and outrun the possible enemies.
33 A. Konstam, Privateers & Pirates..., op. cit., p. 31.
the authorities, by execution – preferably a dishonorable yet uncomplicated and effective hanging. The sea practice itself was hazardous. We must remember that it was a time when modern meteorology or GPS was unknown. People who decided to sail the briny seas could rely only on what they could see and what they learnt about certain waters from their predecessors. And even if they noticed a storm approaching with the limited speed of their vessels they did not have any chance to hide from upcoming difficulties. Even today huge ships built from modern materials and with state-of-the-art technology are being lost to the vicious storms and extreme waves. It is assessed that in single decade of the 19th century – from 1860 to 1870 – 2500 ships of the British fleet only were lost at sea34. And it was already the time of magnificent clippers, much slimmer, longer, faster and sturdier than the vessels used in the former era.

There is a saying that during the golden age of sail men were made of steel and ships were made of wood. And indeed sailors had great need for strength. Besides difficult weather conditions and dangers of fights a daily life on board, sailing vessels was a hard enough struggle. Even the most common practice of manning the yards could be seen as perilous: safety devices have been in use only for the last few decades so ancient sailors were climbing the shrouds barefooted any without any protection. Moreover, the ships were comparatively small for the size of their crews and mariners usually had very little space for sleeping since cabins were reserved for the chosen few officers. A warm bunk – or rather a hammock – system was common. But even if a seaman finished his watch and went to bed, he could be called on board the moment he fell asleep because of the sudden wind change. Mariners usually did not have many clothes so they were not changing. Soaked garments were drying on the bodies. It could lead to many diseases and skin problems were common among the sea folk as well as thermal injuries such as frostbite or sunburn35. Lower decks were stuffy, filled with rats, lice and cockroaches. Furthermore, numerous illnesses were widespread among the crews, especially malaria, yellow fever and, most of all, scurvy. Some diseases, for example the ague, were particularly dangerous to those not acclimatized to the new environment. In fact in the golden era of piracy “far more seamen died from disease than battle or accident […]”36. Sailors must have looked quite horrible to those who stayed on the land – a bunch of dirty, ill and foulmouthed scum wrapped in rags. No wonder that people were afraid of these devil’s companions.

The food and water on board were especially foul. A typical diet consisted of salted pork, boiled beans and scrags. The main problem with sustenance was the lack of long term storage and keeping the food in the edible state. Meat often was moldy and infested with maggots and bread was covered with weevils, yet it was consumed by the hungry crew. And water, which was always in short supply, very soon started to stink and became green, turning into a miniature aquarium. Still it was so precious that men did not use it for washing their bodies. The lack of rudimentary

34 Cf. D. Pike, Sztormy, Warszawa 2013, p. 27.
36 B. Little, op. cit., p. 88.
hygiene and bad supplies led to an almost endemic dysentery and typhus. Since the supply of drinking water on longer voyages was quite problematic “spirits in one form or another were the principal drink at sea”. A daily ration of rum, brandy or beer was so high that the majority of mariners were constantly drunk.

Daily chores of the crew were already demanding but since their vessels were made of impermanent materials, they needed special treatment from time to time. Wear and tear of equipment should lead to regular replacements and the hull itself was endangered by naval shipworms. If it did not undergo a tiring process of careening with time it could start to take water faster than the crew could pump it out or it could simply disintegrate on the raging waves. And such waves could also be the reason of serious seasickness.

Moreover, if a mariner was serving on board the regular merchantmen or the Royal Navy ship, he had to take enormous care about the discipline since the hierarchy was strict. The captain was “the first after god” and he had total control over his crewmen. Flogging or battering was the most common practice along deducting money from the promised salary, also in case of minor offences. Even swearing or discontentment expressed aloud could lead to severe punishment. Death penalty was used ordinarily but other punishments, such as keelhauling, often led to the same result. Moreover, the British fleet regularly suffered from crew shortages and officers readily accepted people hijacked by press gangs on the streets or in the taverns. Able seamen in major British harbors were endangered even when they were sober and without any debts. Sometimes mariners were so scared of the possibility of impressment that they refused to go on land. No wonder that some chose a more negligent life with at least a real perspective of gaining riches and fame.

Cruel actions of the captain and injustice on board could lead to mutiny and if it was successful the newly-made pirates were choosing a leader. But even such captains were faced with the insolent, knavish and generally disorderly crews. Pirate societies were much more egalitarian than the normal societies of their times or crews of regular ships. Nationality, race, religion and previous social status were not of much importance. This unorthodox tolerance was of course quite suspicious and constituted yet another difference between the outlaws and “peaceful” citizens. However, there were several rules concerning the lives of sea robbers which everyone had to obey. Pirates were brothers and all spoils were divided according to services and rank and injured or crippled got special rake-off. This theme as well as some

38 B. Little, op. cit., p. 90.
41 „Yet pirates, for whom severe discipline was anathema, sometimes inflicted severe punishments, including marooning and death, upon their own” – B. Little, op. cit., p. 86.
customs shared by the sailors’ community were often used by the popular culture. Various Hollywood productions such as *Cutthroat Island* or *Pirates of the Caribbean* tend to show pirates covered with tattoos, dressed up in flashy outfits, with colorful birds, golden earrings or wooden legs, with a pipe and a bottle of rum in the hand. And it really was a part of an outlaw mariners’ tradition, apart from foul language, little aversion to religion and numerous superstitions. Black or red flags, frequently adorned with skulls or skeletons, also existed.

Piracy was often a desperate form of protest against social injustice and corruption of the authorities. In fact there were cases when the people supported pirates, treated them as heroes and demanded their liberation from the hands of local governors. Some freebooters surely desired freedom and a place where they would be treated humanely. They did not think about the future, they were trying to take as much from life as it was possible and concentrate on the present. And for sure they were not crueler than their contemporaries. In comparison to what the Spanish did to the indigenous population of the Americas, the pirate activity was a mere childish play.

We can observe that sea robbery not necessarily lead to the condemnation of the mariner in his fatherland since it could have been exploited in the state service which turned piracy into the privateering practice. In several cases initial outlawry ended up in official posts. However, the vast majority of pirates remained exiles, even though at the same time they could have been perceived as the brave adventurers in their nimble vessels. In my opinion, considering the reality of a sailor’s existence and its hardships, illegal actions and atrocities of piracy, it is not surprising that the Western culture created a romantic vision of piracy in literature, music, games or movies. Even if it is rather hard to accept that an enormously filthy drunkard with black stumps instead of proper teeth, infested by lice and covered in blemishes can be viewed as a handsome and interesting character. It is probably more connected to the everlasting allure of freedom and the outlaws not bound by strict state rules. Hence, the answer to the question put in the title of this article should read as follow: both.

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44 For example tattoos, parrots and golden earrings served as good luck charms. Amulets and talismans also were popular. And to this day many mariners think that leaving the harbor on Friday, whistling or women on board will bring bad luck – L. Kaltenbergh, op. cit., p. 198, 310–314; E. Koczorowski, J. Koziarak, R. Pluta, op. cit., p. 215–217.


46 Cf. C. Woodard, op. cit., p. 328.


48 In the last decade several books on pirates – fiction and non-fiction – were released, for example Tim Severin’s trilogy *the Adventures of Hector Lynch*. In Poland popular fantasy writers M. Mortka and J. Komuda published works about sea rovers. When it comes to music, pirates and sea went out of shanties to various rock bands – members of Alestorm dedicated their music solely to the pirate theme. In the 2014 the Americans aired at least two TV series on pirates (*Crossbones*; *Black Sails*). Lots of recent popculture material is also devoted to Vikings.
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SUMMARY

The article concentrates on the issue of piracy. The author explains various terms connected with the sea roving phenomena and, in short, describes the Western tradition of piracy and privateering. The later part of the text is devoted to the presentation of the reality of the daily existence of sailors serving on board the ships during the golden age of sail and piracy in the 17th and 18th centuries. The last part of the article mentions the romantic aspect of being a mariner and the influence it had on popular culture.
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