ANGLICA WRATISLAVIENSIA XIX

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Anglica Wratislaviensia XIX

CONTENTS

MAŁGORZATA TREBISZ

"FOR GOOD OR EVIL MINE IS THE SPEECH THAT CANNOT BE SILENCED" — THE INCONCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE OF CONRAD'S *HEART OF DARKNESS*

Youth and *Heart of Darkness* both belong, as Conrad says in the *Preface*, to the period dominated by *Lord Jim*. The three are bound by the persona of the common narrator Marlow. Of the two novellas Conrad wrote:

> "Youth" is a feat of memory. It is a record of experience; but that experience, in its facts, in its inwardness and in its outward colouring, begins and ends in myself. "Heart of Darkness' is experience, too; but it is experience pushed a little (and only very little) beyond the actual facts of the case for the perfectly legitimate, I believe, purpose of bringing it home to the minds and bosoms of the readers (1985:ix).

Heart of Darkness has provided generations of critics with work. Any new analysis attempts at throwing new light on the narrative and successive readings show that there still exist elements in the story which had been hitherto ignored. This analysis will not deal purposely with the interpretation (though it is hard to avoid it) but with arranging the story's features along the main lines of the current novella theory.

Marlow's attempts to explain the significance of events he had witnessed earlier on in his life is characteristic of a number of Conrad's works written after the composition of *Heart of Darkness*, and is visible already in the earlier *Youth* and *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*. The technique is reponsible for the time distance between the report and the story related. Marlow, in the story discussed, repeats: "I did not see the real significance of that wreck at once, I fancy I see it now, but I am not sure — not at all" (1985:72). Obviously, the story he tells on this occasion is much more ambiguous than in the two preceding novellas. The story remains at its core essentially about Marlow himself but when he tries at the beginning to contradict it by telling his audience that he does not want to bother them with what had happend to him personally, the novella's parabolic quality is established. Mary Doyle Springer (1975) classifies it as the Apologue Novella[1].

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[1] Springer distinguishes three main forms of the modern novella: Apologues, Actions and Satires. Her classification is based on Sheldon Sacks' theory of the informing principles in lite-

A most Boccaccian situation is described in the frame of the story. The same company as in *Youth* is having a session of story-telling aboard *Nellie*, a cruising yawl which cannot proceed because of the low tide. Marlow's story is originally meant to kill time. The frame is dominated by the first narrator[2], the story proper by Marlow. The function of the frame story is far more complex, than in *Youth* and a great deal of critical debate had been devoted to it. It is not a mere external "wrapping" to the Congo story; it is an integral part of it or, better, listening to Kurtz's story animates the frame.

Even at the first reading the function of the frame story is visible. The formidable company of *Nellie* is "fated" to hear about one of Marlow's "inconclusive experiences" whose effect towards the end is that of a parable. In a recent article P. Lindenbaum (1984) points to the marked contrast of technique between the frame and Marlow's yarn — the former much more geographically detailed and the latter much more vague in this respect, which is consistent with the allegory and apologue nature of the narrative. George Walton Williams (1963) had, contrariwise, examined the very same details and their symbolic implications seeing the universal and parabolic meaning in the return towards the particular position of *Nellie* whose facing the open sea towards the end of the tale implies its general nature. For Lindenbaum, who concentrates on the tale's effect on the listeners, the selfsame particulars speak for their persistence in their own attitudes and judgments (excluding the first narrator who would not have retold Marlow's words if they had not really affected him). Two things are prominent in both articles: (1) different technique, (2) the impact of Marlow's story on his immediate listeners.

The different technique, apart from its inherent symbolism, emphasizes the difference between the two narrators which point the critics seem to ignore. The first narrator is more matter-of-fact and in the frame he qualifies Marlow as a storyteller creating an additional perspective in the overall narrative. He does not appropriate any rights to the story proper and it is vital for his own narrative to have the figure of Marlow perform.

Seymour L. Gross (1957:170) describes point 2 as "the reflective function of the frame" which "not only serves to reinforce the thematic implications of the story "but also adds" a new aspect to the work as well. That the narrator is able to arrive at his moral insight through "literature", as Marlow had arrived at his through experience, demonstrates Conrad's faith in the moral efficacy of experience through literature. To clarify: Gross sees in the frame the reflexion

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rature (1969:247-291). Apologue has a strong allegoric quality, its implications expand outside the text. Actions concentrate on the sequence of events without trespassing the limits of the narrative. Satires possess the traditional function of ridiculing and criticizing the external reality.

[2] "First" narrator does not imply grading the two storytellers. He is the first because he appears before Marlow.

of themes from Marlow's story about Kurtz which Lindenbaum elaborates writing of the story's impact on the immediate listeners supporting it with all the convenient symbolism. In any case, both critics write of the total effect of repetition of themes on each narrative level which corroborates Judith Leibowitz's (1974) insistence on the "repetitive structure" of the novella[3], resulting ultimately in the expansion of the story's implications. Gross compares the indifference of the Lawyer, the Accountant and the Director to that of the pilgrims, company officials and the fantastic Russian; Marlow becomes for the narrator what Kurtz had originally been to Marlow (a voice merely), he also stands to Marlow in the same relationship as Marlow had stood to Kurtz in the experience (1957:168). Lindenbaum extends further the Kurtz — Marlow — narrator sequence over the story's total structure describing Marlow's experience as a rite of passage (supported by all the ritualistic elements) reflected in the comparable experience of his audience who are in turn initiates guided by Marlow's tale — symbolism strengthened by their general names, unawareness of time, the dream-like sensations (1984:706-707).

Conrad consistently relies on repetition elsewhere. Marlow deliberately begins his yarn speaking of the Romans who had first come to England — a disconnected remark which acquires its full significance later on. The fate of Marlow's immediate predecessor Fresleven is a bleak introduction to Kurtz himself.

Marlow is the more prominent of the two narrators. Telling a story from a distance of time he passes a double judgment — that of Kurtz and of himself, and he is not sure of either. The story is qualified by Charles May as written in he narrative voice convention and the metanarrative element is very persistent (1983:3285)[4]. Marlow is aware that it is a very difficult strory to come to terms with, and that his listeners are not the most favourable ones to understand it. The metafictional level is closely related to the dream-like quality of the tale. Whatever difficulties Marlow has with articulating his experience spring from its nightmarish nature.

He begins with a tint of the romance as in *Youth* — his fascination with the map in the shop window — a reminiscence of his childhood passion for the

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[3] Leibowitz examines the double effect of the novella — the expansion of its implications through an intensive concentration on the theme. She observes the recurring use of the repetitive structure which allows for the constant re-examination of the conflict, shifs in the point of view, introduction of parallel related themes.

[4] Charles E. May (1983) distinguished the following conventions appearing in the novella: Gothic, parable, narrative voice *Doppelgänger* ("the double"), anatomy, tragedy, fairy tale and dream, the negative adventure, the contemporary novellas (highly metafictional). The convention, apart from being a mere technicality, becomes part of the story itself. In the narrative voice the act of telling and narrating becomes the theme. The self-reflective nature of the novella becomes evident.

distant and nameless places. Once the whole enterprise is put into motion, the adventure grows more and more sinister ending up with a *danse macabre* pattern. The unconsciously registered images at the beginning (the doctor forebodingly measuring his skull, the Fates-like women knitting the black scarves and the black cat) will flash through his mind later. Soon enough Marlow recognizes the whole affair as a "sordid farce" in places with "farcical names, where the merry dance of death and trade goes on in a still and earthly atmosphere as of an overheated catacomb" (1985:61-62). At the beginning, Marlow may speak with irony, but the farther he progresses, the greater problems he has to face. Not once does he feel like asking:

> Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream—making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation (1985:82).

Since there is no means of accounting rationally for what he witnesses, Marlow resorts to the grotesque. Elsa Nettels (1974:145) explains that characteristically for Conrad the world assumes the sinister and dream-like quality once the protagonist's sense of security and the illusions of self are lost and destroyed.

Interestingly enough, Marlow's struggle for expression is magnified by the first narrator and thus he emphasizes that it is an important problem in *his* story as well:

> The others might have been asleep, but I was awake. I listened, I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river (Conrad 1985:83)

There still remains another aspect of relating a story — the relativity of any report — the same words have a different value according to the actual context where they were spoken, and the associations they have for every individual:

> I have been telling you what we said — repeating the phrases we pronounced — but what's the good? They are common everyday words — the familiar, vague sounds exchanged on every working day of life. But what of that? They had behind them, to my mind, the terrific suggestiveness of words heard in a dream, of phrases spoken in nightmares (Conrad 1985:144).

So far the analysis has concentrated on Marlow's attempts to express his hallucinating experience. On the whole he grossly underestimates his powers of conveying it to his readers.

An excellent examination of other aspects of the dream in *Heart of Darkness* appeared in Frederick R. Karl's article (1968:143-156). He begins with the Freudian and psychological perspective and finishes with the general implications of the novella. The elements of Marlow's hysteria and paranoia are echoes of the earlier *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*. When Conrad set out to writing his novella, he had "definite images" in mind and the analysis of the

pattern of recurring imagery would be most valuable for the more detailed discussion of the modern novella form. Karl notices that

> every facet of Marlow's experience in the Congo, including the preliminary interview in the Brussels office, contains elements of the absurd — that is, elements that become a wedge between man's seeming rationality and a world suddenly irrational and out of focus (1968:148).

Whatever there is of the absurd, grotesque distortion and even the black macabre humour — all those elements are artistically controlled and calculated. It is by no means a disconnected sequence — it is Marlow's own substitute for reality or, better, for the reality as seen by the others. There exist certain governing symbolic images (darkness, ivory), the selfsame images are repeated in different contexts uniting the progression of the tale. Another plane of imagery is the one related to the primeval nature and ritual. Those archetypal elements account for the idea of progress and civilization, the decay of values, but above all, they are meant to mesmerize and allure both Marlow, the first narrator and the reader, just as they had affected Kurtz some time earlier:

> Mr Kurtz's adorers were keeping their uneasy vigil. The monotonous beating of a big drum filled the air with muffled shocks and a lingering vibration. A steady droning sound of many men chanting each to himself some weird incantation came out from the black, flat wall of the woods, as the humming of bees comes out of a hive, and had a strange narcotic effect upon my half-awake senses (Conrad 1985:140-141).

Marlow's perception of the absurd and the grotesque has also a very personal aspect, apart from accounting for the altogether unaccountable experience. It serves as a safety valve which secures Marlow from sharing his fate with Fresleven or Kurtz. It is also responsible for any comic overtones in the story — and Conrad did describe his novella as a tragi-comedy. Kenneth R. Lincoln (1972:174) writes of the comic distance emphasizing that "Marlow entertains a comic sense of his own nightmare". This sense of comedy is particularly relevant for the novella's "tail" — technically the most dramatic episode — Marlow's conversation with the Intended. Obviously, the troublesome interpretation of the purport of the final irony has to be projected against the whole of the narrative. Though it seems to be the theoretical turning point, it is but the most natural outcome of the whole adventure.

Karl writes of *Heart of Darkness* as an archetype of modern literature pointing to its similarity with T.S. Eliot's Prufrock in the English tradition (the man who has come from the dead), and discovers its place in the Continental culture among other novellas — "relatively short fiction concerned with underground men in an underground existence who become, through force of character or vision of art, suffering creatures outside the mainstream of society" (1968:155-156). He includes here Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Mann's *Death in Venice*, Camus' *The Stranger*. It seems a most interesting remark for the theory of the modern novella which,

at the moment, seems to be the most congenial form for the presentation of this particular topic. It could be conveniently generalized as the "identity theme" which Howard Nemerov (1963) everso strongly insists on in his discussion of composition and fate of the modern novella.

According to Karl (1968:145) the "identity theme" is closely connected with the dream convention:

> dreams, despite the various barriers the conscious mind erects, are wish-fulfilments of the hidden self. This sense of wish-fulfilment is evidently never far from Marlow — for the very qualities in Kurtz that horrify him are those he finds masked in himself.

The story evidently reflects the *Doppelgänger* convention but Conrad manages to elaborate it considerably due to the tale's structure and technique. Jerome Meckier (1982:373-379) discusses a whole chain of *Doppel-gängers* — Marlow — Kurtz — the anonymous Swedish captain — Fresleven and finally the opening narrator as Marlow's final double (1982:375). Their existence, in fact, could have been inferred from the already discussed repetitions and the frame's reflective function. Most of critical discussions over *Heart of Darkness* wind up with the analysis of the moral and ethical implications of Marlow's recognition of Kurtz's similarity to himself. It would be worthwhile to concentrate on the less explored excellent technical solutions of this theme uniting it with the narrative voice character of the story.

Marlow is compared to Kurtz even before he does it himself. The comparison is prompted by the objectively similar facts. The brickmaker of the Central Station tells Marlow into his face: "You are of the new gang — the gang of virtue. The same people who sent him specially also recommended you" (1985:79). The kinship with Kurtz due to these "special recommen-dations" will turn up again during their first meeting — Kurtz already knows of Marlow from letters. This misconstrued image of Marlow in the eyes of other pilgrims and company officials will in fact cause the misinterpretation of his words, it will blind them to the irony of his speech clearly implying *their* and not *his* similarity to Kurtz. A supreme passage in this respect is Marlow's conversation with the manager who explains Kurtz's "vigorous action" as an "unsound method" since time had not been ripe for it yet. As it is, trade will suffer and the district will be closed for a time, the remarkable quantity of ivory will have to wait. The manager interprets Marlow's answer literally: "»Do you«, said I looking at the shore, »call it unsound method«? »Without doubt« he exclaimed hotly, »Don't you?«" (1985:137). It is Marlow who sees the Kurtz-manager partnership, the latter is by no means more benevolent but he jumps at equating Marlow with Kurtz because he is blind to his own position. The circle closes on the level of the narrative voice — Marlow's listeners are the "literal" men of the manager's class. Once bitten, Marlow is now doubly careful. He explains: "The original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and — as he was good enough to say himself — his sympathies were in right

place" (1985:117), and questions his audience's capacity to understand (the tacit implication is that Kurtz is also part of them) — "You can't understand. How could you?" (1985:116).

To conclude this analysis, it should be summarized that in *Heart of Darkness* Conrad experimented with the narrative voice so that it could effectively tell a superb apologue expressed in the recognizable conventions of the romance, dream and "the double". The writer's great achievement was the solid incorporation of all those diverse elements into a single relatively brief narrative. Along as the reader sees Kurtz's story unfold he grows aware how such tales should be told and how difficult the task is. The novella inspires endless interpretations and allows for legitimate comparisons with the greatest epics of all times such as Virgil's *Aeneid* or Dante's *Inferno* (Feder 1955; Evans 1956). Edward W. Said (1974:116) formidably describes the aspect of Conrad's writing which makes him the real master of the shorter fictional forms in particular:

> Conrad's fate was to have written fiction great for its presentation, and not only for what it was representing. [...] For what Conrad discovered was that the chasm between words saying and words meaning was *widened*, not lessened, by his talent for words written.

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PIOTR SIEMION

JAMES JOYCE'S *DUBLINERS* AND THE DANTEAN TRADITION

The problem of an author's conscious use of some literary tradition, though by no means restricted to this particular period, can be best described on textual examples belonging to the age of modernism. As Frank Kermode put it, "the older modernism remade or rewrote its past. [...] On Eliot's view of literature newness is a phenomenon that affects the whole of the past; nothing on its own can be new" (1967:120-122). The structure resulting from the fusion of common literary tradition and individual vision of the author is usually consciously built, wide-ranging, and in most cases radically different from the initial source of inspiration. The traditional elements, or myth, introduced by a modern author into his work can prefigure the plot, and serve as a system of symbolic comment on modern events. The fact that a particular traditional pattern underlies the text may in fact never be mentioned by the author; the reader may be supplied instead with a number of clues, such as attributes, names, anagrams, allusions, etc. to direct his attention to the myth underlying the work. The most precise and useful typology of such prefigurations so far has been presented by J.J. White (1971).

These observations are certainly familiar to any reader of Joyce. *Dubliners*, however, his early collection of stories, has long been regarded as a "straight" work, devoid of Joycean ingenious craftsmanship in the use of myth and tradition and oriented towards a faithful rendering of the world presented in the stories. In this respect, *Dubliners* have been thought quite unlike *Ulysses*. There have been tentative attempts to trace some symbolic and mythical patterns in the book, especially those of H. Levin and Ch. Shattuck. These critics maintained that since mythology and tradition have a prominent place in Joyce's verbal universe, their role in *Dubliners* might also be much more important than earlier suspected.

It was only recently that a new, extremely feasible study of this aspect of *Dubliners* has been produced by an American scholar Mary T. Reynolds. Her fundamental work *Joyce and Dante*, while concerned mainly with major works by Joyce, discusses briefly also his early collection of stories, pointing out

Dubliners' affinities to *Inferno*, the first part of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Reynolds rightly maintains that *Dubliners* actually have a Dantean design and sketches the most striking correspondences between the two texts. Although she presents her observations in the form of a diagram, there seems to be ample room for more detailed discussions of this problem, for instance in terms of myth and mythology, as opposed to Reynolds' intertextual approach. It must be stressed here that the correspondence between Dante and Joyce seems to be one between two minds dwelling on the underworld rather than an obvious mirror-like rendering of the older work in Joyce's stories. Nevertheless, Reynolds (1981:12-20) is quite right when she points out that

> Joyce wrote out of disciplined and highly endowed consciousness, out of totality of thought and feeling that was the product of widely eclectic reading. [...] His ambition to use Dante in creative work developed early in his college years. [...] Joyce then, like other writers, attached his work to a "tradition", but with a more comprehensive notion of this tradition and a larger intention.

The aim of this paper is, consequently, to analyse Joyce's stories with regard to their parallels to the first part of Dante's epic. That such parallels exist is quite likely, even if one considers Reynolds' evidence insufficient. As Ellmann's biography of Joyce shows, the author's aim while writing *Dubliners* was to present a panorama of human vice; *Inferno's* goal was not different. There are facts in Joyce's biography that show his interest in the Italian epic. Ellmann recalls that at one point young Joyce was dubbed by his one-time friend Oliver Gogarty "the Dante of Dublin". He also points out that in the 18th chapter of *Stephen Hero* Stephen Dedalus thinks about writing a work which was to deal with Dante and Aquinas and was intended as a critique of the society (Ellmann 1966:60-78). Joyce, as Reynold observes, "shared many of Dante's attitudes, including a preference of social order rather than disorder and a distrust of the temporal power of the church" (1981:19).

There are actually grounds to suspect that Joyce began *Dubliners* as a group of fairly realistic stories and only when he finished several of them, he realized that the whole cycle might form a narrative pattern akin, in some of its aspects, to *Inferno*. Ellmann writes at length about the extensive revisions of the first several stories. His remarks cannot be quoted here due to the lack of space but they are to be found in his *James Joyce* on pages 169-255. Also Reynolds mentions the revisions and suggests that they were a result of Joyce's adapting the Dantean "imaginative vision" (1981:158).

This analysis is intended to show that each story of the cycle has its counterpart in some fragment of *Inferno*. This is especially true in the case of the last five stories to be completed: "Araby", "Grace", "Two Gallants", "A Little Cloud", and "The Dead". What differs Dante's poem from Joyce's book, despite the numerous correspondences listed below, is the absence of the central figure of the narrator. In *Inferno* Dante made himself such a narrator.

The instances of the first person narration in *Dubliners* are few. Wandering through Hell, Dante is guided by Virgil. The reader wandering through dark streets of Joycean Dublin has no such guide — unless he is able to recognize faint echoes of Dante's voice in the text of the stories. The closest affinity between the two texts, on the other hand, is their common aim to present human vice and corruption in their totality in order to gain ground for moral judgement and, perhaps, spiritual salvation. It must be admitted that Joyce's vision lacks the art and the scope of Dante's epic and is much more fragmentary. Yet it retains enough parallels with the original panorama of the human Hell to make such an interpretation feasible.

In his foreword to the English prose translation of the *Divine Comedy* J.D. Sinclair describes Dante's Hell as a vast, funnel-shaped cavity reaching from the Earth's surface to the centre, the farthest point from God. The sides of the cavity form a succession of concentric levels in diminishing circles. On these levels, in mud and ice and darkness, the successive classes of the impenitent are being punished, each lower circle punishing more severely a worse offence. Dante's journey is from the edge of the pit down to the centre (1971:17).

The basic structural parallel between the two texts is in their showing a descent among still lower classes of the impenitent, a focusing on growing evil. This effect is reinforced by imagery, use of figures that mirror the Dantean original models while retaining their Dublinian identity, textual allusions. The analysis will concern each story in turn, though only the most striking parallels will be mentioned.

"The Sisters", the first story of the cycle, opens with a sentence obvious in its relation to *Inferno* (and absent from the initial draft of the story): "There was no hope for him this time". The sentence echoes the inscription on the gate of Dante's Hell, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter".

A solitary figure of a boy wanders through dark empty streets. When he enters the house of mourning, he sees a narrow, funnel-like staircase (the first of a series). He reluctantly approaches the region of death. Other situational parallels follow: in Dante's poem his protagonist's reluctance to enter is overcome through the intercession of three Holy Women (Beatrice, St. Lucy, and Virgin Mary). In "The Sisters" Nannie (= Beatrice) "stopped at the first landing and beckoned us forward encouragingly toward the open door of the dead room" (12). The situation reflects the initial three cantos of the epic.

The event which made the boy-protagonist enter the house of the dead was the death of his friend, a priest — a failed one. The figure reappears in form of a nightmare: "The grey face still followed me. It murmured. [...] Then I felt my soul receding into some pleasant and vicious region, and there again I found it waiting for me" (9). The vision echoes the initial canto of *Inferno* where the

narrator, after spending a grim night in the wood, tries to ascend a sunny hill and is driven back by three wild beasts.

This textual sample shows that the ways in which *Dubliners* follow *Inferno* are numerous and extremely varied. Therefore the analysis must proceed along a formal pattern, noting particular aspects of the general correspondence. Such pattern will guide the reader in the stories to follow.

"An Encounter" is less directly linked to a particular episode from *Inferno*. Its theme is an excursion of two boys (Dante and Virgil?).

Textual parallels:

Dante: "And then, directing my sight farther off, I saw people on the bank of a great river" (*Inf.* 3:11.70-72).

Joyce: "We then came near the river. [...] We crossed Liffey in a ferry boat, paying our toll [...] We were serious to the point of solemnity" (21).

Dante: "And lo, coming towards us in a boat there was an old man crying 'woe to you, wicked souls, hope not ever to see the sky. I come to bring you to the other bank, into the eternal shades, into fire and frost" (3:11 80-86).

Situational parallels: the boys' subsequent encounter with a pervert, perhaps a reflection of Dante's 4th Canto, which describes sexual offences. In Dante's poem, as Sinclair writes, "sexual wantonness is a fitful, violent, disorderly vice" (1971:81). Compare Joyce: "he [the pervert] said that there was nothing in this world he would like as well as that [whipping]. He would love that, he said" (25).

Imagery: The pervert with his "pair of bottle-green eyes peering from under the twitching forehead" is not unlike the figure of Minos, also from Canto 4.

Two remarkable phrases Joyce repeats in this story are "circling round" (24, 25), suggestive of the futile movement of the condemned, and "slope", another allusion to the vortex of Inferno (24).

"Araby" is a story about courty love (to be found in *Inferno* 4).

Situational parallels: the plot of the story is certainly related to the story of Francesca in *Inferno* 5. Love, futile quest, lust, so much stressed by the narrator. The Lustful are to be found in *Inferno* 5.

Imagery: In this story the reader sees the city of Dublin for the first time, just as the narrator of *Inferno* enters at this stage the murky City of Dis. The surroundings are menacing:

The space of the sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet. [...] The cold air stung us. [...] The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses [...] where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables (27-28).

These images can be traced back to *Inferno* 6: "eternal, accursed rain, huge hail, foul water and snow pour down to the gloomy air and to the ground that, receiving it, stinks" (6:11.6-12). The reader can also recognize the recurrent image of a staircase (30) and that of darkness.

Textual parallels: to choose the most striking one, here is the picture of the evening crowds.

Dante: "So long a train of people I should never have believed death had undone so many" (3:11. 55-57)

Joyce: "We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers" (28).

The phrase from Dante was later repeated by T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*.

"Eveline". This story, in turn, seems to point towards Limbo, or the foreground of Hell. Limbo is the place of the Neutrals, who in their life took no risks, and who are unfit for heaven and barely admitted to Hell.

Situational parallels: Dante's Neutrals, who have no need to die as they "never were alive", "so abject in their blind life that they are envious of every other lot" (3 : 11.46-49) are represented in the figure of Eveline, who is unable to come to a decision whether to emigrate with her beloved and yet remains resentful of her numbing Dublin life.

Imagery: Again, one finds in the story the images of darkness, dust, and blind, evening-time crowds.

"After the Race", which follows "Eveline" does not match so closely the Dantean pattern.

Situational parallels: It is basically a story of a prodigal, wasteful son. Dante placed the Prodigal (along with the Gluttons) in the third and fourth circle of Inferno (Canto 7). The prodigal son is Jimmy Doyle, a merchant's heir and passionate card-player, the glutton, his Hungarian friend Villona ("in good humour because he had had a very satisfactory luncheon" (41)). The finale of the card game on the yacht paraphrases Dante's words: "Now mayst thou see my son the brief mockery of wealth committed to fortune" (7:11. 60-62).

The story reflects also in some degree the events of Canto 5, such as crossing the Styx (passage to the yacht) and entering the infernal city.

The five young men who in "After the Race" went strolling "along Stephen's Green in a faint cloud of aromatic smoke, who talked loudly and gaily as their cloaks dangled from their shoulders" (44) resemble the five famous poets — Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lukan, Virgil — whom Dante meets in *Inferno* 4. Some correspondence may be also sought between Jimmy's friends and the Avaricious from *Inferno* 7.

Imagery: the city of Dublin in a vortex, towards which cars drive down the slope, again reflects the Dantean "dismal slope which ensacks all evils of the universe" (7:11. 50-52).

"Two Gallants" and "The Boarding House" can be treated jointly, especially that these two stories offer scant material for correspondence-hunting. Sinclair remarks that "having passed through the circles of upper

Hell where the sins of weakness are punished, Dante approaches the deeper Hell of willful sin, the Abyss of Malebolge, the place of Panders and Seducers" (1971:128).

Situational parallels: fraudulence and seducement are subjects of the next two stories in the cycle, "Two Gallants" and "The Boarding House". In the former, Lenehan and Corley, brutal and treacherous creatures, circle the streets looking for women; eventually Corley gains from one of them "a small gold coin" (in *Inferno* 18 "a demon smote the seducer with his scourge and said, »off, pander! Here are no women to coin!«" (18:11. 63-66). In "The Boarding House" a mother and her daughter set a matrimonial trap for a helpless young man — a reflection of *Inferno* 13, which depicts soul's abandonment to despair and spiritual surrender. In this particular Canto the seducers appear as Harpies with "wide wings and human necks and faces". The story of Mr Doran and the two cunning women is an image of this situation:

Mr Doran was very anxious indeed this Sunday morning. [...] All his long years of service gone for nothing! [...] A force pushed him downstairs step by step. The implacable faces of his employer and the Madam stared upon his discomfiture (66).

Imagery: "Two Gallants" has for its setting "the grey warm evening that has descended upon the city" (47). The streets are "swarming with crowds", "the living texture, which, changing shape and hue unceasingly, sent up into the grey evening an unchanging, unceasing murmur" (47). Lenehan's lonely wanderings through the maze of streets matches Dante's description of the Abyss as a region full of valleys, moats, and ditches. The recurrent image of darkness is absent from "The Boarding House" but the reader will immediately discover the familiar vortex-like staircase.

Corley from "Two Gallants", in Joyce's words, "aspirated the first letter of his name after the manner of the Florentines" (49). It is perhaps another cryptic allusion to Dante Alighieri as the author who somehow fathered the human puppets of *Dubliners*.

"A Little Cloud". The story of Little Chandler, a quiet and peaceful man instigated towards violence to his own child by remarks of his "friend" Galagher matches the infernal area from Canto 26, that of evil councellors.

Imagery: the crowds of the underworld appear in the form of "children who stood or ran in the doorway, or crawled up the steps before the gaping door, or squatted like mice upon the threshold" (69).

Other correspondences: the very title of the story is a direct allusion to the episode when Dante describes Elijah's fiery ascent and the flames wrapping up evil councellors (*Inferno* 26:11. 34-40). Galagher, the brutal figure "with heavy, pale, clean-shaven face, and bluish slate-coloured eyes" (72) resembles closely the figure of Bertrand de Born whom Dante placed in Hell for sowing discord (Canto 18). It is difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between evil

councellors and sowers of discord — Galagher may well belong to either group.

"The Counterparts". This story brings the reader back to the seventh circle of Hell, the place of those violent against others (*Inferno* 8). Some elements of its structure, however, can be traced back to *Inferno* 12, where murderers are described.

Situational parallels: Farrington, the alcoholic protagonist of the story, is perfectly capable of violence towards his neighbours, as frequently stressed in the text: "A spasm of rage gripped his throat" (85), "his body ached to do something, to rush out and revel in violence" (88), "his fury nearly choked him" (94). A tentative textual parallel may be drawn here to Dante's description of Minotaur in *Inferno* 12, the symbol of brutishness in general: "When he saw us, he gnawed himself, like bursts that inward rage" (*Inferno* 12: 11. 14-16). Joyce retains the image and his Farrington has a bull-like appearance: "he had a hanging face, dark wine-coloured with fair eyebrows and moustache: his eyes bulged forward slightly and the whites of them were dirty [...] He went out of the office with a heavy step" (84). Farrington's companions at the pub may in turn resemble the group of centaurs gathered around Minotaur in the epic.

Imagery: the setting of the story — a dark, wintry city follows Dante's description of dark, icy Inferno. Along with darkness ("Darkness, accompanied by a thick fog, was gaining upon the dusk" (86)), there reappear other images familiar from the previous stories and suggestive of the vortex of Hell: staircases, faceless crowds, narrow lanes, and foul odours.

"Clay". This story seems to diverge from the Dantean pattern, though Maria's witch-like appearance and her taking part in a game of fortune-telling remind one of similar games among the soothsayers in *Inferno* 20. F.L. Walzl writes in her essay on "Clay" that Maria is one of the living dead who like T.S. Eliot's Hollow Men are "shape without form, shade without colour" (1968:109).

Imagery: it includes evening crowds under the rain and the darkness of the Hallow Eve.

"A Painful Case". Situational parallels: the events of the story mirror another group of sins from the Dantean catalogue: violence against oneself (*Inferno* 13) and hypocrisy (*Inferno* 23). Mrs Sinico belongs to the second round of the seventh circle of Inferno among other suicides, while Mr Duffy (who liked to keep up appearances so much that he "lived at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glances" (106)) could be placed among other joyless hypocrites.

Imagery: after Mrs Sinico's death Mr Duffy confronts "the cheerless evening landscape" and when he looks down the slope towards the distant city, the reader encounters again the image of the dark vortex.

"The Ivy Day in the Committee Room". It is an important story in so far as its subject is treason to one's lords and one's cause, sins which belong to the innermost part of Inferno.

Situational parallels: the roomful of idling amateur-politicians who ridicule their late leader Parnell and his attempts at gaining independence for Ireland are not unlike traitors described in Inferno 32-33. Although Reynolds seeks a correspondence between this group and the Dantean grafters and barrators from Canto 21, some evidence points elsewhere: the penalty assigned by Dante for treason are the numbling, hardening, and disabling of the soul with cold. Joyce placed frequent remarks within the story about coldness and the men's craving for the warmth of fire.

Imagery: rain and darkness dominate the setting, giving it distinct Dantean overtones.

"A Mother". This story tells about a disruption during a nationalistic concert caused by the greed of one Mrs Kearney, the mother of one of the singers. Since the subjects of art, religion, and money intertwine within the story, the sin the events follow seem to be one of usury; perhaps also these of simony and violence against art (Inferno 14 and 17, respectively).

Situational parallels: It is interesting to compare Joyce's "artistes" quarreling about money with Dante's usurers, whom Sinclair calls "quite the worst-mannered souls Dante has yet met in Hell" (1971:223).

"Grace". The themes of usury and simony (the latter word was introduced as early as in the first story of Dubliners) occur again. The related cantos are Inferno 17 and 19. Usury is often alluded to in the text ("Harford had begun life as an obscure financier by lending small sums of money at usurious interest" (157)). The main subject, however, seems to be simony. Mary Reynolds writes that the story is "a dramatic and explicit reading of the Irish clergy's exchange of spiritual benefits for wordliness and gain" (1981:160).

Situational parallels: the audience of Father Purdon resembles Dantean simonists and consists of "businessmen and professional men" who "are forced to live in the world, and, to a certain extent, for the world" (171). Father Purdon names God "their spiritual accountant". This figure bears some resemblance to Pope Nicholas III from Inferno 19 (Dante: "You have made you a God of gold and silver, and what is there between you and idolaters but that they worship one and you a hundred", Inferno 19:11. 112-114).

"The Dead". In the final story of the cycle Joyce reaches the ultimate vision

of life-in-death. Its Dantean counterpart — the final moments in Hell — presents traitors to family, to guests, to benefactors, to Church and State. Below them there lies Satan, the embodiment of the uttermost evil, frozen solid and motionless. It is only there that Dante stops his descent and ente . a hidden road towards life: "And thence we came forth to see again the stars" (Inferno 34:1, 139). Before it happens, though, a complete loss of hope and light must occur.

Situational parallels: all these forms of betrayal can be traced in "The Dead", a long and immensely complex story. The chief protagonist, Gabriel Conroy ridicules his forefathers and denies his country ("Irish is not my language" (187)). Sisters Morkan try to economize on their guests' dishes, polite exchanges are made to cover general hostility.

In "The Dead" Joyce seems to elaborate on Dante's idea that the souls punished for treachery are plunged into Hell while their bodies continue their life on earth. The characters indeed resemble mere shadows whose pitiful existence is in itself a form of punishment. They become living corpses ("Freddy was laughing heartily in a high key [...] and at the same time he was rubbing his eyes" (182); "Grey also, with darker shadows, was Aunt Julia's large, flaccid face. [...] Her slow eyes and parted lips gave her the appearance of the woman who did not know where she was or where she was going" (177)).

With the guests' departure Gabriel Conroy (who meanwhile had been called a traitor by Miss Ivors) begins to recognize this feeling and his own position in the wintry world. Accompanied by his wife he rides a cab to a hotel through deserted snowy streets, ascends yet another staircase in total darkness, and in the room turns his back to the light lest his wife "might see the shame that burned upon his forehead" (217). In his mind's eye he finally perceives "some impalpable and vindictive being coming against him, gathering forces against him in the vague world" (217). It is worth while recalling Dante's words on seeing Satan: "How chilled and faint I turned then, do not ask. [...] I did not die and I did not remain alive, denied both death and life" (Inferno 34: 11.22-24). Such is the feeling Gabriel Conroy experiences in the terminal scene of the story: "His soul approached the region where there dwell that vast host of the dead. [...] His own identity was fading into a grey impalpable world" (220). "The Dead" closes with the vision of the ultimate, unspeakable menace and the soul's transition into another region, remote from the Inferno of Dublin.

Imagery: parts of it were mentioned in the above discussion of the story. The main setting includes a dark house on a snowy embankment. It is night, full of snow and cold. The crowds have brown and red faces. The atmosphere of immobility and the decay of hope prevails. "Snow was general all over Ireland", as it was over the centre of Hell in Dante's epic.

Concluding her work on Dante and Joyce, Reynolds remarks that a book

about the links between *Dubliners* and works by Dante remains to be written (1981:158). The above analysis is by no means exhaustive. Its goal, however, was only to provide some observations about the mode of existence of Dante's epic in Joyce's cycle of stories. There are indeed remarkable correspondences between the Italian moral history of the world and the Irish chapter of such history Joyce was intent on writing. There seems to exist a Dantean pattern within *Dubliners*, ranging from situational analogies down to imagery and phrasing. One can also witness a similar kind of progress from a description of small moral failures to the gravest offences. Dublin, from this point of view, is an Inferno on earth, similar to the city of pre-modernist Baudelaire and modernist T.S. Eliot, an image of the soul's bondage and defeat.

One cannot fail to notice, however, that the similarities and analogies are very often difficult to trace, and that they involve mostly the sphere of imagery. There are many exceptions and incongruities. The Dantean net of reference has to share its place with other patterns, not discussed here, such as the progress from childhood, through adolescence, to maturity, historical allusions, religious imagery, etc. As a work of literature *Dubliners* seems rather ingenuous when compared with immensely complex, masterful epic of Dante. The inexact way of mirroring the Dantean original might suggest that the intertextual correspondence was not inherent to the design of the cycle and was superimposed by the author as an afterthought when some of the stories had already been completed. Hence the absence of convincing Dantean traces in some of the stories (e.g., "Clay") and other irregularities mentioned above.

The function of the Dantean pattern of reference within the cycle, to follow J.J. White idea, is prefiguration: Dante's *Inferno* sets a pattern of reference and serves as an aside commentary on the events and setting. Such a prefiguration is not indispensable for the reader and it certainly does not have such a fundamental role as the myth of Ulisses in Joyce's next work. Yet *Inferno*, to repeat J.J. White's saying (1971:74) permits another world to radiate into the self-contained world of *Dubliners*, giving it a new dimension and a new quality.

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JOANNA NARKIEWICZ-JODKO

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ORIENTAL DRAMA[1] ON WILDER'S PLAYWRITING

The dramatic creativity of Thornton Wilder is characteristic of the usage of numerous techniques which manifestly show the playwright's disregard for the fourth-wall realism of the traditional stage. Many of these techniques and devices which he successfully employs in his plays can be traced back to the Oriental theatre of China and Japan in particular. The main aim of the present paper is to study the influence of Eastern drama on Wilder. A special stress will be laid on Chinese and Japanese theatrical conventions and techniques and the role they played in both the Oriental theatre and in Wilder's playwriting.

Before the beginning of the 20th century, the Oriental drama was a closed book in Europe and in America. However, since the appearance of *The Nô Plays of Japan* by Arthur Waley in 1921, the conventionalism of Japanese and Chinese stage has exercised a powerful influence upon European literature. As an exotic literary vogue, it inspired poets and promoted the development of a non-realistic theatre in the West. According to Allardyce Nicoll, in order to realize

> the impress the conventional stage has made on the modern mind we need only note Lion Feuchtwanger's adaptation of Sanskrit drama, Bertolt Brecht's utilization of Chinese plays, and Paul Claudel's experimentation in the style of the Nô stage (Nicoll 1951:657).

In America, in turn, it was the plays of Thornton Wilder that seemed much indebted to the Oriental drama.

The impact of the Chinese theatre and Japanese Nô plays upon Wilder's playwriting virtually dates back to his childhood. Thornton Niven Wilder, born in Wisconsin, 1897, spent jointly about two and a half years (1906, 1911-1912) in Hong Kong and Shanghai, where his father was Consul General.

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[1] In A. Nicoll's *World Drama from Aeschylus to Anouilh* the term "Oriental drama" includes apart from Japanese and Chinese, also the Sanskrit drama. Here, this term pertains only to Japanese and Chinese productions. They have not been referred to as separate phenomena and the differentiation has been given only when certain techniques described are characteristic of only one of the theatres.

It must have been at that time that he saw some stagings of these exotic plays which made a strong impression on Wilder's creative mind. What seemed to fire Wilder's imagination was the antithesis of naturalism of the Oriental stage. Thus, the Chinese and Japanese theatres found their way into Wilder's plays through his application of the Oriental conventions concerning the approach to time and space, as well as the employment of the stage manager device. The utilization of such techniques also present in the Oriental drama as relative treatment of time and space, highly conventionalized properties and introduction of the character of Stage Manager (his role in Wilder's plays is the resultant of numerous functions of characters in the Oriental drama) is noticeable mostly in Wilder's plays written in the 30'ties. To this group of productions belong three one-act plays: *The Long Christmas Dinner, Pullman Car Hiawatha* and *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden*, all included in the collection entitled *The Long Christmas Dinner and Other Plays in One Act* (1931), and in a full-length play *Our Town* (1938) — a Pulitzer Prize winner. The publication of the collection of one-act plays in 1931 marked Wilder's return to the dramatic form that he temporarily gave up in favour of the novel. The fact that he resumed playwriting, enriching, simultaneously, his plays of that time with the evident Oriental influences, may be suggestive of a view that the Oriental stage corresponds, at least roughly, with Wilder's conception of drama in general.

Bearing in mind the fact that the approach to theatre as a dramatic medium determines the range of techniques and conventions it makes use of, one can distinguish three basic assumptions that Wilder seems to borrow from the Oriental stage. In the first place, theatre is "an accumulation of untruths, pretences, and fiction" (Wilder 1984:11); secondly, a play as a kind of ritual with the audience as both spectators and participants; and thirdly, a performance itself as a conveyor of the author's "message".

Both the Oriental stage and Wilder's dramaturgy refute "slice-of-life" realism in favour of the illusion of reality created by numerous theatrical conventions. The deliberate avoidance of realistic presentation is a relative treatment of space and time. The Chinese and Japanese, unlike the ancient Greeks, utterly disregard the unities of time and space. Both in Japanese and Chinese dramas, the action, as in a short story, moves freely from one place to another. Fast changes of the locale are feasible due to the absence of realistic scenery to specify the place of action. On an almost bare stage there are few highly conventionalized properties "which merely suggest, and by no means represent, the real objects supposed to be involved in the action" (Nicoll 1951:651). As Arthur Waley (1980:19) states:

> an open framework represents a boat; another, differing little from it, denotes a chariot. Palace, house, cottage, are all represented by four posts covered with a roof. The fan which the actor usually carries often does duty as a knife, brush or the like.

Faithful to the ancient technique, Wilder also dispenses with the realistic scenery and most of properties. In *Pullman Car*, for example, chairs stand for berths in a sleeping car; in *The Happy Journey* four chairs and a low platform symbolize the automobile; in *The Long Christmas Dinner*, the characters seated around the table "continue eating imaginary food with imaginary knives and forks" (p.1). In *Our Town* Wilder marks the neighbouring households by grouping a table with some chairs around it at the two opposite ends of the stage. In the third act of this play, three rows of chairs represent graves in a cemetery. Additionally, in *Our Town* and *The Long Christmas Dinner* there is no curtain separating the audience from the stage.

In the Oriental theatre the conventionalism eliminating realistic presentation seems to be dictated mainly by the impossibility of showing on stage the luxury of ministerial palaces or the wilderness of the mountains. That is why, it is rather a natural limitation of theatrical stage than the playwright's intention that justifies the method of staging. There is no doubt, however, that one has to do with the latter in case of Wilder's dramaturgy. "A piece-of-life" realism was the predominant tendency of dramatic works of that time and Wilder's rejecting it was definitely a deliberate artistic design. Wilder himself explained in the Introduction to *Our Town* that he had turned to such a presentation of locale because the realistic one "fixes and narrows the action to one moment in time and space" (Wilder 1984:11). Without fixing the place of the action, on the other hand, it is possible to relate even the most trivial matters to a larger metaphysical and cosmological framework. The address on the letter that one of the protagonists of *Our Town* receives may be a sign that this way of interpretation is wholly justifiable:

> It said: Jane Crofut. The Crofut Farm; Grover's Corners. Sutton county; New Hampshire; United States of America; Continent of North America; Western Hemisphere; the Earth; the Solar System; the Universe; the Mind of God. (Act I, p. 48)

The Oriental drama, not restricted by the detailed presentation of the locale, freely manipulated the notion of space, changing places of action many times within one play. The common practice was — as Tadeusz Żbikowski says — that "as there was no setting on stage, the place of action was described directly, even by the dramatic figures, if this was necessary". A good example of this kind of description may be taken from scene 4 (the play Chang Hsieh chuang-yüan):

> Master Chang told me to come to this mister oneiro-critic. Here is His place... the old door made of four boards, the blue cloth curtain, over it there are big characters written "Interprets dreams like a ghost" (Żbikowski 1974:159)

Sometimes the place of action changes within even one scene, with the characters moving from one place to another and pretending that they are travelling on stage. Wilder makes use of this technique in *The Happy Journey*,

where a family travelling by car make comments on what they can see on their way:

Ma: Elmer, drive careful over that bridge. This must be New Brunswick we're coming to. (*The Happy...* p. 94)

and later:

Ma: What's this place? Arthur, did you see the post office?
Arthur: It said Laurenceville.
Ma: Hhn, School Kinda, Nice, I wonder what that big yellow house set back was — Now, it's beginning to be Trenton. (*The Happy...*, p. 100)

Needless to say, all the elements of landscape the family are referring to are not presented on stage but are left to be visualized by the audience. Likewise, in *Pullman Car*, the passengers of the sleeping car make remarks on the places they are passing on the route from New York to Chicago. The relativity of space as the place of action affects the treatment of time in the Oriental drama as well. It is generally agreed that scenery is a kind of indicator of time of action. The absence of scenery therefore makes time unspecified and owing to this there must be other ways to indicate it: either by the words of characters ("Ten years and three have passed since my soul fled to the Yellow Clod") (Waley 1980:236), or by movements of protagonists and properties they are carrying with them to suggest approaching senility. Furthermore, a character, when growing old, starts using a walking stick and wears a mask of an old man (Waley 1980:19).

The techniques Wilder employs when manipulating time are also based on actors' movements and properties they use. In *The Long Christmas Dinner*

ninety years are to be traversed in this play which represents in accelerated motion ninety Christmas dinners in the Bayards household. The actors [...] must indicate their gradual increase in years through their acting. Most of them carry wigs of white hair which they adjust upon their heads at the indicated moment, simply and without comment (*The Long...*, p. 1).

For instance, when time comes for a person to die he "rises and starts towards the dark portal" (*The Long...*, p. 15) — the one denoting death. Similarly, the act of birth has its symbolic manifestation. When a new member of the family is to be born "through the entrance of birth comes a nurse wheeling a perambulator" (*The Long...*, p. 6).

The play *The Long Christmas Dinner* is especially exceptional among Wilder's plays with respect to the techniques manipulating both time and place of action. The accumulation of these non-realistic techniques[2] underlines a

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[2] "Non-realistic technique"/"non-realistic presentation": as opposed to the realistic drama conventions established in the second half of the 19th c. They comprise both the real-to-life presentation of the setting as well as the down-to-earth treatment of human dilemmas. The emphasis is on scenic characters as social beings and the material world they live in. Wilder, on the other hand, seems to follow the conventions of Greek, Oriental, Elizabethan, and expressionistic

cyclical form of a play which — as Rex Burbank states — "suggests a relationship between the recurring events on stage and destiny" (Burbank 1961:67) and reflects the eternal Wheel of Death and Life.

Summing up what has already been said about Wilder's vision of theatre as "an accumulation of pretences", it is coming to be more evident that all the techniques he applies to illustrate this idea are a sort of escape from realistic presentation in favour of convention and symbol. Unlike the Japanese and Chinese, however, whose use of conventions is most often motivated by the impossibility of creating real-to-life scenery, Wilder employs similar techniques but with a different artistic intent. Namely, his manipulations of scenery, time and space are planned to generalize the "now and here" of the play and turn it into the "Act in Eternity". In other words, Wilder imparts the quality of universal experience to individual actions.

Another point highlighting the sensation that theatre is only "a pretence", is the presence of property man on stage during the performance. Allardyce Nicoll defines the role of property man in the Oriental drama in the following way: he "unconcernedly brings on and removes the few pieces of furniture necessary for the progress of the play, hands small properties to the actors during the course of their performance" (Nicoll 1951:640). In Wilder's plays the assignments of the property man are carried out by a special character called Stage Manager. This figure, formerly introduced in *Pullman Car*, is later to appear in *The Happy Journey* and *Our Town*. Consequently, in *The Happy Journey*, the Stage Manager "moves forward and withdraws the few properties that are required" (*The Happy...*, p. 86) and in *Our Town* he "enters and begins placing a table and three chairs. [...] As the house lights go down he has finished setting the stage" (*Our Town*, p. 21). The device of the Stage Manager leads the play further away from the realistic.

Functioning as a property man, the Stage Manager remains outside the action of the play since he does not come into immediate contact with the characters. Many a time, however, playing another role, he gets in touch with the audience. In this respect, Wilder seems to follow the Oriental drama's conception of the performance as a ritual in which the audience is an indispensable part for the production. Wilder maintains that "without an audience a play would 'fall to pieces and absurdity', for the excitement of pretending requires a throng" (Burbank 1961:85) and that "the theatre, in the days of its greatness, has always been ritualistic, religious" (Grebanier 1964:30). Both of the above statements hold true in case of the Oriental drama. The Japanese and Chinese theatres originated from religious services and ritualistic dances, and that is why they highly valued the role of the audience

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theatres which, in their productions, dispense with the real-to-life presentation of time and place of action.

during the performance. This is the source of the practice of both Japanese and Chinese drama in which the audience is directly addressed in a form of introductory monologues or self-presentations of protagonists appearing on stage for the first time. The emergence of an actor commenting on and introducing the play is characteristic mainly of the Japanese Nô plays where a character called Waki ("Assistant") "explains the circumstances, under which the principal actor came to dance the central dance of the play" (Waley 1980:18). Waki's function in a play is best exemplified by the lines of a courtier from *Aoi No Uye* (Princess Holyhock) by an unknown author:

> I am a courtier in the service of the Emperor Shujaku. You must know that the Prime Minister's daughter, Princess Aoi, has fallen sick. We have sent for abbots and high-priests of the Greater School [...], but they could not cure her. And now, here at my side, stands the witch of Teruhi, a famous diviner with the bow-string (Waley 1921:181).

The Stage Manager takes up the part of Waki in *Pullman Car* and *Our Town*. In the opening scene of *Pullman Car*, the audience are being told that they are looking at a wagon called Hiawatha on its way from New York to Chicago. With even greater exactitude the Stage Manager introduces the play *Our Town*:

> Stage Manager: This play is called 'Our Town'. It was written by Thornton Wilder, produced and directed by A. [...]. The name of a town is Grover's Corners. New Hampshire – just across the Massachusetts line: latitude [...]; longitude [...]. The time is just before dawn [...]. There is Doc Gibbs comin' down Main Street now, comin' back from that baby case. And here's his wife comin' downstairs to get breakfast. Doc Gibbs died in 1930. The new hospital's named after him. Mrs Gibbs died first – long time ago, in fact (*Our Town...*, pp. 21-24).

Comparing the two above quoted excerpts it can be noticed that while the first plays a mere informative function, introducing some characters and events from their past, the second displays the Stage Manager who also comments on protagonists' future and assumes the function of an omniscient chorus, resembling that of Greek drama. As John Gassner puts it

> he is both the raisonneur, or commentator [...]. The Stage Manager is, so to speak, both a one-man chorus and a multiple "second character" or deuteragonist in the play which reflects conventions of both Greek and Oriental drama (Gassner 1980: XV).

Wilder's intent of this deliberate violation of sequence of time (the revelation of the characters' future) is to turn the viewers' attention to what constitutes the essential part of the play, viz. the protagonists' daily life. Thus, the audience are now no longer eager to know the play's ending and change their attitude from impatient (what happens next?) to more contemplative (why is it so?).

Another technique of addressing the audience in a form of characters' self-presentation is shared by the Oriental drama and Wilder's productions. According to Tadeusz Żbikowski, "in the *Chang Hsieh chuang-yüan*" as well as in other plays, all the significant figures for the development of the plot, perform a kind of self-presentation, in which besides their names, they describe

some pertinent facts of their past and present life. Chang Hsieh makes the following self-presentation:

> I, Chang Hsieh, from the time of my forefathers have lived in the Western Seuch'uan. For many years I have studied numerous scrolls of books all nights [...]. My intention is to support my illustrious ruler at his court (Żbikowski 1974:136).

The following extract taken from *Pullman Car* provides a direct characterization of a German workman:

> Ich bin der Arbeiter der hier sein Leben verlor. Bei der Sprengung für diese Brücke über die Sie in dem Moment fahren (The engine whistles for a trestle crossing) – erschlug mich ein Felsblock. Ich spiele jetzt als Geist in diesem Stück mit (*Pullman...*, p. 58).

To emphasize the audience's role as participants, the Stage Manager, apart from introducing the events and commenting on them, answers the questions posed by the actors sitting in the house.

Wilder's dramaturgy also follows the Oriental drama in the treatment of performance as a key to the playwright's "message" the audience is supposed to decipher. Before proceeding with discussion about the third assumption, however, it would be advisable to focus for a while on some minor functions of the Stage Manager. Apart from acting as a commentator (the equivalent of the Japanese "Waki") and a property man – in either case he does not participate in the action – the Stage Manager "reads from a typescript the lines of all the minor characters. He reads them clearly, but with little attempt at characterization, scarcely troubling himself to alter his voice, even when he responds in the person of a child or a woman" (*The Happy...*, p. 86). The above quoted passage suggests clearly that realism was not only unnecessary but even redundant. It is possible to encounter the same kind of gimmick in Chinese plays, where the actor of so called "mo-type" played the roles of minor characters without changing his disguise (Żbikowski 1974:131). There are instances when the Stage Manager not only takes part in the play but interferes with the dramatic action summoning the protagonists on stage, imposing the scenes they should perform upon them and interrupting them at his will. As Rex Burbank suggests "the Stage Manager is used here as the arranger and interpreter of the action, manipulating the characters and scenes according to the idea he wants to illustrate" (Burbank 1961:69). Such treatment of the characters on stage imitates the way the attendants manipulate half-life size Japanese puppets of the so-called Bunraku-za. Paul Schiffer declares that

> the artists are so skilful in their manipulation and directing in the profound godlike attitude they assume towards the creatures in their control, that after a moment they succeed in making us forget their own presence (Nicoll 1951:656).

The perfection of the Japanese puppeteers creates the illusion that the puppets are living human beings. The Stage Manager, assuming the controlling attitude of a puppet attendant towards living actors, achieves quite an opposite

effect. The audience are made to think that what unfolds in front of their eyes is not a piece of actual life. On the contrary, by the constant presence of a person who controls the actors, they are repeatedly reminded of the factitiousness of the performance.

What immediately arises out of the employment of the multiple unrealistic techniques in Wilder's works, such as the lack of realistic scenery, treatment of space and time and numerous functions of the Stage Manager, is breaking out of the illusion of reality usually created in the audience's minds. Thus, people watching the play are incapacitated for any unconscious identification with the characters on stage and, treating drama as a phenomenon remote from their own experience, they are rather supposed to focus on the message the author endeavours to convey. The role of the audience as the active agent whose task is to interpret the message is in line with one of the fundamental assumptions of Zen — this branch of Buddhist philosophy that has exercised considerable influence on the development of the Oriental theatre. As A. Waley puts it "Zen Buddhists believe that Truth cannot be communicated by speech or writing, but that it lies hidden in the heart of each one of us and can be discovered by Zen or contemplative introspection" (Waley 1921:58). Hence, in both Wilder's dramaturgy and the Oriental theatre the relation: playwright — play — the audience is of the same type. The playwright, by using multiple unrealistic techniques transfers the trivial actions of characters to a universal plane. Those who manage to decode the playwright's idea and intention experience the play individually within their minds because as Wilder himself says:

> Our claim, our hope, our despair are in the mind — not in things, not in "scenery" [...]. Each individual's assertion to an absolute reality can only be inner, very inner. And here the method of staging finds its justification (Wilder 1984:12).

It is hard to disagree with the following statement as Wilder's concept of theatre is put into practice in his plays giving a compact illustration of the creative process. The numerous non-realistic techniques, such as the manipulation of space and time, the elimination of scenery and the stage manager device, all exemplify the idea of Stage being "a pretence". The play itself has a form of a ritual during which the participants (the audience) are given access to Truth — truth that they are meant to find in themselves, following the playwright's guidance.

Another clue to the proper understanding and appreciation of both Oriental and Wilder's plays can be spotted in the Japanese Book of Criticism:

> Forget the theatre and look at the Nô. Forget the Nô and look at the actor. Forget the actor and look at the "idea" (kokoro). Forget the "idea" and you will understand the Nô (Waley 1921:44).

In conclusion, one may pose a question whether American and European audiences are artistically aware enough to accept the role the playwright has

assigned for them. In contrast with Eastern culture, Western civilization hardly ever seeks for introspective contemplation. On the contrary, it tends to see things on literal rather than metaphorical plane.

In the present paper, the concepts of manipulation of space and time as well as the construction of characters have been analyzed solely to point out the parallel between the Oriental and Wilder's drama, however, the above mentioned notions, although either discussed or merely touched upon in a number of critical works, remain to be scrutinized in a still more extensive study.

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ANNA CICHOŃ

HISTORY IN J. G. FARRELL'S *TROUBLES*

When in 1970 *Troubles* won the Faber Memorial Prize, J.G. Farrell (1935-1979) was hailed as one of the most promising writers of his generation. The subsequent parts of his trilogy — *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) and *The Singapore Grip* (1978) presenting moments in the past which involve the decline of the British Empire — confirmed the author's literary position and showed that he was at his best dealing with historical themes[1].

Farrell was one of those contemporary writers who were not influenced by fashionable views which treat history as a "text", as a "verbal construct", which is not artistically attractive to a novelist unless rewritten in a comic or apocalyptic way[2]. J.G. Farrell, though conscious of the growing scepticism towards the writing of history, treats the past with respect, believing that many ideas can be conveyed without undermining the status of this discipline.

The aim of the present paper is to analyze how J.G. Farrell uses his chosen historical material; it sets out to determine in what sense *Troubles* is a historical novel, and to ask what is the author's attitude towards and understanding of history.

The action of the novel covers the period from July 1919 till July 1921 in Ireland during the Irish Uprising and Anglo-Irish war, which eventually led to the partition of the island and establishment of the Irish Free State. Against the historical background of the bloody struggle for independence, Farrell

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[1] Farrell's three early novels: *A Man From Elsewhere*, *The Lung* and *The Girl in the Head* did not bring him any success.

[2] Structuralists claimed that since all human experience is grounded in language, history is nothing more than another kind of "fictions" or "texts". Therefore history should be treated as thought and not as past actuality and it has a similar formal organization as a novel. History, as a narrative, is coloured by the historians' attitudes, no matter how hard they try to preserve objectivity. This is why many writers started to question factuality and treated verifiable and invented, but probable "facts" with the same seriousness (e.g., Doctorow's *Ragtime*). For the discussion of this problem see: Bergonzi 1980:43-45, Lodge 1971, Higdon 1984:9-14.

presents the tragi-comic tale of Major Brendan Archer during his stay at the Majestic hotel in Kilnalough on the south-east coast of Ireland. And even though the dramatic historical events remain in the background seemingly overshadowed by the mad and grotesque plot, history and its contemplation constitute the main theme of the novel.

It seems worthwhile to briefly recollect the background of the period described in the novel. The end of the First World War and the treaty of Versailles have evoked great expectations among the Irish separatists and seemed to provide the opportunity of introducing self-government. According to pre-war agreements Home Rule, suspended by the war, should have been introduced.

The struggle of Young Ireland Movement for independence started in the 19th century. It took different forms. Parnell, head of a nation-wide political and economic struggle, leader of National Land League and later of Home Rule Party, believed in legal methods and passive resistance. A supreme master of Parliamentary tactics he never allowed methods of terrorism. His efforts resulted in the first Home Rule Bill elaborated by British Prime Minister, Gladstone. However, the changing political situation and internal policy of Great Britain caused that the project was defeated. Two other projects that followed shared the same lot. After the death of Parnell John Redmond, leader of Parnellite Party, continued the policy of his forerunner. In the same period national movements were making rapid progress in other parts of the world. The Russian people were recovering from the defeats of 1905 and 1906 and a revolutionary crisis seemed to be approaching. Also struggle for independence of India and Egypt encouraged Irish Nationalists to finding other forms of their struggle.

Sinn Fein (Ourselves Alone), a nationalist organization established by Griffith in 1900, superseded Home Rule movement by a movement for complete independence which was directed towards the establishment of the Irish Free State. Initially Sinn Fein stressed cultural, economic and political independence, but soon Griffith lost his position and was replaced by radical nationalists — Patric Paerse and Thomas Clarke. By 1914 Sinn Fein passed from passive to active opposition to British Rule. This decision was speeded by a Home Rule project of the new Prime Minister — H.H. Asquith. This project was utterly inadequate and infuriated virtually all political parties in Ireland. Asquith suggested to divide the country into two States with very limited rights. This act granted Ireland a measure of independence considerably smaller than that enjoyed by the Dominions.

Sinn Fein demanded an independent republic. The Nationalists claimed that Ireland was a single and indivisible nation and that no English Parliament had the right to partition it. The Unionists, especially Ulster Protestants, objected to leaving the Empire and to being placed under the rule of the

Catholics from the South. Thousands of Ulstermen signed the covenant of resistance to Home Rule and Edward Carson, as leader of Ulster Unionists, announced that a provisional government would be formed there to defeat Home Rule. In the South of Ireland the challenge from Ulster was taken up by the formation in 1913 of the Irish Volunteers. When the war broke out there developed several differences within the Nationalists. Redmond and the bourgeois Nationalists supported England and turned into recruiting agents. The left wing of the Volunteers opposed the war and prepared for an armed rising. The section led by Patric Pearse wished to rise as early as possible and decided upon a rising at Easter 1916. The rising, confined to Dublin, was suppressed brutally by British soldiers after one week. Paradoxically the crushing of the Easter Rising proved to be the beginning rather than the end of the rebellion in Ireland. During the two following years the Labour and the National movements grew steadily. The new movement developed largely under the leadership of De Valera, head of Sinn Fein since 1917.

Agitation in Ireland intensified and Irish Volunteers begun to conduct guerilla war against the military and armed police. As the Irish Republican Army they soon engaged in wide-spread ambushes and attacks on barracks and convoys and the government retaliated with ruthless reprisals. A large proportion of the Irish police, known as the Royal Irish Constabulary, resigned but they were replaced by recruits from England, who became known as the Black and Tans.

On January 21, 1919, Sinn Fein members organized Dail Eireann — the legislative body of Ireland's parliament and proclaimed Irish Republic with De Valera as President.

Increasing pressure from Irish emigrants in England and the USA compelled Lloyd George, Prime Minister, to undertake new steps in Ireland. He offered a truce to De Valera and invited negotiations which resulted in the Anglo-Irish treaty of December 1921. Threatened by a new civil war, De Valera was forced to sign the treaty, even though it was by no means satisfactory. The IRA refused to accept the Irish Free State and division of the nation and resorted to bombings. Though outlawed by the government, the IRA remained a center of agitation for union with Northern Ireland. Since 1921 the struggle for uniting Ireland has been taking different forms. In the 1970ies it has violently intensified.

Troubles starts a few days after the peace treaty of Versailles when the Irish lost their hope of gaining independence through this treaty. De Valera, the head of Dail Eireann, who had to seek refuge in the USA, comments that the peace treaty of Versailles will "make twenty new wars in the place of one nominally ended" (*T*:12)[3]. The "nominally ended war" is obviously a reference

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[3] All quotations from *Troubles* abbreviated as *T* will be cited parenthetically in the text.

to the First World War which had just finished. Farrell describes several celebrations of the end of the war, the Victory Parade through London, Peace Day in Dublin and he mentions the Victory Loan which was to help Britain pay her debts. Meanwhile De Valera led an anti-British campaign in the USA to win sympathy for the Irish Independence Movement. The summer of 1919 witnessed the start of military action between Sinn Fein and the IRA on the one hand, and the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), on the other. With great scrupulousness Farrell mentions the numbers of murdered, attacked or injured policemen, attacks on civilians, raids for arms or incendiary explosions. Since Ireland was dominated by the partizans, the RIC were terrified and often helpless. In 1920 the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, sent auxiliary troops of ex-officers, the Black and Tans who were supposed to aid the RIC. Instead, their cruel reprisals, such as mass executions, shooting at civilians or burning of a district in Cork stimulated resistance. The victims of British violence like the Lord Mayor of Cork — Terence Mac Swiney, became symbols, national martyrs who died for Irish independence. The situation was very difficult for the British — the Sinn Feiners won a majority of seats in the general election in Parliament (Farrell gives the actual, true figures!). Since the winter of 1921 Lloyd George tried to negotiate with the Irish Separatists and the novel ends with the invitation of De Valera to London. Farrell often refers to previous stages of the Anglo-Irish conflict. Thus he mentions the efforts of Parnell or Redmond who, at the beginning of the century, failed to win Irish independence through parliamentary means. Also the Easter Rebellion of 1916 finds its reflection in the novel.

Independently of the Irish problem the novel abounds in references to other corners of the British Empire and all parts of the world — there is unrest in Africa, turmoil in India, riots in South Africa, racial violence in Chicago and internal problems in Russia.

The above reconstruction of the historical background in the novel results from combining the historical facts mentioned in *Troubles* and arranging them relatively coherently. But Farrell does not present the bygone period in such a form. Historical events are referred to, but never "lectured on". They rather remind of a jigsaw puzzle, are scattered throughout the narrative, are interwoven into the plot and lack a chronological arrangement. Farrell is more concerned with showing "particles of history" and "random events" in such a manner as people perceived them. Therefore history is shown in the way it affects the enclave of the hotel. Historical events are mixed with everyday human life. Thus the reader experiences the past through the feelings and emotions of those who participated in it. And consequently *Troubles* is a novel about the lives and opinions of people who lived in the twenties and lived their lives against the background of violent historical upheavals.

Even though Farrell frames his narrative around facts which are ordinarily held to be true in the sense that they are externally verifiable, his novel is not a history book. Farrell only takes verifiable facts as his starting point so as to be able to interpolate his fictional but plausible word. The setting of the novel, purely imaginary as there is no Kilnalough on the South-east coast of Ireland, is still probable in its topography. Farrell also gives his characters historical credentials. The Major is introduced as a real person living in that period and his return from the war to England and completion of service are mentioned in an ostensible quotation from *London Gazette*. Also one of the visitors to the Majestic is said to be an old friend of Parnell's.

The majority of invented pseudo-historical events in *Troubles* concern the conflict between Ireland and Britain; they depict street fights, violent acts, a chain of alternating attacks and reprisals. The Irish problem is permanently referred to a broader, worldwide historical background. In his presentation Farrell always concentrates on unrest and turmoil as if trying to suggest that the early twenties were a period of troubles everywhere — of the beginning of the fall and disintegration of civilization. By disclosing the actual conditions of life Farrell depicts social problems and trends leading to political crises.

Thus it seems that the aim of Farrell's novel is not so much a reconstruction of the bygone period as an interpolation[4] of history with the intention of evoking and bringing closer to the reader the atmosphere and general trends of the past. Blending of fact and fiction supplies a mine of historical particulars that enrich the panorama of the age, that help the author to "encapsulate" the essence of the bygone period. The subordination of historical facts and personages to the reconstruction of the mood of the past explains why great personages and famous people remain in the background — they only delimit the thematic framework of the novel.

Let us now consider in what sense *Troubles* is a historical novel. In *The Historical Novel* Lukács (1962:49) claimed that "the aim of this genre is to portray the kind of individual experience that can directly and typically express the problems of an epoch" and that the lives of characters should coincide with the "lines of force". In Farrell's novel there is an organic connection between personal fate and historical problems. The period of 1919-1921 is often referred to by the historians as that of "the troubles" (and that is where the title of the novel comes from). The very word "troubles" appears frequently in the narrative in reference to different ideas. Thus problems occur not only in politics, in economy or in Ireland itself, but also in human lives — in

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[4] Bartoszyński (1984:12-13) states that the aim of the historical novel is to "interpolate history", i.e., to penetrate areas complementary to history, which are potentially connected with this discipline, but which, nevertheless, do not actually belong to it.

interrelations, health and love. In the novel no love affair has a chance of a happy ending. The Major is disillusioned with his fiancée, Angela, mainly due to her illness which goes unnoticed by him. He cannot break his engagement or explain his situation until Angela's untimely death. Archer also fails in his second relation with Sarah whom, no matter how hard he tries, he cannot win.

Almost all characters in *Troubles* are ill — Sarah is a cripple; the Major suffers from neurosis and catches several colds; Edward goes mad; the old ladies have difficulties with proliferating "aches, pains, insomnia and bowel discomforts" (*T*:211). The political complications and uncertainties are mirrored in the individual lives of the characters.

In the same way that in politics the times are complicated, difficult to understand, and not susceptible to interpretation, so are the characters in the novel. Margaret Drabble noticed that they are most frequently "depressed", "uncertain", "puzzled", "doubtful", "confused" or "hesitating"; they understand neither the general situation nor that of other characters. Farrell makes a pervasive use of the emotion of bewilderment. The typical Farrell man is baffled by his own life and by history (cf. Drabble 1981:188-189).

Archer, for example, tries to make sense of reality — but all in vain: "the Major only glanced at the newspapers these days tired of trying to comprehend a situation which defied comprehension, a war without battles or trenches" (*T*:154). He is aware that the turmoil of his times is more difficult than other situations because "unlike the Irish troubles one knew instantly which side everyone was on" (*T*:103).

In *Troubles* the characters meet with history directly, it influences human lives and asserts itself often against their will. At the beginning of the novel Major Archer goes to Kilnalough only in order to sort out his personal matters. The Irish problem and politics do not interest him; he even tries to separate himself from them. When, during his journey to the Majestic, he reads about Irish girls maltreated in Dublin, he does not finish the article, but dozes off before finding the answer. After a few days at the hotel he feels like an outsider because "after all it was hardly any of his business, and would be even less of his business once he had managed to have a word with Angela" (*T*:51). He can leave at any moment and go back to England but he chooses not to, because he is magically drawn into the "vicious circle", and feels obliged to participate in the events. After some time of his stay at the Majestic, when the fight for Irish independence comes closer to the sleepy provincial retreat, the Major is forced, against his will, to back Edward's radical views. For his act of loyalty he almost pays the price of his life. He becomes a victim of Sinn Fein, is buried up to the neck in the sand and left to drown in the tide, only to be rescued by some of the old ladies from the hotel.

From the beginning of the novel history moves closer and closer to the Majestic: it surrounds and besieges the hotel in order to invade and damage

it at the end. The movement of encircling and tightening is a structural principle characteristic of the novel. At the beginning of the narrative, the Sinn Feiners and members of the IRA are pursued only in the areas surrounding the property. This pursuit then extends to the adjoining buildings and finally, with the quartering of the Black and Tans, historical reality tangibly rushes into the hotel, inevitably causing the destruction of the place by fire. This is meant to be an act of revenge for the alleged anti-Irish attitudes of the residents. The officers introduce terror to the hotel and shake its apparent stability from the inside. All these steps show how history approaches, enters and eventually ravages Spencer's property and how it asserts its influence upon the lives of the patrons of the Majestic.

According to Lukács (1962:24) in the historical novel historical consciousness is born when people "comprehend their existence as something historically conditioned, affecting their daily lives". This kind of consciousness is born in almost all characters, and even if they do not verbalize it, they intuitively feel it. They have a sense of an ending, realize that the situation cannot last any longer and feel threatened and beset. The general decline of civilization characteristic of that period is mirrored in human existence. Numerous quoted newspaper cuts give accounts of murders. Edward Spencer maniacally reads lists of dead soldiers at breakfasts. As Dr Ryan comments on people: "people are insubstantial, they never last" or "a person is only a very temporary and makeshift affair" (*T*:140-141). In the same way does the Major express his understanding of those times: "At no point of recent history [...] in the past two or three hundred years could the standards of decent people have been so vulnerable and near to disintegration, as they were today" (*T*:170). Except for expressing it directly the Major can also sense the ending:

> Depression came down on the Major like a blanket of fog suffocating him. What dreadful days these were! The future of the British Isles could never have seemed so dismal since the Romans had invaded; there was Trouble everywhere (*T*:277).

Lukács also stated that the conflicts of fictional characters should mirror the contending historical forces of the time. Most of the arguments of the inhabitants of the Majestic concern political events and result from their radical views. The characters in *Troubles* represent a whole range of attitudes — they are Unionists or Separatists, Republicans or Nationalists, the Sinn Feiners or the Anglo-Irish, Catholics or Protestants. All of them utter stereotypical, biassed and prejudiced judgements typical of their stand-points. Their personal conflicts mirror the general political situation and the stress in the novel is put on the variety of opinions, usually contradictory. For some characters the Easter Rebellion was a patriotic and heroic rising, for others nothing else but a "stab in the back" or "a mad and criminal rebellion (*T*:51). The Versailles treaty disillusioned the Irish but Edward calls it "a triumph, for Prussian tyranny is accorded punishment" (*T*:39). The Lord Mayor of Cork

is for some characters a patriot but for others a criminal. It is impossible to learn the truth. Sometimes the Irish are only "trouble makers", blunt people, incapable of any independent thought. When the Major wonders what would happen if Irish children were given good education, Edward replies shortly: "You might just as well dress up a monkey in a suit of clothes" (T:170).

The Major himself arrives in Ireland with some orthodox, preconceived notions. When, forced by Edward, he sets off in pursuit of a supposed Sinn Feiner he comments on the situation in the following way: "How incredibly Irish it all is! [...] The family seems to be completely mad" (T:26). He is also quick to remark on the difference between the Irish and the British, for while the former "had always had a habit of making trouble" (T:51), the presence of the latter "signified a moral authority, not just an administrative one" (T:51). Dr Ryan, an Irishman, claims that he has no sympathy for the British because "they've lived here for generations like cocks in pastry without a thought for the sufferings of people. Now it's their turn and I'll shed no tears for them" (T:142).

The conflicting views and opinions of different characters climax in the grotesque quarrel between Edward and the students of Oxford. Both antagonists maniacally cling to their opinions and blame the others for misunderstanding the situation.

National divisions also pervade the closest of human relationships. Edward, a Protestant, cannot forgive his son his marriage to a Catholic girl and this becomes the reason for their conflict which results in the abrogation of almost all family ties.

Against this background of varied opinions, radical and stubborn views there appear the attempts of the Major — a mild English liberal — to understand the conflict. He is honorably and honestly, if a little hopelessly, engaged in an attempt to fit the incomprehensible parts together. Though prejudiced at first, he soon notices that it is impossible to blame only the Irish. He starts noticing British tyranny, their breaking of the law and even cruelty. When the Black and Tans come to Ireland "to bring order", the Major is most sceptical about them and thinks that "the cure might be as bad as the disease" (T:158). But when he almost sympathizes with the Irish, he is again taken aback both by their violence and by the reprisals of the RIC. He feels responsible for the country and therefore claims: "If the RIC take to behaving as badly as the Shinners, pretty soon the whole country will be in chaos and it'll be every man for himself" (T:225). But later Edward's murder of the supposed Sinn Feiner evokes the Major's sympathy for the Irish. He even explains to Edward that Ireland is "their country as much as it is ours [...] more than it is ours!" (T:385). Archer wants to see the boy's father to explain that the boy was not a martyr of the British but a victim of private hatred. But at the end he concludes that the Sinn Feiners would not take pity on Edward, and bursts out in irritation:

"That boy got what he deserved. I only hope it may serve as an example to some of the other young cutthroats who are laying Ireland to waste" (T:387). In this way Archer returns to his former views. Thus even though he tried so hard, he is incapable of comprehending a different nation, a different culture. In this way Farrell leaves the reader at the same point as E.M. Foster does in *A Passage to India* though in a totally different setting.

Another claim that Lukács (1962:63) made about the genre of the historical novel refers to the function of historical personages whose importance lies in

> their ability to generalize, to raise to a higher level of historical typicality problems which in life itself are scattered and appear in purely individual forms and as purely private fates. When experience of people has been lived by various characters, the artistic generalization has an extremely broad basis and suits its function of summing up.

But Farrell abandons Walter Scott's model of two plots as there is no "public" plot in *Troubles*. Still historical personages like Parnell, Lloyd George or De Valera and many others are mentioned and often referred to, in order to prove that the experience of the fictional characters is not merely individual. The summing up function is also given to press comments and speeches of the politicians. All of them prove that the disputes and problems of the inhabitants of the Majestic are at a higher level.

In *Troubles* people are united with history in the most intimate way. The characters' personal and social-political fates closely conjoin. Through personal experience they come into contact with all the great problems of the age, become organically linked by them, yet lose neither their personality nor the immediacy of their experience. Thus history is used according to the conventions of the genre of the historical novel and becomes an intrinsic element dominating the narrative.

Farrell's attitude to history is traditional, though peculiarly so. He seems to rely on the assumption that historical reality is significant and even if not coherent, it did, as Carlyle put it, "in very deed occur" (after Foley 1978:89), Farrell does not call into question our concept of factuality and history, which remain past actuality, not thought. Yet he realizes that history is not transmitted and reconstructed objectively — there are lies, intentionality and interpretations depending on people's view, ideology and background. This is expressed best when the Major exclaims to Sarah: "You ask me to believe in these operatic characters when one reads entirely different things in the newspaper" (T:76). Farrell also realizes that "historical facts" can be misleading. Thus Farrell is conscious that evaluations and meanings are chimerical or at best subjective, and he lacks the orthodox confidence of making sense of history.

Since Farrell's vision of the development of the world is apocalyptic[5],

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[5] The term "apocalyptic" is used here as discussed by Kermode (1967, Introduction).

history is seen as a process of organization and entropy. He seems to express a conviction originating from Hegelian dialectics that the fall of civilization, of social or political structures, starts already at the moment of their highest prosperity. Thus even though in the period described in the novel the British Empire contained over a quarter of the world's population and dominated over a quarter of the world's surface, the decadence and decay of the Anglo-Irish Ascendency augured the fall of the Empire. The view that this civilization is ending is stressed by making clear the idea that none of the young or energetic characters is willing to shoulder the burden of the situation. Spencer's son, Ripon, withdraws from political matters to lead a comfortable, affluent life; Sarah elopes with an officer and the only "reasonable" person, Dr Ryan, retreats to his home. It soon becomes obvious that nobody will continue the old politics.

Historical considerations are reflected in the novel's central metaphor of the hotel which functions on many planes. From the first pages of *Troubles* Farrell emphasizes the larger-than-life size of the Majestic. The Major is "astonished with the size of the place", with "massive gate-posts", "broad staircase", "vast cavern" or "enormous furniture". As in Camus' Oran there are typological ironies: there are indications in the book that the hotel might stand for any community or for some particular community. The Majestic becomes not only a physical asylum for the Spencers and their guests, a specific world, but also a place in general. At the first glimpse it is striking because of its demolished state. Different "smells hang heavily in the air", the gate-posts are "rain-polished"; the interiors are dark, shabby, dusty and gloomy. The decaying condition of the Majestic alarms the Major on his arrival. The hotel is presented as a living organism ("rusting rain pipes bulged like varicose veins"), and is run by its own rules, with its own life or as Binns (1986:58) put it "with a growth but of a cancerous kind, bringing decay and collapse".

The hotel is captured by hordes of dogs and cats, luxuriant, exuberant vegetation develops uncontrolled. The proliferating foliage astonishes the Major, as creepers dangle "from above and run in profusion over the floor", "snakes of greenery" throttle furniture, plants appear everywhere, destroy walls and ceilings and are so plentiful that the Major suspects that "there must be some underground irrigation system to provide water for all this vegetation" (T:17). Yet this guess turns out to be false. This growth of an alien and uncontrolled foliage at the Majestic runs parallel to the development of Militant Irish nationalism — a phenomenon which to British or Anglo-Irish eyes appears as equally alien and beyond control.

The advancing destruction of the hotel in the novel coincides with the decline of the Anglo-Irish Ascendency and the impending dissolution of the British Empire (Bergonzi 1980:61). (This parallel is stressed by the very name of the hotel and its parts. There is an Imperial Bar there, the Prince Consort's wing and the place is guarded by a statue of Queen Victoria). The Majestic

is rotting from the inside and proves too big a responsibility for the owners to maintain. Perhaps it does not make a terrifying impression on those who look at it not critically but through eyes affected by customary attachment, sentiment and youthful memories. This also reminds one of the Anglo-Irish attitudes of many people who, used to the conflict, cannot notice how it aggravates each day. The politicians still believe that mutual relations are correct, and if not, then remaining safe and controlled. Thus Lloyd George, as if deaf to information from Ireland, says: "I ask you not to pay too much heed to the distorted accounts by partisans" because the police are "dispersing the terrorists" (T:256-257).

All attempts to forestall the inevitable fall are senseless. For instance Edward's great ball does not restore the hotel to its previous splendor but rather brings it even faster to ruin, furthermore the troops of the Black and Tans contribute to the aggravation of the conflict. Demoralized officers, instead of taking control of Ireland, provoke the Irish to the use of more cruelty and violence. Edward Spencer, fanatically loyal to the British, is unable to prevent the crumbling of his hotel or the collapse of British authority.

The metaphor of the hotel also seems to suggest that all social and political structures yield to time: they develop, metamorphose and fall. For, as the Major notices, "nothing is invulnerable to growth, change and decay" (T:259). This destruction, "drive" to ruin, is an imminent, dynamic force. The British position in her dominions is threatened by civil wars, uprisings and fight for independence in a way analogous to the collapse of the Majestic caused by vegetation, animals and time. When the danger is not yet visible outside, when there are only small fissures and cracks, alarming sounds can already be heard and disturbing sights appear. When Edward, alarmed by strange sounds of cracking at the Majestic calls an expert to investigate the state of the hotel, the architect, even though petrified that the building might fall down any moment, does not give an opinion. This scene is parallel to the speech of Lloyd George in Parliament, who undisturbed by the news from all parts of the world still believes in British strength and calls the Empire: "that Empire at the highest of its power [...] that Empire at the greatest day of its glory" (T:256). Yet, as Farrell shows in his novel, under the thin coverage of stability and prosperity there had been forces at work which gradually led to its destruction. Considerations of troubles in different parts of the Empire bring to mind a scene in the novel when Archer and Sarah play the game of tracing bulges:

> Something was trying to force its way up through the floor.
> "Good heavens! What is it?"
> The Major knelt and removed three or four of the blocks to reveal a white, hairy wrist.
> "It's a root. God only knows where it comes from..."
> "Why do you think it wants to come up into the lounge?"
> "Looking for nourishment, I suppose. There may be lots more of them for all I know. One shudders to think what it may be doing to the foundations" (T:251).

The hotel, in its structure, colouring, atmosphere and weirdness resembles Ireland as perceived by the Major on his arrival. When Ripon, as a guide, shows Brendan different institutions, shops and churches in Kilnalough, the Major is puzzled for, to his surprise, he can "see no trace of them" (T:14). Yet what he notices are the smells and colours, the impression of poverty and strangeness. Ireland in *Troubles*, like the Majestic, is mysterious and incomprehensible, though fascinating. Only for the first few days can the Major control himself and resist its power; "like a man struggling to retain his consciousness as he inhales the first fumes of chloroform, he has not yet allowed himself to surrender to the country's narcotic inertia" (T:37).

There are several scenes in the novel which stress the parallel between Ireland and the Majestic mainly in order to show the destruction both of them have undergone. When after a conversation with Edward about the disastrous state of Ireland the Major looks at the Majestic, he notices: "How dilapidated it looked. The great chimneys towering over the hulk of wood and stone gave it the appearance of a beached Dreadnought" (T:199).

The metaphor of the hotel dominating the novel can also be considered on the plane of the interpretations and approaches to history. With the passage of time events fade, the dramatic experience of people changes into "historical facts". There remain cool retrospections, reports about great personages, general trends and moods. When one reconstructs the richness and variety of the forms of life, human emotions and personal experience get lost, blurred by time. The very framework of the novel seems to support such a view. The opening sentences in a cool and remote manner present the setting of the novel. The perspective is historical, there is a strong sense of the flow of time, evoked by frequent repetitions of "at that time", "in those days", "by then". The tone seems to be characteristic of a historian who after years tries to reproduce the bygone era on the basis of what remains of it. From the huge layout of the hotel he may deduce that the Majestic used to be a luxurious place with a prodigious number of rooms, with the modern equipment and facilities of the day. Yet very little can be said about the lives of the inhabitants of the place. So, when after years, the narrator looks at the ruins of the hotel, he notices that long before the fire the Majestic must have already been dilapidated. This is why he says: "by that time the place was in such a state of disrepair that it [the fire] hardly mattered" (T:7). But it did matter. The hotel witnessed dramatic events; in it people led rich and complex lives. When one looks from a distance of time at the lives of people, one is likely to reduce them to some universal, typical dimension or function, in the sense that they appear as a "distant species" conditioned by history. Thus for a historian the immediacy of human experience and dynamism fade. It is significant that at the end of the novel the Major mimics the actions of the narrator. When on his last day in Kilnolough Archer pays a melancholy visit to the Majestic, he notices: "Now that these

rooms were open to the mild Irish sky they all seemed much smaller — in fact quite insignificant" (T:411). Only a writer can express the immediacy of experience, show the rich texture of human existence as something past, but nevertheless as having happened "here and now".

In order to eliminate the time distance Farrell uses several narrative tricks which are essential for the structure of *Troubles*. They introduce the conventions which facilitate easier access to the text[6]. Thus the fictional world is presented by a narrator who is a grandson of the generation who lived in the Ireland of "the troubles". Nevertheless the events are shown from the point of view of the main character.

On the one hand, Farrell seems to assume that the reader will entertain many presuppositions[7] concerning the thematic frame of the novel. It is possible because the implied reader, at least potentially, might learn about the bygone period from the generation that participated in the events of the past. When the narrator, probably in the late sixties, visits the ruins of the hotel with his grandson, he strongly draws attention to the generation link: the grandfather who himself could have been a teenage visitor to the Majestic, knows the history of the hotel and passes it on to his grandson.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that when, in the seventies, the novel was handed to the reader, the Irish problem had become topical once again: 1970 was the beginning of "troubles" in Northern Ireland which have dominated the history of the province for the last two decades. Thus the writer himself assumed competent understanding on the part of the reader. Besides that the presentation of the fictional world from the point of view of the Major also makes history more accessible: the Major is unfamiliar with the Irish problem, is a "naive" character and therefore must be equipped with information analogous to presuppositions. The reader, together with the Major, gets to know the Ireland of "the troubles" through topographical, political, social, domestic and psychological descriptions. Also different techniques applied in the novel, such as documentary realism, informative discussions among the characters or mutually contradictory quotations from the press and other historical sources present the complexity of the past.

The very style of the writer "metamorphosing from a realistic mode into that of the fairy tale, myth, fantasy, symbolism and parody" (Binns 1986:45), the rich imagery connected mainly with decay, colours and smells, bring the place closer to the reader so that the historical distance is not alienating. The Major ironically remarks that the intimacy he reached with the Spencers is

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[6] See Bartoszyński 1984: 7-8. The author distinguishes six genological conventions of the historical novel and claims that "the role of accessibility and intelligibility of the world presented" is of primary genological importance in this genre.

[7] The term "presuppositions" is here used as defined by Culler 1976.

almost ridiculous for "it's hard to be intimidated by people when one knows, for instance, the nature and amount of the dental work in their upper and lower jaws, where they buy their outer clothes [...] and many more things besides" (T:12).

Furthermore, Farrell's novel is populated by characters whom the reader recognizes as representative of the twenties. The Major is a well-known type of officer who went through the First World War from which he emerged shell-shocked, with a consequent neurosis resulting from his experience in the trenches. He is an English gentleman always responsible for weaker and threatened people; Angela, his fiancée, is a faded Edwardian beauty, a reminiscence of the past epoch; her father — rambunctiously eccentric Edward — is a representative of a dying breed of Empire builders, a caricature of a pompous upper middle class Englishman. Finally, the gallery of old ladies with their knittings, salts and chocolates smelling of peppermint, or the officers from the Black and Tans with their sense of superiority and aggression, furnish a broadly representative microcosmic world which suits the reader's preconceived notions about the twenties. Farrell's use of typical and, at least potentially, recognizable characters serves the effect of obliterating extraneousness separating the reader from the text[8].

Farrell does not limit his presentation to historical aspects because beside responding to their reality, people lead their lives — they love and suffer, have their personal problems. Farrell claims that human existence does not differ radically, because beside responding to history, the rest is "merely 'the being alive' that every age has to do" (T:93). In this way Farrell anhances the historical self-consciousness of his readers. He also suggests that the forms of the present-day conflict have their roots in the past[9].

The past in *Troubles* is felt as prehistory of the present, as formative history. Farrell shows how the past in the course of a long evolution has influenced and shaped present-day life. *Troubles* is intended in a sense to bridge two different periods by showing what they had in common.

Troubles with all its "truthfulness" and historical veracity uses many tricks to render the content modern. It is directed towards contemporary polemics and interpretations and in this way it "debunks" the past, stripping it of old sentiments and pro-English sympathies. It also offers a contemporary and less biased system of evaluations by verifying false and stereotypical judgements. This is reflected in the Major's permanent doubts about the attitudes and

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[8] See Bartoszyński 1984:8-11, for discussion of the convention obliterating the time distance and estrangement separating the reader from the text.

[9] Lukács (1974:53) claims that "without a felt relationship to the present, a portrayal of history is impossible" and adds that this relationship does not rely on alluding to contemporary events but on bringing the past to life.

behaviour of the British. Farrell speaks from the position of the lost Empire, not from the authoritative stand-point of power. His contemplation of history is ironical and he often uses ironical or even grotesque expressions with which to ridicule simplistic views.

Thanks to the time distance he can afford a retrospective interpretation and state that the fall of the Anglo-Irish Ascendency was not a separate phenomenon but rather resulted from general, worldwide crises. On the other hand, it was also caused by the lack of responsibility and stubbornness on both sides of the conflict. The English were also guilty because of their prejudices, sense of superiority and sometimes a belief that there was a different law and standards of evaluation for them and the locals. When captain Bolton rushes into the ladies' lounge and refuses to leave it, Edward threatens him that the police will come and throw him out. But Bolton dares claim that he is the police and therefore has a sense of impunity.

It is with the contemporary school of self-conscious historical novelists that Farrell has a closer affinity — a group to which Fowels, Doctorow, Gracia Marquez belong. What Farrell and the various writers of this tendency have in common is a fundamental scepticism about the "'objective" nature of historical reality. This is why in *Troubles* historical significance resides more in general currents and atmosphere than in specific figures and events.

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TADEUSZ RYBOWSKI

SŁOWO TRAFIONE, SŁOWO NIETRAFIONE. UWAGI O TŁUMACZENIU TZW. WIERSZA WOLNEGO (NIERYMOWANEGO) NA PRZYKŁADZIE UTWORU KENNETHA REXROTHA PT. *CONFUSION*

Tłumaczenie wiersza obcojęzycznego jest zawsze dla przekładającego wielkim przeżyciem. Odnosi się to zarówno do wierszy rymowanych, jak i utworów pisanych tzw. wierszem wolnym, nierymowanym. Tłumacz staje wobec tekstu napisanego w obcym języku i musi go przetransponować na własny język tak, aby nie utraciwszy niczego z wartości poetyckiej wiersza, oddać jego treść w sposób możliwie wierny i adekwatny. Jako odbiorca wrażliwy i znający dobrze język oryginału zostaje od razu poddany wielorakim naciskom, a proces przekładowy uruchamia w nim utajone pokłady własnej wrażliwości, często nie uświadamiane. W umyśle tłumacza wytwarza się jakby kopia oryginału, początkowo niejasna i niedookreślona. Najpierw pojawiają się blade kontury, które następnie stają się wyraźniejsze, a w końcu zjawia się obraz wyrazisty, pełen szczegółów. Wszystko to przypomina nieco proces wywoływania zdjęć fotograficznych.

Inne prawidła obowiązują przy przekładzie wierszy rymowanych, a inne przy przekładzie tzw. wiersza wolnego. W wypadku wierszy rymowanych mamy do czynienia z tłumaczeniem d y n a m i c z n y m. Tłumacz musi zbudować wiersz, opleść go konstrukcją rymów, a następnie wypełnić tę konstrukcję treścią odpowiadającą treści oryginału lub do niej zbliżoną. W rezultacie tych zabiegów powinien powstać utwór autonomiczny, funkcjonujący już w odrębnym języku. Utwór rymowany często staje się w przekładzie utworem ekwiwalentnym. Wierność wobec oryginału jest rzeczą istotną, lecz nie najważniejszą. Istotne jest to, aby powstał utwór poetycki, charakteryzujący się napięciem poetyckim, zdolny do wzbudzenia reakcji czytelnika, oddziałujący na jego wyobraźnię i wrażliwość[1].

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[1] Szerzej o tłumaczeniu wiersza rymowanego piszę w artykule pt. *Niektóre problemy przekładu poetyckiego. Uwagi warsztatowe na przykładzie utworów Williama Butlera Yeatsa*, "Studia Linguistica", X, 1986.

W wypadku tzw. wiersza wolnego proces przekładowy ma charakter raczej pasywny, uszczegółowiający. Tłumacz stara się przede wszystkim przełożyć utwór z maksymalną wiernością, utrafić niejako w odpowiednie słowo, gdyż w przeciwnym razie może zaistnieć utwór pozornie gładki i literacko zachęcający, lecz pozbawiony wewnętrznego napięcia, obecnego w wersji oryginalnej. To utrafienie w odpowiednie słowo nie jest wbrew pozorom rzeczą łatwą. Często należy wprowadzić wyraz bliskoznaczny, a nie bezpośredni odpowiednik, gdyż w tego typu utworach o wartości poetyckiej wiersza decyduje właśnie jego niedookreśloność.

Tak więc tłumacz stoi wobec nadzwyczaj trudnego zadania. Musi być maksymalnie wierny wobec oryginału, a jednocześnie powinien sobie pozostawić jakiś margines niedookreśloności, niejasności, zamglenia, często decydujący o wartości literackiej przekładu.

Te ogólnie tylko zarysowane problemy związane z przekładem tzw. wiersza wolnego wymagają szczegółowego omówienia na podstawie materiału przekładowego. W tym celu wybrałem utwór poety amerykańskiego Kennetha Rexrotha pt. *Confusion*, dość typowy dla współczesnej poezji Stanów Zjednoczonych[2]. Przedstawia on drobny wycinek tzw. codziennego życia i określoną sytuację ludzką. Bohater utworu, człowiek nieśmiały i zakochany, wędruje w deszczu po mieście przez cały dzień, przechodzi obok domu ukochanej, by wreszcie znaleźć się w swoim pokoju obok niezapisanej kartki papieru. Taka jest w największym skrócie treść utworu, bardzo delikatnego w treści i melodyjnego w formie. Sytuacja ludzka ukazana została za pomocą cienkiej kreski, subtelnej tkanki znaczeniowej.

Utwór ten jest w dodatku dość łatwy w zrozumieniu. Słownictwo wiersza jest nieskomplikowane, nie ma tu skrótów myślowych, mogących sprawić trudność tłumaczowi. Jest to więc utwór pozornie nietrudny w przekładzie. Jak się jednak za chwilę przekonamy, nawet tak prosty wiersz może zostać przełożony w sposób odległy od oryginału, nie wolny od błędów i niewłaściwego odczytania tekstu.

W analizie różnych wersji przekładowych tego utworu posłużymy się pięcioma przekładami, dokonanymi przez studentów anglistyki w czasie ćwiczeń tłumaczeniowych. Oznaczymy te wersje jako A, B, C, D, E. Ze zrozumiałych względów wersje te pozostaną anonimowe.

CONFUSION

For Nancy Shores

I pass your home in a slow vermillion dawn,
The blinds are drawn, and the windows are open.

[2] Kenneth Rexroth, *Confusion*, [w:] *The Collected Shorter Poems*, New Directions, New York 1966, s. 47.

The soft breeze from the lake
Is like your breath upon my cheek.
All day long I walk in the intermittent rainfall.
I pick a vermillion tulip in the deserted park,
Bright raindrops cling to its petals.
At five o'clock it is a lonely color in the city.
I pass your home in a rainy evening.
I can see you faintly, moving between lighted walls.
Late at night I sit before a white sheet of paper,
Until a fallen vermillion petal quivers before me.

Ten pozornie łatwy konwersacyjny wiersz w dokładniejszej analizie okazuje się majstersztykiem kompozycyjnym. Całość rozgrywa się w ciągu jednego dnia, ale dzień ten jest podzielony na świt (dawn), właściwy dzień (all day long), wieczór (evening) i wreszcie noc (late at night). Każdemu z tych okresów przypisany jest pewien odcinek utworu, kilka jego linijek. Nastrój utworu jest spokojny, nieco monotonny, z lekka melancholijny. Wiersz zarysowuje drobne i delikatne uczucia — budzącą się miłość, nieśmiałość, wyczekiwanie, pragnienie przeżycia czegoś wielkiego.

Jest więc ten wiersz precyzyjnie skomponowaną całością, a poszczególne linijki, słowa i zwroty podporządkowane są koncepcji całego utworu. Poeta nie narzuca jednak swojej wizji poetyckiej czytelnikowi. Nasuwa mu się ona niejako sama, bez udziału twórcy. Jest to więc utwór dyskretny, nie nachalny. Mimo pozornej łatwości i prostoty tzw. środków wyrazu łatwo jest ten utwór zniekształcić w przekładzie na inny język, zakłócając np. rytm wiersza, wydłużając wersy lub dokonując skrótów myślowych. Tłumacz może też próbować utwór ten upiększyć lub wystylizować, co nieuchronnie prowadzi do zmiany tonacji wiersza, tak istotnej w przypadku tego utworu. Najwłaściwszą linią postępowania przy przekładzie tzw. wiersza wolnego jest w zasadzie ścisłe przyleganie do tekstu oryginału, oczywiście z zachowaniem prawideł i ducha języka tłumacza, gdyż utwór ten musi przecież funkcjonować w odrębnym języku.

Obecnie dokonamy szczegółowej analizy pięciu wybranych wersji tłumaczeniowych wiersza *Confusion* (A, B, C, D, E).

Wersja A

NIEŚMIAŁOŚĆ

dla Nancy Shores

Mijam twój dom podczas cynobrowego brzasku
Zaciągnięte story, otwarte okna.
Lekki wietrzyk znad jeziora
— twój oddech na moim policzku.
Spaceruję cały dzień, pada, pada.

W opuszczonym parku zrywam tulipana,
Jasne krople deszczu przylegają do jego płatków.
To samotny kolor o tej porze w mieście.
Mijam twój dom podczas deszczowego wieczoru.
Nieśmiało spoglądam na twą postać wśród oświetlonych ścian.
Późnym wieczorem siedzę nad białą kartką papieru,
Czekając aż spadły, cynobrowy płatek nie zadrży.

Jest to dość kulturalny przekład mimo licznych przcinaczeń w tekście. Już pierwsza linijka przekładu narzuca, moim zdaniem, błędną interpretację całego utworu. Wyraz „mijam", w zasadzie obojętny, nie obciążony emocją, nie sugeruje wędrówki po mieście, lecz po prostu spacer. Nb. wyraz „spaceruję" powtórzy się w linijce piątej, co jest naturalnym echem przyjętej wersji przekładowej z wersu pierwszego („mijam"). W linijce trzeciej „lekki wietrzyk" jest niepotrzebnym podwojeniem tego samego znaczenia ("lekki — wietrzyk"). W oryginale mamy poza tym wyraz „soft", sugerujący nie tyle siłę wiatru, co jego delikatność. W wersie szóstym określenie „opuszczony park" sugeruje określony stosunek do parku, a nie jest odbiciem stanu uczuć samego bohatera. W linijce dziesiątej tłumacz zniekształcił sens utworu dość wyraźnie, przekładając wyraz „faintly" jako „nieśmiało", a nie „niewyraźnie, słabo", co spowodowało istotne zafałszowanie treści. W wersie jedenastym wreszcie zwrot „późnym wieczorem" (late at night) wydaje się zbyt statyczny. Określenie to usytuuje wydarzenie w czasie bez odniesienia do stanu duszy bohatera utworu. „Late at night I sit" oznacza po prostu „siedzę do późna w noc". Zwrot ten sugeruje niechęć lub niemożność udania się na spoczynek, stan zamyślenia lub łączności z ukochaną osobą.

Wersja B

ZAMKNIĘTY KRĄG

dla Nancy Shores

Mijam twój dom, gdy cynobrowy podnosi się świt,
Story są zaciągnięte, okna otworzone.
Delikatny powiew znad jeziora
Jest jak twój oddech na moim policzku.
Cały dzień błądzę w deszczu.
W pustym parku podnoszę cynobrowego tulipana,
Krople deszczu lśnią na jego płatkach.
O piątej to raczej samotny kolor w tym mieście.
Mijam twój dom, gdy deszczem opada wieczór.
Ledwie mogę cię dostrzec między oświetlonymi ścianami.
Późną nocą siedzę nad białą kartką
Aż opadły, cynobrowy płatek nie zadrży przede mną.

I znów mamy do czynienia z tzw. kulturalnym przekładem tekstu. Tłumacz starał sę miejscami zbliżyć do oryginału i nieraz mu się to powiodło. W innych partiach tekstu jednak pozwolił sobie na zbyt samodzielną interpretację. Linijka „gdy cynobrowy podnosi się świt" na pierwszy rzut oka wydaje się efektowna, lecz w istocie jest to próba upoetycznienia tekstu, który i bez tego jest poetycki. Echem tego upoetycznienia jest linijka dziesiąta („gdy deszczem opada wieczór"), gdzie tłumacz starał się konsekwentnie zestroić ze sobą te dwie linijki („p o d n o s i się świt — o p a d a wieczór"). Jest to więc zamysł celowy, przemyślany, a chyba niepotrzebny. Za to linijki trzecia i czwarta przylegają ściśle do oryginału. W odróżnieniu od wersji A w wersie piątym mamy wyraz „błądzę", a nie „spaceruję", co sugeruje męczącą wędrówkę bez celu i jest chyba bliskie oryginałowi. Jednocześnie tłumacz opuścił w przekładzie wyraz „intermittent" (przerywany), co jest zafałszowaniem oryginału. Linijka ta powinna brzmieć: „cały dzień błądzę w przerywanym deszczu". W linijce szóstej pojawiło się słowo „pustym" (pustym parku), co jak sądzę, właściwie oddaje stan emocjonalny bohatera. „Pusty park" sugerować się zdaje stan osamotnienia, brak czyjejś obecności, podczas gdy „opustoszały park" oznacza po prostu park, z którego odeszli ludzie, psy itd. i jest zwykłym stwierdzeniem faktu. W wersie następnym mamy znów lekkie przekłamanie tekstu. Krople deszczu nie „lśnią", lecz „przylegają" (cling), co może być odczytane jako pragnienie zbliżenia się do kogoś i być subtelną, nieuświadamianą metaforą, wyrażającą pragnienie złączenia się z drugą istotą. W wersie dziewiątym pojawia się znów słowo „mijam" (podobnie jak w wersji A), co zdaje się świadczyć o podświadomym, a niewłaściwym rozumieniu tego wyrazu. Tłumacze nasi nadają konsekwentnie temu słowu inne znaczenie, niż je ma w istocie. Wreszcie w wersie dziesiątym mamy określenie „ledwie" (ledwie mogę cię dostrzec), co jest zdecydowanie lepsze od błędnego „nieśmiało spoglądam" w wersji A.

Wreszcie sam tytuł wiersza Zamknięty krąg wydaje się zbyt ryzykownym odczytaniem prostego w istocie wyrazu „confusion" (zakłopotanie, zmieszanie).

Wersja C

ZMIESZANIE

dla Nancy Shores

Mijam twój dom, gdy nastaje cynobrowy świt,
Opuszczone story, otwarte okna.
Łagodny wiatr znad jeziora
Jest jak twój oddech na moim policzku.
Cały dzień spaceruję, moknąc w deszczu.
W pustym parku zrywam cynobrowego tulipana,
Krople deszczu lśnią na jego płatkach.

O piątej jest samotnym kolorem w mieście.
Mijam twój dom, gdy zapada deszczowy wieczór.
Ledwo widzę, jak poruszasz się między oświetlonymi ścianami.
Późną nocą siedzę przed białą kartką papieru,
Aż opadły płatek drży przede mną.

W wierszu tym zbyt wiele jest skrótów myślowych, a także sporo przeinaczeń. W przeciwieństwie do poprzednich wersji tłumacz wystrzegał się upiększania przekładanego utworu, ale — jak sądzę — posunął się w tym za daleko. W rezultacie powstał wiersz ascetyczny, oszczędny. W porównaniu z oryginałem wersy uległy znacznemu skróceniu, i to niekoniecznie z powodu różnic pomiędzy językiem angielskim a polskim. (Nb. na ogół tłumacze polscy mają tendencję do rozbudowywania tekstu w stosunku do oryginału. Tutaj mamy proces odwrotny). Podobnie jak w wersjach poprzednich pojawia się wyraz „mijam" (mijam twój dom). Tłumacz zdecydował się na zwrot „n a s t a j e cynobrowy świt" (w wersji B: „cynobrowy podnosi się świt") i konsekwentnie zespolił go z określeniem „z a p a d a deszczowy wieczór" (w wersji B: „deszczem opada wieczór"). Zdaje się to świadczyć o podświadomym, a może świadomym, przynajmniej w części, oddziaływaniu ducha języka polskiego i jego klisz językowych. W wersie trzecim „łagodny" wiatr znad jeziora zdaje się nazbyt banalnym tłumaczeniem słowa „soft" (miękki, delikatny). „Cały dzień spaceruję, moknąc w deszczu" jest trochę bezsensownym przekładem odnośnej linijki oryginału. Opuszczono istotne słowo „intermittent" (przerywany), ilustrujące wyraziście topografię tego długiego dnia. Poza tym istnieje wyraźna sprzeczność logiczna między czynnością spacerowania, a więc czymś przyjemnym, relaksowym, a moknięciem w deszczu. Sprzeczność ta, nie zamierzona przez autora wiersza, pojawiła się tu niepotrzebnie i bez uzasadnienia. W wersie siódmym znów pojawiło się słówko „lśnią" w odniesieniu do kropli deszczu na płatkach kwiatów, nieobecne w tekście oryginału. Najwidoczniej w umyśle tłumacza (podobnie jak w innych wersjach) krople deszczu kojarzą się z połyskiem lub kolorem, a nie z dotykiem, przyleganiem. W wersie dziesiątym określenie „ledwo widzę" (I can see you faintly) nasuwa zabawne skojarzenia. Bohater utworu zdaje się mieć kłopoty z wzrokiem, niedowidzi! I wreszcie w linijce przedostatniej określenie „późną nocą" (late at night) ma znów charakter zbyt statyczny, określa czas, a nie stan ducha narratora. Lepiej byłoby przetłumaczyć ten passus jako „późno w noc".

Wersja D

ZAKŁOPOTANIE

dla Nancy Shores

Mijając twój dom wczesnym porankiem
Widzę zaciągnięte story i otwarte okna.
Lekki powiew wiatru znad jeziora

Jest jak twój oddech na moim policzku.
Cały dzień spaceruję bez celu w siąpiącym deszczu.
W opuszczonym parku zrywam niebieskiego tulipana,
A jasne krople padają na jego płatki.
O tej porze to samotny kolor w całym mieście.
Mijając twój dom w deszczowy wieczór,
Widzę cię niewyraźnie w oświetlonym wnętrzu.
Późną nocą siedzę nad kartką papieru,
A opadły płatek drży przede mną.

Ze wszystkich cytowanych wersji przekładowych wersja D jest chyba najbardziej prozaiczna. Tłumacz zrezygnował w ogóle z prób interpretacji utworu, jego upiększenia czy upoetyczniania. W rezultacie powstał utwór oschły, oszczędny, zarysowujący wyraziście sytuację ludzką. Nie byłoby w tym nic złego, gdyby nie to, że niejako wyparowała z niego wszelka poezja, a także pozostały liczne zafałszowania czy wręcz zmyłki. W wersie piątym np. tłumacz dodał niepotrzebnie słowo „bez celu" (nie ma go w oryginale) oraz przeinaczył określenie „intermittent" (przerywany) w coś wręcz przeciwnego — „siąpiący", a więc ciągły. Krople deszczu zyskały określenie „jasne", a słowo „cling" (przylegają) zastąpił wyraz „padają", co zupełnie wyeliminowało podskórny, delikatny podtekst emocjonalny (zob. uwagi do wersji B). Pozostałe linijki utworu charakteryzuje nadmierna rzeczowość, chwilami zresztą celna, np. linijka dziesiąta: „widzę cię niewyraźnie w oświetlonym wnętrzu". Tłumacz właściwie utrafił w słowo „niewyraźnie", opuszczając jednocześnie istotne określenie „w ruchu" (moving), sugerujące piękny obraz poetycki — osobę oglądaną z oddalenia, niewyraźnie, w ruchu, a więc jakby zamazaną, zamgloną.

Wersja E

NIEPOKÓJ

dla Nancy Shores

Mijam twój dom w powolnym cynobrowym brzasku,
Zasłony są zaciągnięte, okna otwarte.
Łagodny powiew od jeziora
Przypomina twój oddech na moim policzku.
Przez cały dzień spaceruję w nawrotach deszczu.
Zrywam cynobrowego tulipana w opuszczonym parku,
Błyszczące krople lgną do jego płatków.
O piątej w mieście jest to samotny kolor.
Mijam twój dom w deszczowy wieczór.
Widzę cię słabo, jak poruszasz się między oświetlonymi ścianami.
Późno w noc siedzę przed białą kartką papieru,
Aż opadły cynobrowy płatek poczyna drgać przede mną.

Jest to chyba najbardziej kontrowersyjny przekład ze wszystkich tu omawianych. Obok wcale inteligentnych prób odczytania tekstu mamy do czynienia z wyraźnie nie dopracowanymi miejscami. W linijce pierwszej mamy znów słowo „mijam", ale zaraz potem tłumacz, trzymając się wiernie oryginału, zachował wyraz „powolny" (slow); w wersie piątym odnajdujemy sensowne odczytanie zwrotu „intermittent rain" jako „nawroty deszczu"; pozostają „błyszczące" (!) krople deszczu, lecz nie eliminuje się słowa „poruszasz" (moving) w linijce dziesiątej. Zwrot „late at night" tłumacz słusznie oddaje przez „późno w noc", zachowując w ten sposób napięcie poetyckie, jakie zanikło w innych wersjach przekładowych. Pozostało jednak wiele miejsc nie dopracowanych, nie przemyślanych do końca. „Faintly" przełożono jako „słabo", co zresztą jest lepsze od bezsensownego „nieśmiało" (wersja A), „ledwie" (wersja B) lub zgoła niezrozumiałego „ledwo" (wersja C). Niestety pozostało „spaceruję" zniekształcające ogólną wymowę utworu, którego lejtmotywem jest właśnie całodzienna wędrówka po mieście. „O piątej w mieście jest to samotny kolor" jest nazbyt skrótowe i surowe. Niepotrzebnie też zastąpiono poetycko nośne „is" (jest) słowem „przypomina" (przypomina twój oddech). Mimo wszystko przekład ten zdaje się zapowiadać obiecującego tłumacza właśnie ze względu na wspomniane próby właściwego odczytania tekstu.

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Sądzę, że na podstawie tych uwag szczegółowych można już sformułować wnioski ogólne.

A więc przede wszystkim wydaje się, że niezależnie od obiektywnej wartości tłumaczenia w wyniku procesu twórczego powstanie zawsze utwór nieco inny, odrębny przy zachowaniu ogólnej wierności wobec oryginału. O odrębności przekładu decyduje m.in. temperament tłumacza, jego indywidualna wrażliwość oraz stopień znajomości języka.

Podobnie jak w wypadku wierszy rymowanych tłumacz może mieć wrodzone inklinacje do upiększania przekładanego wiersza, jego stylizacji według własnych kryteriów. Innymi słowy, może pokusić się o napisanie własnego utworu niejako na kanwie utworu przekładanego. Wiersz obcojęzyczny służy wtedy jako punkt wyjścia, rodzaj tworzywa literackiego, które przekładowca modeluje na swój własny sposób.

Taka interpretacja idzie najczęściej w kierunku upiększania utworu, jego upoetyczniania. W tym procesie wyraźna jest interferencja języka ojczystego i klisz językowych w nim funkcjonujących. Najczęściej są to zabiegi zbędne, gdyż tekst oryginału jest i tak wystarczająco poetycki bez tych zabiegów. Wskazane jest, aby tłumacz trzymał się wiernie oryginału, niejako przylegał do niego, wyszukując co najwyżej te punkty istotne, które przesądzą o wewnętrznym poetyckim napięciu wiersza. Wyszukiwanie takich właśnie słów lub zwro-

tów-kluczy, które w wierszu wolnym pełnią rolę podobną jak rymy w wierszu rymowanym, to najtrudniejsze i najbardziej odpowiedzialne zadanie tłumacza. Określenia te winny być przy tym przełożone wyraziście, gdyż przekład rozmyty, banalny może zniszczyć wartość całego utworu.

W przekładzie tzw. wiersza wolnego nic wolno sobie pozwolić na niczym nie usprawiedliwione opuszczanie poszczególnych wyrazów lub całych zwrotów. Utwory pisane wierszem wolnym są często krótkie, dlatego każdy wyraz się liczy, gdyż pełni ściśle określoną funkcję. Rezygnacja z poszczególnych słów może okazać się dla wiersza zabójcza. Unikać też należy dodawania czegokolwiek do tekstu.

Utwór pisany wierszem wolnym można porównać bardziej niż jakikolwiek inny do delikatnie ciętego kryształu. Jeżeli szlifierz zapomni wyryć cienką kreskę lub zadrży mu ręka przy pracy, piękno całego niemal już gotowego dzieła ulega skażeniu.

Na zakończenie warto by może zacytować jakiś literacki już przekład tego pięknego wiersza. Na szczęście utwór ten ukazał się drukiem w „Literaturze na świecie" (1983, nr 9) w dobrym tłumaczeniu Zofii Prele. Myślę, że tłumaczce udało się zbliżyć do oryginału i oddać wiele z subtelnej oschłości tego wiersza, dość typowego dla współczesnej poezji amerykańskiej.

NIEŚMIAŁOŚĆ

dla Nancy Shores

Przechodzę obok twojego domu w leniwym cynobrowym brzasku,
Story są zaciągnięte, a okna otwarte.
Delikatny wiatr od jeziora
Jest jak twój oddech na moim policzku.
Cały dzień tak wędruję w przerywanym deszczu,
Zrywam cynobrowego tulipana w pustym parku,
Jasne krople deszczu przywarły do płatków.
O piątej po południu to jest jedyny kolor w mieście.
Przechodzę obok twojego domu w deszczowy wieczór,
Widzę cię niewyraźnie, w ruchu między oświetlonymi ścianami.
Późno w noc siedzę nad białą kartką papieru,
Do chwili gdy nie zadrży przede mną opadły płatek cynobru.

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