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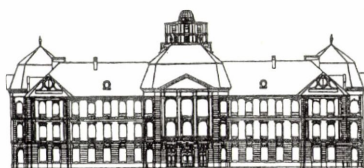
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EDITOR: LEHEL VADON



DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES
ESZTERHÁZY KÁROLY COLLEGE
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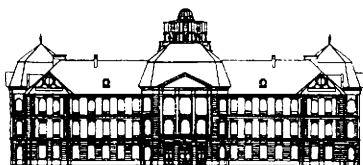
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CONTENTS

STUDIES

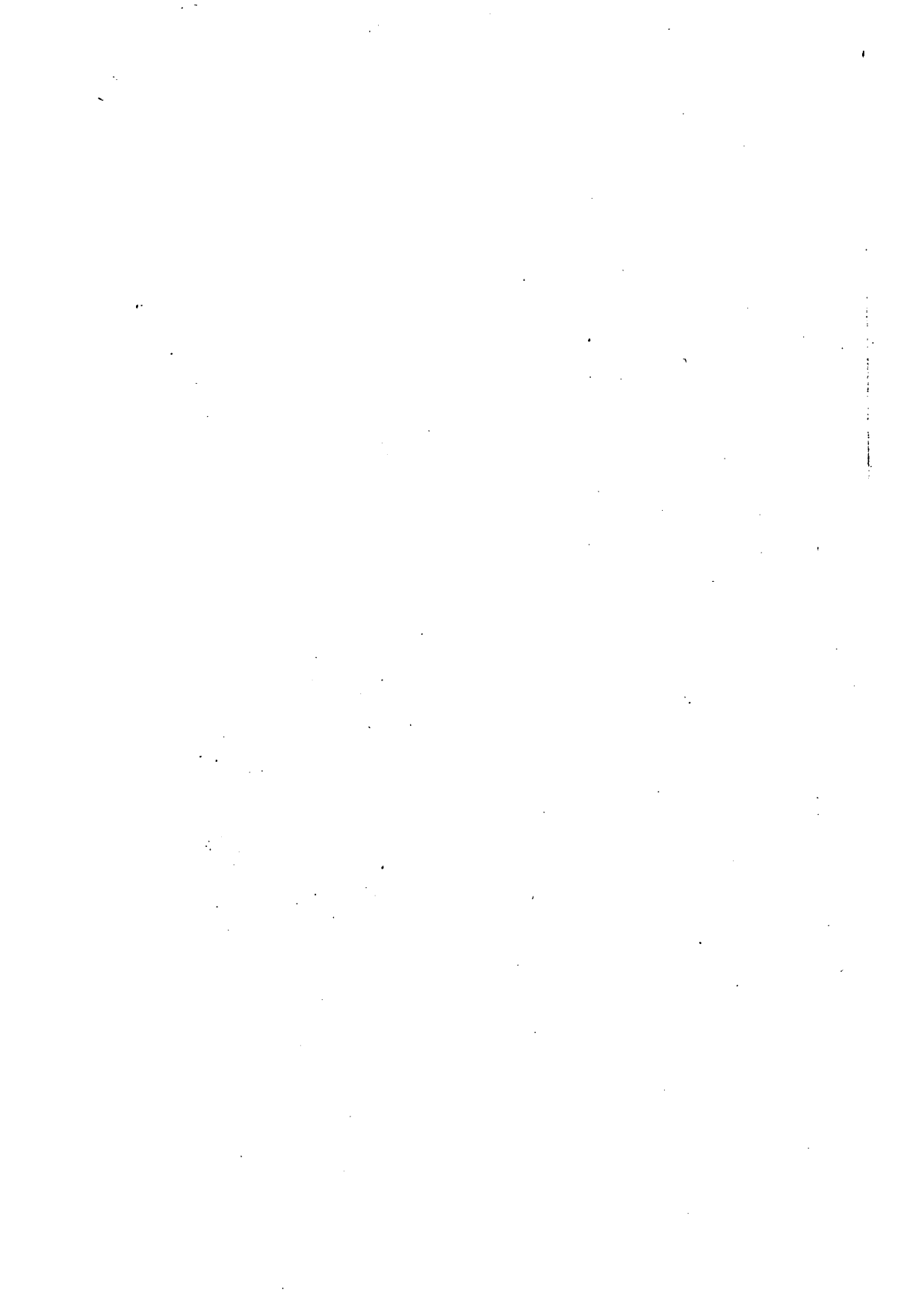
László Dányi: <i>The Eccentric Against the Mainstream: William Styron, 75</i>	9
Judit Ágnes Kádár: <i>Histories, Truths, Fictions. Interdisciplinary Relations of Historiography and Philosophy in the Context of Recent Western Canadian Fiction</i>	21
Lenke Németh: <i>David Mamet's Women Characters: Conceptions and Misconceptions</i>	37
Zoltán Simon: <i>The Image of Technology in Selected American Novels of the 1920's</i>	47
András Tarnóc: <i>Entropy and Ecstasy: The Dynamics of Human Relationship in Bernard Slade's Same Time Next Year</i>	61
Sándor Végh: <i>Adoption or Adaptation?: Interpretations of the Automobile</i>	75

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lehel Vadon: <i>The American Enlightenment: A Hungarian Bibliography</i>	91
Lehel Vadon: <i>James Fenimore Cooper: A Hungarian Bibliography</i>	137

BOOK REVIEWS

Péter Egri: Vadon, Lehel. Az amerikai irodalom és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiája a magyar időszaki kiadványokban 1990-ig [A Bibliography of American Literature and Literary Scholarship in Hungarian Periodicals till 1900]. Eger: EKTf Líceum Kiadó, 1997. 1076 pp.	179
András Tarnóc: Csillag András: Joseph Pulitzer és az amerikai sajtó. [Joseph Pulitzer and the American Journalism]. Budapest, Osiris Kiadó, 2000. 214 p.	185



CONTRIBUTORS

László Dányi, Assistant Professor at the Department of American Studies, Eszterházy Károly College, Eger, Hungary

Péter Egri, Professor at the Department of English Literature, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Judit Ágnes Kádár, Assistant Professor at the Department of American Studies, Eszterházy Károly College, Eger, Hungary

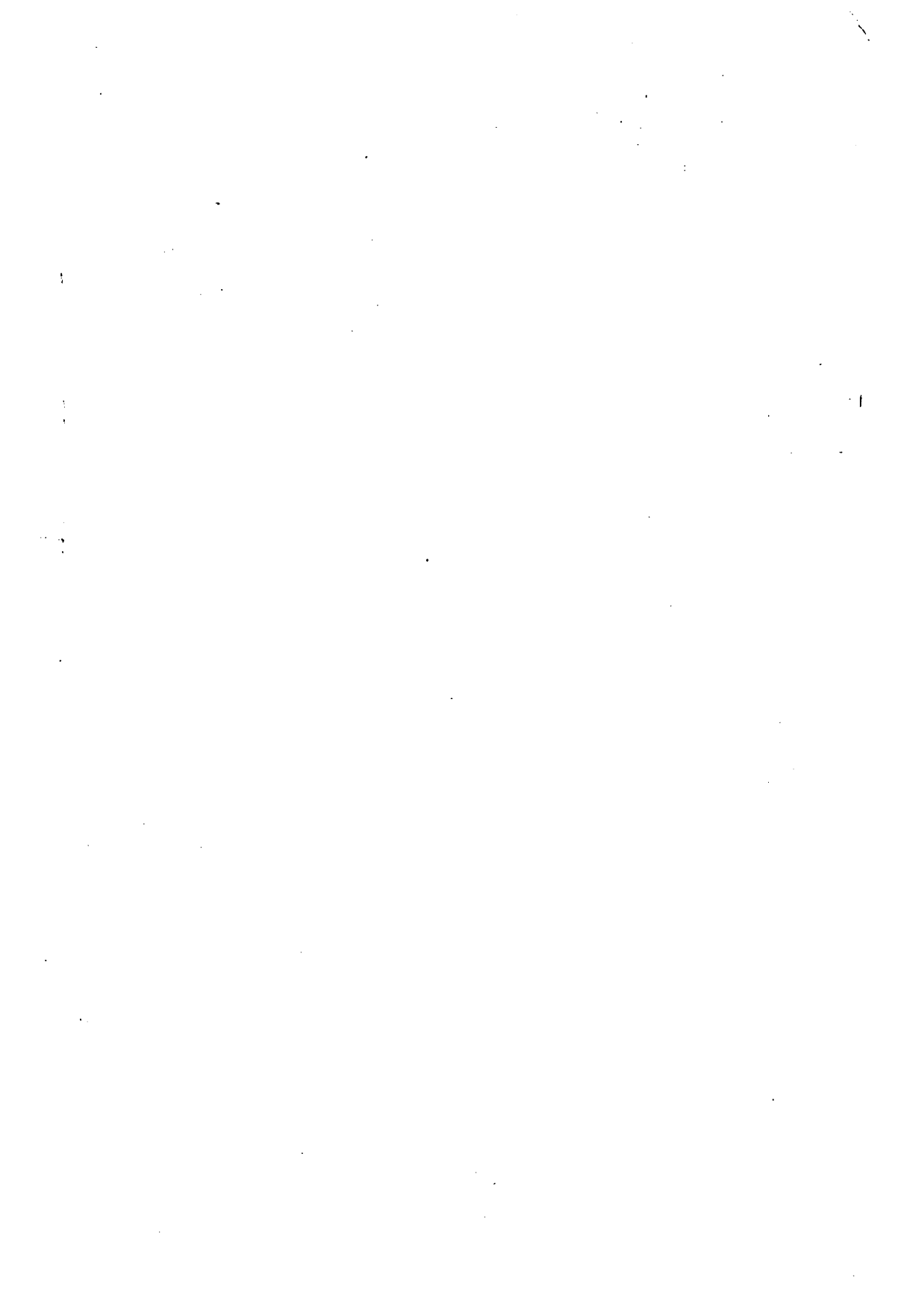
Lenke Németh, Assistant Professor at the Department of North-American Studies, University of Debrecen, Hungary

Zoltán Simon, Assistant Professor at the Department of North-American Studies, University of Debrecen, Hungary

András Tarnóc, Associate Professor at the Department of American Studies, Eszterházy Károly College, Eger, Hungary

Lehel Vadon, Professor at the Department of American Studies, Eszterházy Károly College, Eger, Hungary

Sándor Végh, Ph.D. student, University of Maryland, College Park, USA



EDITORIAL NOTE

The Department of American Studies at Eszterházy Károly College is pleased to present Volume VII of the *Eger Journal of American Studies*.

The *Eger Journal of American Studies* is the first scholarly journal published in Hungary devoted solely to the publication of articles investigating and exploring various aspects of American Culture. We intend to cover all major and minor areas of interest ranging from American literature, history, and society to language, popular culture, bibliography etc.

The journal welcomes original articles, essays, and book reviews in English by scholars in Hungary and abroad.

The *Eger Journal of American Studies* is published annually by Eszterházy Károly College.

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LÁSZLÓ DÁNYI

THE ECCENTRIC AGAINST THE MAINSTREAM:
WILLIAM STYRON, 75

William Styron (1925–) has simultaneously been considered as one of the most controversial and the most admired authors in the United States. He has always resisted swimming with the current of postmodernism, and even during the heydays of that ephemeral mode of writing he achieved unprecedented recognition by the reading public. Styron will celebrate his 75th birthday in 2000, and the coincidence of the two significant figures instantly invites the question of appreciation. The latest approach to Styron's work and life has been provided by James L. West III, who meticulously explored the multitude of dimensions that reveal the meaning and significance of Styron's art. So the unavoidable questions are: what comprises the Styron legacy for the generations of the 21st century, and what is the definition of the author's place, and what is his contribution to American literature? In the search for the answers to the questions, first, I will identify the major thematic patterns in Styron's works, then I will summarize major critical approaches to his oeuvre and explore the Faulknerian heritage in his novels.

What are the social icons that can be traced in Styron's works, and what are the major thematic patterns that constitute his novels?

The first of the novels is his poetically written *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951) which portrays a Southern family crumbling into bits in the shadow of the mixed Southern ethical inheritance. The characters who act out the tragedy of this family are Peyton Loftis, the daughter, whose suicide commences the meditation over the estrange-

ment of the family members from one another; Helen Loftis, the pious mother, who wastes all her love over her crippled daughter, Maudie; and Milton Loftis, the weak and alcoholic father adoring his daughter, Peyton.

The Long March (1953), a novella set on a Carolina marine base, juxtaposes men like Captain Mannix of more than average intelligence against the high-ranked authoritative representatives like Colonel Templeton of the senseless oddities of the military machine. Styron explores the role of moral authority in the military machine which oppresses the individual's desire to be free.

Styron's characters revolve around murder, rape and suicide in his *Set This House on Fire* (1960) which provides a Dostoevskian insight when seeking the source of evil in a universe without either God or the devil. An Italian village after World War 2 accomodates a Southern alcoholic painter, Cass Kinsolving, a naive Southern lawyer, Peter Leverett, and a cruel aristocrat, Mason Flagg, who embodies pure wickedness. Kinsolving's killing Flagg initiates the dilemma over crime, punishment and oblivion.

Styron has always had a strong commitment to the issue of slavery, and to the relationship between history and fiction. Stemming from the weltanschauung of a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant writer in the 1960s, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967) encapsulates the humiliations, cruelties and idiocy that constituted "the peculiar institution" which scars the common awareness of both blacks and whites. Through depicting Nat Turner's transformation into a self-conscious and visionary leader of blacks Styron discusses the issue of historical fiction versus fictional history.

Attempting to conduct the reader in the world of chaos and death, *Sophie's Choice* (1979) endeavors to speak about the unspeakable and the unimaginable. It introduces the reader to the horrors of the concentration camp machinery of Nazi Germany through the revelations of a Polish Catholic survivor, Sophie, whose tormented soul is unable to come to grips with the memory of having had to spare one of her children in the gas chamber, and who interacts with Nathan, a schizophrenic American Jew helping her in need, and with Stingo, the American Southerner striving to write his first major novel. Finally,

the novel sweeps us into the self-destruction of Sophie and Nathan, and leaves Stingo alive with the burden of the two characters' suicide.

The reminiscences of Styron's past experiences sound in *A Tidewater Morning*, (1993) which is a recollection of events in Paul Whitehurst's life during the Great Depression and World War 2. The three short stories set in Virginia's Tidewater country apotheosize the power of memory, and are haunted by the themes of race, death, authority and faith, and they recuperate the themes discussed in Styron's earlier works.

Three other works must be mentioned as being parts of Styron's oeuvre. The first is the author's non-fiction prose, *This Quiet Dust* (1982), which is a collection of previously published essays encompassing Styron's moral engagement. The second work is a play entitled *In the Clap Shack* (1952), which places a young recruit in the wretched world of a Navy hospital; and *Darkness Visible*, which addresses the effects of depression.

In interviews Styron speaks about a novel which he started writing before *Sophie's Choice*, and has not finished yet. *The Way of the Warrior* will intertwine two themes: the nascent fascism at a personal level, and the latent homosexuality in male individuals, and the dilemma of the novel will explore what happens when these two appear explicitly.

These are the works that are considered by Styron's critics, whose pendulum is continuously swinging between the iconic and the iconoclastic elements of the literary work when appreciating the author's oeuvre. Consequently, some praise the iconic elements and marvel at the beauty how the work fits into traditional thematic patterns, or the mainstream of the mode of writing of the given age, whereas some others despise the literary work for the same reason. William Styron's critique is no exception to this rule. The writer could not escape being compared to his Southern literary predecessor, William Faulkner, who left a heavy burden behind to the forthcoming generations of authors, as it is impossible for a Southern writer to avoid being contrasted to the Faulknerian mode of writing which established the Southern Literary Renaissance in the first half of the 20th century. In the summer of 1995, while on a study tour in the United States I conducted a conversation with Thomas Inge, the well-

known Faulkner critic, related to Faulkner's legacy in the writings of Southern authors, and he jovially remarked that Faulkner was like the Dixie Limited train—you had to get out of its way, otherwise you would be run over.

When Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* (LDD) was published in 1951 the Southern literary mode had been a distinguished tradition for some thirty years. Therefore when the book appeared it seemed to fit into this tradition. Critics thought that there was another good writer in the familiar Southern style, with another novel about Southern decay. They were eager to point out the Southern characteristic features in the novel, and they tried to prove that Styron followed Faulkner's footsteps and continued his legacy: "This guy was influenced by Faulkner: this guy is trying to write the way Faulkner tried to write. This is a burden ... it is a real burden" (Core 58–59). So Styron had to bear the weight of being called an heir to the Faulknerian heritage, and had to labor in the shadow of the colossus, however, there were critics like Malcolm Cowley who favorably reviewed Styron's usurping the Faulknerian style, rhetoric and concerns (Cowley 19).

In one of his essays Gunnar Urang finds Styron's fiction derivative and imitative because it sticks to the old-fashioned models of conveying characters and describing them through their interactions with each other and placing them into a traditional plot. He writes that Styron cannot delete his commitment to an ancient enthusiasm about character and story (Urang 183–209), and in his thematic structuring of stories he is a successor of great 19th century novelists like Flaubert and Melville. Flaubert had affected Styron's attitude to life, in his workroom he wrote the following quotation by the great French novelist: "Be regular and orderly in your life, like a good bourgeois, so that you may be violent and original in your work" (West 277).

In an interview by Esquire magazine Styron admits that most people think he writes "just a bunch of derivative trash", and he tries to deny this supposition and to escape Faulkner's shadow: "You can't spend your life living with a monument. If you're going to be a writer, you become a writer on your own terms and totally set yourself free from that influence" (Caputo 150). Interestingly enough, in another interview Styron asserts that it was not only Faulkner who inspired his

writing, but his writing, *LDD*, also had an impact on Faulkner's *The Mansion* (Cologne-Brookes 227).

Not only was the writer marked as a Faulkner follower, but he was also regarded as being akin to almost everyone except himself: "In his first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951), Styron seems strikingly derivative. He had read his Fitzgerald, his Warren, his Wolfe. Above all, he had read Faulkner, and so strong was that influence that on first reading it very nearly swamps the novel" (Lawson 479–480).

Most of the comparisons with the Southern literary mode have raised the issue of the relationship between imitation and originality, or tradition and innovation. For example, Styron's *Sophie's Choice* has been criticized for thematic weaknesses (Durham 449), and Richard Pearce also argues based on the aforementioned premises when he writes that Styron's heroes cannot reach the core of the problem in their search for meaning (Pearce 285).

These critics tend to see the novels as either too general or too specific and they tend to ignore the shift from the particular to the universal. The labels of parochialism, provincialism, regionalism, topicality, universality and cosmopolitanism have all been used and abused related to Styron's works. When esteeming *LDD*, Lewis A Lawson argues that "[o]n the personal level, it is certainly a Southern novel, but like any good Southern novel it is universal" (480), others like the Ten Black Writers who responded to Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* in the 1960s disparage the author's novel for the same reason.

The analysis of the motifs and the dimensions dominating the novels proves that the conventional requisites of particularity and universality convey new and different meanings. The novelty of Styron criticism has been to combine the regional and parochial Southern influences with the recognition of a "desire for a more complete literature to arise out of the South. That completeness, in this instance, relies on breaking away from the confines of the South" (Metress 309). Recent criticism broadens the scope of observation from the contemporary ideas of existentialism to the French "nouveau roman", and it focuses on the universal implications and dimensions of Styron's themes. The critics who are convinced that Styron's Southern commitment can be extended to universal aesthetic concerns

usually argue by considering a certain period of the writer's life, for example when he travelled to France, where he founded the Paris Review, and where he established his reputation as an American writer whose stature has been esteemed as highly as that of Victor Hugo, Balzac and Flaubert. Valarie Meliotes Arms writes the following about those years in the author's life:

He was pilloried at home when his third novel seemed to forsake the southern tradition, but abroad he was accepted as a serious writer. Gallimard published *Set This House on Fire* and reissued *Lie Down in Darkness*. The existential trappings of French philosophers, the intricate plot and well-developed characters made *Set This House on Fire* quite popular in France. (Arms 48)

While he received acclaim for his *Set This House on Fire* in France, in America Styron's decision to live and to write outside the South has perhaps fueled critical disagreement over how closely his fiction should be linked to a regional context.

In spite of the diversity of critical approaches to Styron's content and form, when trying to define Styron's place in contemporary fiction I share Zoltán Abádi-Nagy's opinion. His appreciation delineates the writer's oeuvre in relation to the multitude of influences that affected his writing. The critic concludes that Styron's style and mode of writing can be characterized by the traditional realistic approach to characterization traced in the works of Bellow, Malamud, Roth and Updike. He is an innovator of form concerning time-, perspective- and consciousness-techniques, and he inherited a lot from modernism and the stout representatives of Southern literature: Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe and Robert Penn Warren (Abádi 490).

Although I accept that in most cases what an author confesses about the way he writes, or why he writes, or why he employs certain elements in his work, or when he explains the meaning of his works is not a trustworthy clue to grasp the meaning of, or to interpret an author's oeuvre, a brief recollection of what Styron thinks about his art might provide a more shaded picture of his art. In a TV interview William Styron himself mentioned William Blackburn and Hiram Hayden as those two people who had had a great impact on his career by giving him advice, and the latter one by encouraging him to turn

towards the novel form instead of the short story. Styron was a promiscuous reader, and he read almost everything and everybody, but his favorites were Dickens, Melville, Flaubert and Faulkner, and he had not read any Henry James. He regarded *Madame Bovary*, *Moby Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn* as the three colossal works of world literature (Writer's Workshop).

In another interview conducted by Gavin Cologne-Brookes Styron asserts that Malraux, Orwell and Koestler dealt with issues similar to his, and he refutes his presumptuous opinion on Henry James assumed in the previous interview, and says: "your art will have some tiny but meaningful effect on this whole blindly mysterious process that we are all caught up in" (Cologne-Brookes 229). He also reveals that he does not care whether the literary work is postmodern, or not, the most important factor for him is to find some enjoyment in it, further on, when discussing John Barth's writing related to postmodernism he pronounces: "John Barth, to my mind, is a totally self-preoccupied writer, to the extent that he virtually lacks any interest for me" (Cologne-Brookes 214). He admits that reading Kierkegaard's, Camus' and Sartre's works contributed to shaping his existentialist views that provided a philosophical background to his novels.

So the question still remains: what is William Styron's place in contemporary fiction? What are those shades on the palette of contemporary American literature that show Styron's uniqueness? The long list of appreciation and Styron's remarks about his own art, and his comments on the influence of other authors and philosophers on him show compellingly how complex the question is and how difficult it is to esteem the writer's oeuvre. To find an answer to this question is even more complicated in the case of a contemporary writer, because it is always easier to judge an author in retrospect. The Styron oeuvre is still open, as for decades he has been working on a novel entitled *The Way of the Warrior*, which he started before *Sophie's Choice* and has not finished yet.

I cannot consider the opinion of posterity which usually boils down to throwing some authors into the box of the mainstream of literature by labeling them as 'major writers', and leaving some others on the shelf by attaching the label of 'minor writers' to them. I am convinced that the Southern background in Styron's works is not negligible. I do

agree with those critics who say that the South is a major source of inspiration for the writer. Elements of the culture of the South can be traced in all of Styron's works, as his novels are rooted in his southern soil, and the question here is how. Those critics who argue by saying that Styron is a universal writer also have the right to say so because I believe that Styron vocalizes general human concerns, general human needs that are expressed in a unique way from his pen, with his Southern background. So all in all my assumption is that Styron's books in their content are about these basic human conditions with general existential dilemmas of our 20th century living, however, his strong moral engagement, without implying that other writers outside the South cannot be morally engaged, links him to the very best traditions of the Southern Renaissance in literature, and to Faulkner. In all his novels there are characters who are from the South with all the cultural implications of this word. Then he, like most Southern writers, is concerned with a very strong sense of time, place, belonging to a culture and the endurance of the human spirit. These parallels with Faulkner are not only contextual, but formal as well. On the one hand his link to 19th and the beginning of 20th century writers, like Dostoevsky, Melville, Conrad and Flaubert is obvious, i.e.: there is a story line in his novels, the stories are inhabited by distinguishable characters holding character traits, having basic human striving to come to terms with the world around them and to find a *raison d'être*; his storyline is also similar to this traditional modernist way of writing, that is he wants to get from A to Z, he usually knows the beginning and the end, but he does not have a programmed plot. So the route between A and Z is not necessarily paved in alphabetical order and it makes it possible for Styron to use the stream of consciousness method, which is a link again to Faulkner too.

However, what differentiates Styron from the rest of the writers is that in his novels characters keep on struggling even after realizing the futility of quest for meaning, and enduring all hardships and manage to survive, and in novels where there are not Southern characters like *STHF*, *SC*, it is the Southern characters who survive. In Faulkner the stories are inhabited by Southerners and they are doomed to die, whereas here there is a palpably strong implication of optimism in the form of a survival for Southerners. And here we are again back at

Faulkner, and the Faulknerian heritage. In his form Styron goes back to Faulkner, because as I mentioned the modernist way of writing connects the two authors. Styron goes back to Faulkner in his rhetoric and style. The way he writes is also similar to Faulkner's in the way that he associates certain sensations with particular incidents. Images appealing to the senses—a smell, fragrance or vision or view—stir up memories and ignite the creation of the text.

So in spite of Styron's indebtedness to the Faulknerian decorum of writing there are differences as well between the two:

- the characters who inhabit the Styron novels are not only Southerners, or their background is not always Southern, they are not always linked to the South directly;
- in Faulkner's writing aesthetic formalism is the artistic means through which regional and social issues are conveyed, on the other hand in Styron's writing regionalism gains a different meaning;
- whereas in Faulkner's world the characters belong to dynasties and their lives can be traced for generations in the different novels, in Styron's novels the characters are not in a dynastic but in a familial relationship with each other;
- in Faulkner's novels the characters are doomed to failure because they try to act against the indifferent forces of history which crumbles and crashes them and they do not have any power to influence the monstrous and hostile powers of history, in Styron's novels history appears to be an inherent part of the characters' individual and personal stories, it is recaptured as the collection of personal histories, and Styron's characters are doomed to fall due to the failure of their personal histories. They are dangling characters who try to find links to each other and to their universe and they are on the run for trying to find the points of contact which is in most cases futile because of their tormented souls. However, Styron cannot fully escape from the image of the impersonal history, because in SC the military machine of Nazi Germany represents history but Styron realizes that the agents of that 'perfect' society are individuals.
- Faulkner created his imaginary Yoknapatawpha County and inhabited it with his own characters. Styron's regionalism is different from Faulkner's. His land is the Virginia Tidewater area,

which, in most of his novel, has the role of a starting and firm base point for the characters, not necessarily for Styron, rather than a life long time link to the land as place, or physical terrain. It is more like a spiritual terrain of the land which is not necessarily the Tidewater region, but in a more extended form the South itself. Even in his collection of short stories entitled *A Tidewater Morning* the reader might think that the stories will take him to that region which is partly true, but in other novels the characters leave this area and they act against it and for it as a spiritual terrain with its distinct cultural patterns. For Styron as a writer, the South is the background, and his novels are rooted in that place, but he manages to look back upon the South from a vantage point which is not necessarily in the South as a homogeneous physical and spiritual terrain. The existence of this vantage point allows him a certain detachment from the South, which does not mean that he is isolated from it. In other words in his literary career he leaves the Faulknerian notion of the regional South, and this shift in perspective allows him to view the South, the same land that Faulkner belongs to, from another new angle. And it gives its uniqueness to Styron's writing, because he belongs "neither to the Deep South sunk in its archaic doom nor to the Yankee blend of purposefulness and inferiority complex" (Kretzoi 121). So the long list of the appreciation of Styron's works shows that the author's works have proven to be the targets for exploring Freudian aspects, existential perspectives, Bakhtinian textual questions, narrative devices, the time technique and Southern cultural elements.

From the abovementioned it is unavoidable to conclude that the Souther cultural elements appear in Styron's works with such weight that they are iconological creations of the Southern consciousness. The existence and the presentation and representation of icons related to the South, and their transformations and manifestations in Styron's works prove that Styron, by recollecting, recuperating and modifying but not rejecting the Faulknerian mode of writing, managed to preserve Faulkner's and the South's legacy for posterity by creating his own iconology of the South.

Styron identifies and explores the major distinctive cultural parameters and patterns of the American South as they are represented

by images, emblematical representations and figures, and shows how the contemporary American Southerners cultural awareness is related to the aforementioned Southern icons. Styron adapts, transforms and creates icons that are disposed towards or/and against the iconology of the South, a major part of which was created by Faulkner.

In the 21st century the uniqueness of the writer's achievement will be assessed in the light of his Southern background. Styron's novels are historically situated and his characters culturally conditioned, at the same time I concede that the American ingredients of Styron's prose cannot be fully deduced from the writer's Southern legacy, not to mention the impact of obvious international influences.

The greatest achievement of the author is that superimposed on the general themes, his work defines the constituent elements of the distinct quality of the South as a cultural region; it formulates the principles of the Southern content and form; and achieves the fictional creation of the Southern ethos; and it establishes new fictional space for the iconology of the South; consequently, Styron's art will keep the Southern literary tradition alive.

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JUDIT ÁGNES KÁDÁR

HISTORIES, TRUTHS, FICTIONS INTERDISCIPLINARY
RELATIONS OF HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PHILOSOPHY
IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT WESTERN CANADIAN
FICTION

The problem of epistemological relativism is a major challenge for contemporary literature as well as for historiography and philosophy. In the following I am going to highlight this issue through investigating the relationship of historiography and historiographical meta-fiction. An examination of the ideas of some outstanding historians and the examples taken from recent Canadian literature might bring us closer to the understanding of their similar philosophical concerns. The literary texts that the investigations are based on are some novels by Rudy Wiebe, George Bowering, Robert Kroetsch and Jack Hodgins. A correlated aim is to provide a theoretical background to our readings; as well as it may illuminate the drives of some major characters, mostly historians, archaeologists, explorers, conquerors and settlers, who attempt to create myths of their own through univocal presentation / recording.

As for history, a basic problem historiographers have to face is the limitations of the scientific method and the debate over the role and aim of their investigation: whether the narration and/or explanation of past events within the fragmentary framework of any description should serve purely scientific purposes or should be regarded as just other fictions, different versions of various past experiences. The latter might mean the end of grand narratives, unifying myths, any totalitarian views in the relationship of man and human environment related to concepts about the past, too. As for literature, a similar

tendency to break with the limitations of previous ideas about the nature and function of the literary work of art can be observed. The distinction between *historie* and discourse is an important concern of contemporary literature, especially postmodern novels, though, as Linda Hutcheon argues, postmodern literature earlier was claimed to be ahistorical (*Poetics* 87). One of the main focuses of present-day literary criticism is the investigation of the difference between concepts that regard the mimetic functions of literature, the description and reflection of human environment, like Realism and Modernism in general, versus the contemporary (postmodern) interest in language as a creative power which can construct various worlds and which does not aim at reflecting anything directly, but suggests a different approach to our own many worlds instead.

Starting the investigation with the philosophy of history, it is well known that the question of the nature of historical writing goes back to the time of Quintilian, who treated history as a form of epic, while Heracleitus attempted to define the discourse of history. Cicero was the first to make a distinction between the mere chronicling of events and the literary production. Nietzsche viewed all products of thought ironically and reduced historical thinking "to the same fictional level as science and philosophy, grounding it in the poetic imagination along with these, and thereby releasing it from adherence to an impossible ideal of objectivity and disinterestedness" (White "Croce", 376). Another major step regarding this question was made by Benedetto Croce, who enunciated the notion of history as an art form. In the 20th century, a conservative trend of historiography seems to favor the idea that history writing is a monological system of explanation, while the more progressive trend tries to accept the findings of other fields of knowledge, such as philosophy and literature, and, to a different extent, accept the multiplicity of possible approaches and interpretations without questioning the seriousness of their scientific undertaking. Of course, the historian's confidence in his job is strong in the first case and some of the novels that belong to historiographic metafictional writing represent this state of mind. However, it is uncertain in the second case; interestingly enough this uncertainty factor is central for some characters and/or narrators in the novels, too.

Charles A. Beard, a historiographer of the so-called Progressive School of American history writing, was among the first historians who gave voice to their doubts concerning the univocal objectivity of the historian's job. In the 1930s he became interested in the question of historical (a philosophical sense: epistemological-) relativism. He advocated the fragmentary nature of historical knowledge and also investigated its nature and limitations, as he claimed: "no historian can arrive at more than a partial and biased version of the past. Each one is locked into a frame of reference" (Beard 480–1).

Similarly to historians' notion of the frame of reference, the contextuality of any texts—literary or scientific, especially the historical recordings of past events—is a central issue in historiographic metafictional novels, too. Central characters like Professor Pieixoto, director of the Twenty-first Century Archives in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the archaeologist William Dawe in Robert Kroetsch's *Badlands*, the narrator-historiographers of Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*, George Bowering's *Burning Water* and Jack Hodgins' *The Invention of the World*, are all seekers of a new narrative version of previously established myths. However, rigid scientific data-collection and recording may lead to biased presentation. Howard Zinn, the famous New Left historian, gives a strong criticism of academic historiography that seems to forget about humanistic goals, being blinded by the historians' orthodox professional concern and gathering data and facts only (see for instance: Henry Butterfield's concept of the so called technical history).

In these novels researchers of the past, the archaeologist or the explorer for instance represent the unwillingness of many scientists to abdicate their obsessions since they are inclined to uphold a myth that excludes the existence of others' truths. Gossman claims that the privilege of the historian is that "he alone can translate the confusing messages of the Other into language, therefore, can be the instrument of an orderly reconstruction and harmonization of society" (282). It is interesting to keep in mind this extremely high professional self-esteem when examining fictional characters like Pieixoto and William Dawe, the literary parallels of some historians, as presented in the following. It is a fundamental assumption in these novels that history and attempts to know and record the past within *one* particular system

of thought often fail to work and other versions (e.g. oral narratives and personal perceptions) call for a generally more liberal attitude in our perceptions and judgements, whereas History is reduced to just another approach of human experience, as David Carroll claims: "The question asked of history in the novels in fact produces no valid, uncontradicted responses—history in its dispersive multiplicity is continually falling back into fiction, unable to establish itself against fiction as the form of true discourse" (*Subject* 128). In my view, academic preoccupation with methodology versus humanistic considerations of value sound oversimplifying, since the question of methodology in the research of the past must involve social, philosophical, moral and psychological aspects as well. As Zinn sees it, the basic question is how history can serve man today, and the answer one gives will define the method, whether it should be more narrative or more explanatory.

In the last decades contemporary philosophers of history like Paul Ricouer, Hayden White and Timothy Donovan have introduced radically new perspectives in the study of the relationship between historiography and fiction writing. Donovan in his *Historical Thought in America: Postwar Patterns* (1973) changes the tradition of valuing objectivism over a subjective presentation of the past, stressing the historian's intuition related to the discontinuities of existence and fragmentary experiences, memory traces, as the most needed qualities in written history. This emphasis on the humanistic side of historiography opposed the data-collecting and rationalistic so called factography of the positivist historiographer and philosopher, Ranke's followers. Furthermore, that humanistic scientific scope brings us to the common ground of historiography and fiction writing explored by Ricouer in his three-volume *Time and Narrative* (1984, 1985, 1988), a key work of special significance. He unveiled the fact that language is an element of primary relevance in both narrative versions, fiction and written history. He also called historians' attention to the recognition of their authority implied through the language of their narratives (just like in fiction), naturally involving the questions of power and ideology present in narratives. Ricouer focused on narratology and the problem of reference (fictional/imaginary worlds) in the comparison of these two fields. Hayden White's poetics of historiography

(*Metahistory* [1973], *Tropics of Discourse* [1978] and *Content of the Form* [1987]) are closely related to Ricouer's ideas. He explores the poetic construction nature of history writing and explains phenomena like encodation and emplotment, i.e., the conscious selection and arrangement of historical traces, extending Ricouer's notion of the utmost priority of language in historical discourse.

Carl F. Becker, another Progressive historian following Beard's relativism, tried to define the motivating factors and aim of history writing, a central issue in the novels associated with historiographic metafiction. He made a distinction between the so-called *actual* and *ideal* history, the first marking is absolute and unchanged, the second dwells in "the memory of things said and done" (Becker 22). Since the object and method of remembering are determined by the historian's idea of himself, of what he is doing in the world and of what he hopes to do (Becker 29), history writing is subject to presentism. "History is ... that pattern of remembered events, whether true or false, that enlarges and enriches the collective spacious present of Mr Everyman" (34). Becker pointed out the creative and individually determined nature of the historian's job and the "unstable pattern of remembered things" (35) that also gains relevance in current concepts of literature—examined later on.

In the 1970s the movement called New Social History gave a radically new definition of history and diverted the interest towards the experience of man in the street, consequently, towards new sources of data like private narratives, new methods like census research, new questions of power and authority, altogether: away from the conceptual monoliths other historians preferred to work with previously. An interesting parallel exists between the search for new, marginal resources in historiography and the similar tendency in historical fiction (especially historiographic metafiction) of turning to marginal issues and resources—a priority in nowadays Canadian culture, too.

A collection of articles published under the title *The Vital Past: Writings on the Uses of History* (1985) included manifestos in defense of history. Lester D. Stephens claims "history is one vital dimension of our reality, however, and it can aid us to appreciate our humanity, ... [can] provide us with a sense of being, ... [and can enable us] to

acquire a more realistic identity... and to satisfy our cravings for continuation as human beings" (100). H. J. Hanham emphasized the manifold nature of the historian's job, since he must be a natural story-teller, a poet, a philosopher, a biographer, a scientist and a politician, too (Hanham 65). The circumstances and the purposes of his writing will decide which one dominates his tone and method.

Having a look at Canadian historiography, it seems that the majority of earlier historiography in Canada was devoted to either the concept of achieving political nationhood, basically meaning the study of treaties and conferences that shaped the nation's fate in the face of White documents, or to the environmentalist approach represented by for instance Harold Innis, which meant the study of the East-West or the urban-rural axis, essentially the splits defining Canada. History writing before the 1920s about Western Canada, for instance, was devoted to the uniqueness, frontierism and the strong sense of regional identity of the West, whereas this vision was gradually altered with the harsh climatic image enforced during the 1930s. Later on the political and economic hinterland image became popular (e.g. D. Francis and J. M. S. Careless), a vision that westerners have to get rid of themselves. Regionalism in its contemporary interpretations establishes a closer interrelation of geography, history and literature, where the subjective inner mindscape of the observer comes into the foreground and creates more valid approaches than the previous ones.

Correlative ideas guide some major trends in literature today, too. Writers of the genre of historiographic metafiction explore much the same philosophical concerns, especially the epistemological question of How shall I interpret this world? In most texts the authors treat the past and the historical remembering of past events in an ironic way, which means that they present the different efforts to impose order on chaos—seemingly of past events and memories, but virtually of conceptualizing the world. In an ironic manner they suggest the writer's own uncertainties and counter-reactions against any authoritarian ways of thinking. Becker detected similar tendencies in history, too, as he writes: "Every generation, our own included, will, must inevitably, understand the past and anticipate the future in the light of its own restricted experience, must inevitably play on the dead whatever tricks it finds necessary for its own peace of mind" (35).

This 'play on the dead' is developed into a concept of a whole genre. In her thesis Laura E. Moss writes: "Historiographic metafiction differs from traditional historical texts on one hand by the emphasis placed on the metafictional process of reading, writing, and interpretation, and on the other hand, by the political agenda of rewriting an inclusive history in a fictionalized form" (3). Hutcheon gives a detailed analysis of the way writers attempt to create different approaches to the past in this genre. She claims that writing history (or historical fiction) has an equal status with fiction-writing due to their common methods of selection and interpretation ("Historiographical" 66). The latter methods bring together the two disciplines. According to White, history is accessible only in a textualized form and the job of both historians and novelists both need emplotment strategies of exclusion, the emphasis and subordination of the story-elements (*Metahistory*, 6). Another link between the two fields seems to be what Gossman defines as the Other, the primitive, alien, the historical particular.

As for novelists, the cult of seeking the discourse of the Other, and the distrust of monomyths i.e. Dialogism seems to be a major interest today. In the context of Canadian historiographic metafiction it has a special relevance, since it opens up the monologue of a limited perspective narrator to the endless versions of stories told and breaks the tyranny of one's narrative. The discourse of the text contrasts the different approaches and representations of the past. This Other might be interpreted as other voices within a text, including possible voices from the past, as well as the reader as the Other with whom the writer is creating the story in the course of a dialogue.

Recent Canadian fiction seems exemplary to present the special relationship between history and literature today, particularly because the Canadian national psyché seems sensitive to the search for a usable past. This kind of fiction provides a special way of rewriting and (re-)creating the past in a self-consciously auto-referential and intertextual fashion with the purpose of questioning certain authoritarian approaches to knowledge. Bowering describes the peculiar situation of Canadian fiction that is closely related to history writing in his essay entitled "A Great Northward Darkness: The Attach on History in Recent Canadian Fiction," where he calls the

general state of mind of Western Canadians Being West of History (13). In his view Canadians in general worry about being invisible for historic and political reasons. The result of their search for roots is different from that in the past. For instance Hugh MacLennan's one-dimensional, realistic way of describing the past for the creation of a national consciousness opposes Wiebe's and Atwood's efforts to involve orality and other narrative versions of past experience somehow in their fiction; moreover there are fundamental differences of historical presentation in Central (Easter) and Western Canada.

A basic subject, method and characteristic feature of these novels is the opposition of written history and orality, realist and modernist efforts (data-collection and reconstruction of events pretending there is only one possible truth) versus postmodern experiments to provide a multiplicity of perspectives that leave us certain questions unanswered and stories open-ended. Following J. Lyotard and the Post-structuralists in literature and philosophy, Kroetsch, Bowering and some other leading Canadian literary critics and writers tend to use the previously mentioned anti-closure strategies, i.e. multiple perspective narratives, dialogism, open-ended stories and the uncertainty of telling, along with the implied epistemological relativism. The overall aim is to dis-close the so called tyranny of narrative, to acquire freedom from the binds of unifying grand narratives given by the state, myth or religion, to create alternative histories through pushing the reader into epistemological and ontological doubts to show the necessity of a more tolerant way of thinking.

The philosophical state of being west of History denotes Canadians' different concept of life as opposed to the European imagination as well as their "need to come to terms with their roots or ancestors," as another critic, Dick Harrison sees (*Unnamed* 183) and rediscovers the past in the course of retrospective fiction, "because it has been somehow misinterpreted, ... [bound by the] domineering colonial constrictions" (*UC* 184). Harrison adds that "Canadians' particular kind of national schizophrenia stems from a disparity between the historical and the mythic shapes given to their experience" (210). As it is known, the European linear concept of History is rejected in contemporary Canadian imagination, fiction and

history writing included. Bowering's view falls in with Harrison's when saying:

Novelists who believe that history is a force or a law tend toward realism and naturalism—Zola, Dreiser, Hugh MacLennan. They believe that history speaks and teaches. Fiction writers who believe that history is someone's act of narrative tend toward myth and invention—Conrad, Borges, Robert Kroetsch. History comes from an old European word meaning possession of knowledge. Fiction comes from an old European word meaning the act of shaping. (Bowering "A Great Northward" 3)

This fictional act of shaping provides an opportunity to shape the past through retelling stories in the course of historiographic metafiction. The relationship between history and fiction must be explored as well, "fiction of the historians and other fictions" with an "ironic awareness of the storyteller's own creative tendency to shape the past" (*UC* 184). Obviously, here the concept of history is not that much affiliated with scientific fact gathering about the past or the univocal presentation of memory traces but rather with a multiple perspective by the retelling of myths and legends: the creation of histories, truths and fictions—all in the plural.

Other critics like Davidson, or writers Bowering and Kroetsch emphasize the distinctness of the Western Canadian notion of history present in literature that is accentuated powerfully by contemporary fiction, as opposed to that of other regions and previous periods of Canadian literature. This distinctness—according to Harrison—comes from the fact that "Westerners tend to have rather an apocalyptic sense of time, to situate [themselves] in relation to the gigantic movements of Christian history of the world—creation, the fall, redemption, the apocalypse" (*UC* 190). This sense of time is "cyclic, eternal in its periodic repetition of day, season, generation, but it also shows the encroachment of the linear time of the new industrial society" (*UC* 191). Kroetsch explains the particular Western Canadian sense of time and concept of history as follows: "No, the West doesn't think historically. If the West accepted history, then its whole relationship to the country would have to change radically. I don't think that the West wants to move into a historical role, or to accept history. Myth is more exciting" (Neuman 134).

Another distinctive feature of recent Western Canadian writing is the special sense of space, the special relationship between sense of time and sense of place; as Bowering explains: the transformation of history (his-story) into her-story and his geography ("A Great" 9). It denotes providing other versions and interpretations of the past from gender and ethnic perspectives and presenting the typical white male quest for the layers of time in stories of un-layering the ground either as archaeological search, meaning a vertical quest, or as discovery / settlement / conquest of the land, denoting a horizontal one. In the West, as Bowering adds, "the layers are layers of earth rather than tiers of written records" ("Great" 19). This un-layering of time and space is located in new forms of the Canadian Western. In Margaret Laurence's fiction the central characters are victims trying to free themselves from the past. These novels present the need to examine the past critically but on its own terms, which means "a new awareness of traditional values rather than a radical rearrangement of them" (Harrison 204). However, a new step introduced by her in the development of Western Canadian historical novel is the discontinuity of memory as a post-realist tendency. Her characters, like Hagar Shipley and Stacey Cameron, keep telling their memories in a narrative that is frequently interrupted by either their own inner thoughts and feelings, or by impulses coming from their environments.

Contemporary novels are motivated by archaeology in the Foucault-ian sense of the layers of land (geography, region) and in the layers of time (history), both central ideas in these kind of novels. Archaeology in the literal sense of the word is the central motif in *Badlands*. William Dawe's journey, un-layering, digging down in layers of prehistoric time parallels his daughter's pursuit of archaeology to find the fragments of her father's past and self-created myth, her archaeology in the layers of time and stories in a more abstract sense. Journey on the land is a general motif in most writings referred to as historiographic metafiction, it denotes the dynamic version of the vertical-man-in-horizontal-world scheme (Ricou's term). Here the horizontal movement of man into the environment is un-layering space with different purposes such as exploration, discovery, mapping and/or conquest—different names for the same quest for something deeper located at the core of human identity and

understanding. Of course the journey theme always has an Odysseyan implication. In *Burning Water* the above mentioned exploration and mapping theme coexists with un-naming, i.e., erasing previous names for land objects and then renaming them as a means of putting claim for possession. Becker's contemporary interpretation of Vancouver's story un-tells the older version of history, just as Anna Dawe's act of un-telling in *Badlands*. In *The Invention of the World* Kenneally's establishment and proclamation of a settlement, foundation of a community and creation of a usable past based on unifying myths and legends for that community are counterparted by Becker's unlayering these communal myths and legends and investigating other versions of the same story. These fictions present various quests for the past as a typical way of, on the one hand (re-)creating identity, and, on the other hand, conceptualizing the world, i.e., imposing a new order on the chaos of reality: by extending the chaos and using imagination—fantasy, vision, myth and mystic elements.

Discontinuity introduced by Laurence, is accompanied by a new multiple voice technique in Wiebe's novels, mainly in *The Temptations of Big Bear*. The writer reveals the tension between the cultural awareness and discourses of the dominant culture and the politically and culturally intruded aboriginal culture. The previously voiceless as a possible alternative perspective here is the Indian who is treated with a kind of romantic primitivism, similarly to W. O. Mitchell's in *The Vanishing Point*, another book to appear in the same year (1973). The romantic primitivism of the Indian is present in Kroetsch's *Gone Indian*, too, but here he introduces irony as a central agent to "juxtapose mythical and historical realities of prairie experience" (Harrison 204). Kroetsch's novels are generally parodies of the myth of creation, quest for origins and un-naming fathers, where he "creates a prairie past by drawing its legendary or mythic forms closer to immediate, local experience" (Harrison 212). Multiple voice technique characterizes William Dawe's own heroic quest story noted down in his diary, challenged by his daughter's way of telling the same story as well as by another character, Anna Yellowbird, Dawe's Indian mistress. Kroetsch "replaces history's paradigm with that of archaeology" (Bowering "Great" 14). In the novels of Bowering and Hodgins novels the Vancouver and the Kenneally

legends are reshaped by a number of voices from both the past and the present. Here the treatment of historical recordings and the approach of the past is very similar to those in Kroetsch's fiction. Regarding this respect, important common features of the novels of Kroetsch, Wiebe, Hodgins and Bowering are the analogous attitudes of the central characters to the land and their psychologically resembling personalities.

As for the second, the personalities of the central characters denote a special reference to the different aspects of history as a science. As Kroetsch says: "Western has too readily served to universalize highly ambiguous and even morally reprehensible local events—conquest, imperialism, Manifest Destiny, destruction of the environment, particularly racism and other exercises in domination and control" (Davidson 82–3), i.e. different names for heroism. Seeking control over one's environment as well as over one's own self is embodied in various subtypes according to the motivations of the central characters in the dominant narratives and the reinvention of the original stories. These subtypes apparently seem to follow certain paternal patterns. In *Burning Water*, in *The Temptations of Big Bear* and even in *Beautiful Losers* a historical or mythic personality (founding father) is reinvented in the course of the novel, while *The Invention of the World* presents the reinvention and/or erasure of communal myth of origins (religious father). Other novels like *Badlands* or *The Diviners* reinvent personal past experiences and myths of those in parental relations (genetic father), whereas the image of the Other (natives, immigrants, exiles) is reinvented for example in Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, in Wiebe's *The Temptations of Big Bear*, in Kroetsch's *Collected Works of Billy the Kid* or in Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*.

Conclusion

A major theme of all novels related to historiographic metafiction in the special Western Canadian context is the de-centering of the so-called grand official narratives widely accepted and spread by the shapers of public opinion. Bakhtin's idea of resistance through literature (i.e., the decision of un-telling the grand narratives) brings this branch of arts back to its pre-modern function, and refuses modern claims for the non-referential concept of the novel that did not

acknowledge the role of contextual forces in shaping the literary texts. The mistrust of grand narratives is expressed and accomplished in these novels by certain anti-closure strategies, a general tendency working actively in the texts challenging the traditional beliefs in unity, totalization, origins and endings, consciousness and human nature, ideas of progress and fate, truth and representation, causality, linearity and temporal homogeneity of historical knowledge, following Hutcheon's list in her seminal essay entitled "Historicizing the Postmodern: The Problematizing of History" (*Poetics* 87–104). The term anti-closure strategies denotes fictional means like untelling, un-naming, de-mythifying what previously was interpreted as the only possible version of the past, History as such; and these strategies tend to include the descendant narrator's rejection to follow the chronological and univocal presentation of past events, too. Williams claims: "Freed into speech, narrative can now avoid the tyranny of temporal progression (story as history) and the rigid control of myth (story as universal pattern). It offers only itself in the act of telling, free of any other inheritance, resisting both determination and interpretation" ("After" 264-5).

However, the creation of alternative narrative versions of the past human experience, i.e., alternative histories, also questions the validity of grand narratives. The latter relies on the fact that since the "past is provisional, discursive, historicized" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 149), history, a narrated version of past events accepted as *facts*, is subject to textualization. As Julia Kristeva explains: "what this narrative fiction constructs as material truth, or as a deformation of 'historical truth', is the *plausible evolution*, not of an *event* of historical reality, but of a *process* that creates the ('historical') advent of logic: the process of separation" (Moi 223). The synchrony of equally valid textual traces of the past appears both in certain trends of contemporary history- and fiction writing. The closely related job of the novelist and the historian is based on their shared emplotting strategies, i.e. the selection of events being raised to the status of facts, exclusion, subordination and emplotting—techniques analyzed in detail by historians like White, Ricouer or by critics like Hutcheon. These strategies lead to the creation of histories, truths and fictions, all

in the plural, within the frame of the novel, consequently degenerating any claim for one unifying or totalizing version.

There is always a certain epistemological doubt involved in these texts. Narrative confidence is shaken and the reader may only rely on the narrator's assumptions regarding the subject of his/her story: whether it is reality, or at least, what s/he would like to believe. One always has to ask: who says that?, which indicates that the reader is expanded. He might even start wondering if he is an object or subject in/of telling the story (though in Canadian literature this doubt does not seem to lead up to panic or despair, rather to excitement); while the narrator's traditional omnipotence is restricted. The reader does not necessarily have to be told about details, for it is enough to remind him of what is in his memory. The discourse has a poliglossia nature, where the reader supplies the other side to language, creating his own version of alternative histories. The questions central to all participants of the discourse of the novel are: 1/ "Whose history survives?" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 120); 2/ to what extent are we influenced by the official canon; 3/ what kind of power-relations control telling and the selection of events made facts. The latter draws further ideological issues of freedom versus totalitarianism and fundamentalism of any kinds analyzed first by Foucault, as well as the mistrust of the scientific world view and judgement. An overall implication of these literary works is pluralism and tolerance in terms of ideology as well as narratology. The reader is made aware of the extent to which he is influenced by the existing official narratives determining his concept of present and past life. He is also made to realize the method of those trying to impose certain ideas on others, narrowing the control and choice of the individual. However, by the same token, it also opens up new possibilities of further interpretations, or, at least, the claim for them.

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LENKE NÉMETH

DAVID MAMET'S WOMEN CHARACTERS: CONCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

In an interview over a decade ago David Mamet observed: “[w]hat’s missing from modern life is spirituality—the connection to the greater truths of the universe. What is missing is the feeling of knowing our place and a sense of belonging” (qtd. in Nuwer 10). Indeed, the loss of spirituality seems to pervade the totality of his dramatic output. Surfacing in his plays to varying degrees, the spiritual emptiness is a haunting presence in the characters’ conversational dissonance, in their fragmented, disjointed, and incomplete utterances, as well as in the abusive language they use to conceal their innermost feelings.

The spiritual void “plaguing” Mamet’s plays finds its most blatant manifestation in the “demythitized” way that women are treated and presented in his dramatic works. Typically, Mamet’s “women characters are either absent or presented as natural disturbers of the male order” (Radavich 123). When women characters are on stage, it is the “language of contempt, hatred, and dehumanization that is insistently allied to matching attitudes toward women” (Jacobs 167). With reference to women, the male characters invariably use highly abusive words, ranging from slurs such as “bitches,” “broads,” and “inanimate objects” to “chicks” and “dykes.” The stance that critics take of Mamet’s female characters is far from being flattering either: Joan in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (1974) is “cynical” (Richards 5); Karen in *Speed-the-Plow* (1987), Dr. Ford in *House of Games* (1987), and Carol in *Oleanna* (1992) are “manipulative, monochromatic

heroines" (qtd. in Mufson 11); Donny in *The Cryptogram* (1994) is labeled as "narcissistic" (Lahr 73).

Apparent even from the brief selection of comments cited above, Mamet's female protagonists have baffled male characters and critics alike. Whereas a large bulk of Mamet criticism has predominantly focused on the most obvious aspects and themes in Mamet's drama (the decline of American myths, the decay of American idealism, the prevalence of corruption and venality in business, the degradation of business ethic into deception and betrayal, the loss of American Dream and frontier spirit), the few critical inquiries devoting scant attention to his female characters have produced one-dimensional and somewhat distorted images of women. I contend that these reductive explanations stem from what has been unduly overlooked so far: Mamet's heroines defy usual character typologies. The conventional clichés, archetypal paradigms or other patterns of classification that allocate women the roles of mother-wife-lover, Magna Mater-Virgin-Seducer-Bitch, the virgin and the whore, lose their validity in Mamet's world. Essentially, the female protagonists in Mamet's plays undermine and debunk the stereotypical roles sanctioned to them by patriarchy. Disrupting and subverting male dominance and superiority, the women *carnivalize* the male-dominated world, whereby they expose its prejudices and corrupt practices, as well as oppose the patriarchal modes of the objectification of women and the negation of their subjectivity.

In an attempt to dispel some of the misconceptions about Mamet's women characters, in the present paper, I will highlight how Mamet is mapping the displacement of women's socially and culturally prescribed roles. I argue that M. M. Bakhtin's concept of "parodying doubles" (*Problems* 127)—a literary device whereby a leading hero has several doubles who parody him in various ways—can serve as an appropriate analytical tool to illuminate certain aspects of the representation of women in Mamet's plays. Accordingly, the female characters assume the role of "parodying doubles" in the sense that they parody their male counterparts by emulating male role models and discourse, thus, the women characters expose the tenuous grounds that male phallocentric power is based on, and also lay bare corrupt patriarchal practices. In light of this assumption, it is precisely through

the women protagonists that Mamet actually offers a profound critical angle on an America that is falling apart.

With reference to a corpus of six plays and one screenplay by Mamet, I will demonstrate the “parodying double” role of the women characters. Based on a tendency of rendering the women characters with increasing subtlety over the past few years, Mamet’s dramatic output lends itself to a division into periods. Thus, I distinguish three phases: the early plays in which the women are treated as objects of male desire; the second stage of the so called “business plays” with the appearance of a “new woman” who does not merely challenge but also subverts male dominance; and finally, “family plays” with women situated in a domestic environment. The three stages I propose come to full circle in terms of the sites where the women characters’ lives unfold: there seems to be a movement from the private realm of life into the public and a shift back again to the private domain. Also, the three phases testify significant shifts in the author’s gender focus.

The first phase extending from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s includes predominantly all-male cast plays such as *Lakeboat* (1970), *The Duck Variations* (1976), *A Life in the Theater* (1977), *American Buffalo* (1975), *Glengarry Glen Ross* (1983); also, plays where women appear only as sex objects of male desire as in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*, *The Woods* (1977) or are simply family members as in *Reunion* (1976).

Even in the early plays with women characters in them, *Chicago* and *The Woods*, the apparently stereotypical female protagonists debunk conventional sexual roles ascribed to them by patriarchal society. Through the subversion of a former male-centered sexual myth, “[t]he birthright priority whereby males rule females” (Millett 25), the women characters expose their traditional role as objects of male perception and desire. They revolt against being treated as sex objects by, ironically, objectifying their male counterparts. In *Chicago*, two woman characters act as the “parodying doubles” of Bernie, a loudmouth male chauvinist who keeps bragging about his sexual performance. A nameless off-stage woman character and Joan, one of the on-stage women protagonists, adopt male role models in their acts and discourse whereby they expose and challenge the male prerogative to sexually subordinate women. The objectification and

negation of *male* subjectivity is exemplified in the hasty sexual intercourse the *anonymous* woman has with Bernie. *She* brings it home to him that *he* is just as *unimportant* to her as she is to him. Joan, on the other hand, subverts the verbally abusive level of sexuality in her encounter with Bernie in a singles' bar. She refuses to act out the role of a sex object and to employ any subtle feminine strategies to stifle Bernie's sexual advances. Instead she tells him point blank: "I don't find you sexually attractive" (20). In *The Woods*, Ruth treats Nick as an object whom she tries to win and *buy* with her endless talk and gifts, whereas Nick, feeling trapped by her importuning him for commitment, turns mean, violent, and finally he rapes her.

In the second phase, which I date from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, Mamet considerably departs from his pattern of marginalising women characters in his works. The novelty of portraying women in *House of Games*, *Speed-the-Plow*, and *Oleanna* lies in two facts: first, the women protagonists embody a new type of woman who challenges and even subverts male power and authority in public places of life; second, closely linked to the previous one, these characters act as autonomous human beings located outside their domestic environment. The unconventional portrayal of the women protagonists of these plays, however, engendered more debate than acclaim. These heroines' violence and arrogance toward their male counterparts as well as the seemingly ungrounded shifts in their acts and discourse created a huge stir and puzzlement at the time these plays were produced. Through the lense of the "parodying double" role of the women, however, the conflicting interpretations concerning the female protagonists' behavior can be conveniently resolved. Thus, their sudden metamorphosis—a most frequently attacked aspect—is nothing else but a hyperbolic emulation of certain sides of the male characters presented in the plays.

In fact, in "doing business" with their male counterparts, all the women characters mimic male practices. Human and business relations are equally built on and motivated by deception and betrayal. For instance, adopting strategies of cunning and betrayal, Karen, the secretary in Bobby Gould's Hollywood studio in *Speed*, *plows* her way to secure her position in the film industry. Yet, she employs

exactly the same modes of deception to get a job for herself as Gould has used to con *her* into believing that he needs *her* perceptive opinion about a new film script. Being fully aware of the fact that in patriarchal society “her value resides not in her own being but in some transcendental standard of equivalence (money, the phallus)” (Moi 141), Karen capitalizes on her “exchange value” and uses her sex to obtain the job. She deceives and manipulates Gould into believing that she acts out of pure love and with the intention of saving his soul. However, she attains merely a temporary victory over her male counterpart. Because she admits her real intention to Gould and his business associate, she is not yet allowed to enter the male world. Paradoxically, her *sincerity*, which lays bare the male protagonists’ hypocrisy and corruption, prevents her from joining the male-dominated world.

Dr. Ford, the successful psychologist in *House*, while collecting material on the behavior of conmen, gets hoodwinked by them and becomes the victim of their confidence game played on her. She is made into a thief, a whore, and even a murderess. Realizing that she has been badly humiliated, Ford feels shattered and destroyed financially, professionally as well as spiritually. In order to restore and renovate her identity, she must take revenge on Mike, the leading con man. Having mastered his strategies of deception and con games, she gains back all her money. However, she can complete her final metamorphosis into a con-woman only by physically annihilating her “teacher.”

Carol in *Oleanna* studies for a university degree in order to ensure her social advancement but she feels she does not receive the necessary education nor the expected help from her professor. Realizing that the professor’s unlimited power allows him to break down every barrier and violate all the rules and laws at the university, Carol reports him to the Tenure Committee of the university and charges him with sexism, elitism, and racism. With this move, the hierarchical positions allocated to them by patriarchy and institutional restrictions reverse between them. The empowered student, then, employs the same strategies of wielding power as her teacher. Ironically, Carol turns out to be an excellent student who reiterates the professor’s words and phrases, assumes his condescending and

arrogant attitude, and even her hunger for power is just as ravenous as the professor's. In exchange for withdrawing her accusations against the professor, she intends to ban all his books from the university curriculum, an unacceptable ultimatum for the professor. As a result he will be dismissed from his post.

Adopting the "parodying double" role, the women characters in the above plays succeed in subverting the initial hierarchical order that ascribes subordinated position to them in patriarchy. With the exception of Karen, who can only momentarily invert the patriarchal structure, dr. Ford and Carol are able to confirm their newly gained empowerment and assume not only their former oppressors' discourse and value system but also their dominant positions. "The new woman" gains power by embracing male values such as deception, venality, hypocrisy, violence, and transgression of rules and laws. Yet, she is at a transitory stage, the ambivalent nature of which can be elucidated by Simone de Beauvoir's note concerning this stage in the new woman's evolvment: "disguised as a man she feels herself as ill at ease in her flesh as in her masculine garb" (10).

Arguably, the comic aspect of parody, inherently present in the "parodying double" role, is gradually muffled and reduced almost to a minimum in the portrayal of Mamet's women characters, and especially in the family plays. Nevertheless, the shift in the nature of parody from loud to "reduced laughter" (Bakhtin 166) or bitter irony does not lessen either the importance or the legitimacy of the parodying double role of the women characters. As Bakhtin asserts, "reduced laughter in carnivalized literature by no means excludes the possibility of somber colors within a work" (166).

In the third phase, extending from the mid-1990s up to the present time (2002) two major works, *The Cryptogram* (1994), and *The Old Neighborhood* (1997)—comprising three short plays, *The Disappearance of the Jews*, *Jolly*, and *Deeny*—display thematic shifts from the public into the private realms of life. Family life becomes foregrounded and, following the conventions of the American family plays by Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller, the domestic setting is the locale where the characters' lives unfold and their relationships are played out. While the women protagonists in the canonical forefathers' family plays could retain their vigor as well

as their drive to keep their families together—with varying success, though (Amanda Wingfield in Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, Big Mamma in Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Kate Keller in Miller's *All My Sons*, Linda Loman in Miller's *Death of a Salesman*)—in Mamet's plays mothers and wives appear to be both estranged from their families and dysfunctional.

In *The Cryptogram* the absent husband's alienation from his wife, Donny, and his ten-year-old son, Del, finds parallel in the wife's similar estrangement. Donny's acts and discourse in the play are best characterized by an oxymoronic combination: her *distanced presence*. Her first *offstage* appearance, marked by a crash (her breaking the teapot) evokes a dysfunctional and distanced mother and wife, who, as the play unfolds, turns out to be incapacitated to keep her family together. "Mamet's family den in *The Cryptogram*," as Martin Schaub claims, "has completely lost its function as a protective haven; his [Mamet's] protagonists are drifting and, quite literally, on the move" (327). The loss of the "protective haven" function of the living-room is a metonymical indicator of mothers' and wives' inability to sustain this vital function. Simultaneously, the radical transformations of conventional routines and the prevalence of uprooted patterns in the lives of families indicates the presence of a carnivalized world where the most protective familial setting is degraded into a transitory shelter.

The pattern of spiritual brokenness equally applies to *The Old Neighborhood*. The protagonist, the middle-aged Bobby Gould returns to the old neighborhood in a series of encounters with his past only to realize his depressing present overshadowed by a broken marriage and an impending divorce. Untypically for Mamet, both in *Jolly* and in *Deeny*, certain details about Bobby's past are narrated from the female characters' points of view: Jolly, Bobby's sister recalls her childhood grievances, while Deeny, Gould's first love, meanders about gardening, molecules, and her work only to conceal her agitated state of mind when confronting the man she once loved. The "parodying double" role of these two female characters departs from the former ones in the sense that they cease to function as "crooked mirrors" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 127) for their male counterparts: instead of reflecting, emulating, and even distorting unfavorable sides of their

male counterparts (violence, alienation, enstrangement), both Jolly and Deeny show role models and behavior (courage to face and overcome difficulties, reassurance, ability to build a dialogical relationship) that the male characters surrounding them can draw strength from. In other words, they dare to discard “the masculine garb” that seems to be an essential “outfit” when entering the male-dominated world.

The brief account of the portrayal of Mamet’s female characters testifies that Mamet revises the male-conventional treatment of women in mainstream American drama: first, apart from the few family plays (*The Cryptogram*, *Jolly*) his heroines are located outside their domestic environment; second, by granting the women characters *subject positions*, Mamet disrupts one of the most powerful tendencies prevalent in American literature: a general disregard for women characters both in fiction and drama.¹ Concurrently, the women characters’ parodying double role reveals one of the most disturbing aspects of contemporary American society: the arbitrariness of the demarcation lines between what is personal and commercial, that is, the infiltration of business mentality into the private realms of life. In Roudane’s words: “in Mamet’s world, art and culture, as with human relationships and the environments in which those tragicomic relationships come into view, are devalued, exchanged, compromised: fiscal capital replaces cultural and spiritual capital” (10).

Yet, by no means can it be suggested that Mamet’s drama evokes an apocalyptic world suffused with total negation and disruption. On

¹ The apparently misogynistic treatment of women in Mamet’s works is neither an exclusively Mametian feature, nor is it bound to a specific genre or time. It appears to be an essential element that informs the historically defined “Americanness” of American literature: “American literature, more specifically, was typically a story about a would be autonomous self who revolts against a corrupt or stultifyingly conventional society—a society [...] characteristically associated with the women left behind” (Carton and Graff 8:327). As regards the mode of treating women characters in American drama, feminist critic Gayle Austin observes that the pattern has been set by canonical texts such as Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* (1947): “The overpowering impression the play leaves is that, for men, sex with women is empty, mothers and wives are necessary but ineffectual, and the most important thing is to bond successfully with other men. The problem is that this play has become a paradigm for what the ‘serious American play’ should be” (50).

the contrary, in some underlying terms, the affirmation of traditional values and a need for connection evolve in it. The presence of a carnivalized world with its radical transformations and uprooted patterns as described by Mamet posits the existence of another world, where values based on morality and humanity prevail.

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ZOLTÁN SIMON

THE IMAGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SELECTED
AMERICAN NOVELS OF THE 1920S

I.

Following the industrial revolution of the late nineteenth century, the first decades of the twentieth century could generally be characterized as a period of coming to terms with technology by the wider population of the United States. The previous, merely sporadic encounters with technology that were thrilling, awe-inspiring, or frightening a generation or two before gradually became a part of the everyday reality for the average American. No longer would a grandson of Henry Adams, in a walk through an exposition, stumble upon a huge dynamo (or, to provide a chronologically more appropriate example, an early experimental television set such as the one first publicly demonstrated in 1927), and respond to it with the same mixture of admiration, curiosity, and apprehension as his grandfather did. The assimilation of the machine into the modern American psyche and existence that took place in the first third of our century made such technological epiphanies once and for all obsolete in the U.S.A.

The decade of the 1920s was chosen in this paper for the purposes of demonstrating the reflection of this growing technological awareness in American literature for two reasons. In the first place, it appears that the processes of industrialization, mechanization, urbanization, and standardization that had continued for several decades culminated in the decade following World War I, finally to reach a stage where quantitative changes have turned into qualitative

ones. Never before were such wide layers of American society immediately affected in their lifestyles and general standards of living by technology as in the 1920s. As will be seen from some of the examples and statistics below, several important events marked the Twenties not necessarily as a decade of technological breakthroughs, but rather as a period when the changes brought about by progress must have become apparent for the population at large. The 1920s was in many ways *the* decade of widespread assimilation of technology into American culture.

Browsing through the years between 1920 and 1929 in *The Chronicle of America*, several curious facts, as elements of a larger mosaic, strike the reader's eyes. Census figures in 1920 showed for the first time an urban population larger than a rural one. In his address on July 4, 1926, on the 150th anniversary of the United States, novelist Sherwood Anderson remarked: "The machine (has caused) the herding of men into towns and cities [...]. Minds began to be standardized as were the clothes men wore" (qtd. in Clifton 631). Motorization was undoubtedly one of the most conspicuous changes in the country. By 1920, Americans owned 8 million cars; in other terms, for every automobile there were two horses in the country. With 24 million automobiles (78% of the world's cars) registered by 1927, this proportion was very soon reversed (Lewis and Goldstein 142). Catering to the changing needs of the motoring public, the first drive-in restaurant, J. G. Kirby's self-ironically named "Pig-Stand" opened in Dallas, Texas, in 1921.

In aviation, the year 1923 saw the first non-stop flight across the American continent; then, in 1927, America celebrated Charles Lindbergh's 33-and-half-hour non-stop solo flight across the Atlantic from New York to Paris. In telecommunications, the first national radio broadcast, the announcement of the results of the presidential elections, occurred in 1920. Between 1920 and 1924 the number of registered radios leaped from 2,000 to 2.5 million. These facts and figures are but arbitrarily chosen examples of the very rapid quantitative changes that took place in the decade, yet they clearly illustrate the nature of the impact that the overwhelming presence of technology must have had on the generation of the 1920s: technology

had become an inseparable part of modern American existence, lifestyle, and psyche.

The other reason why the literature of the 1920s is especially useful for studying patterns of changes in American technological consciousness is more practical. The 1920s is regarded by general consensus as a golden age of American letters, a sort of second American Renaissance, second only perhaps to the 1850s. The mere output and quality of the literature produced in this short period would warrant special attention, but more important is the fact that the writers of the Twenties, as will be shown below, appear to have been especially attentive to the changes brought about by technological progress in the period. As much as literature can be accepted as a singular way of documentation and reflection of social, economic, and psychological changes in a given place and period, a number of novels written in the 1920s clearly attest to the above claims about the significance of the decade in any serious consideration of the interaction of technology and American literature.

A very comprehensive analysis of this theme in the considerably large corpus of literature of the 1920s would not be possible in the confines of a relatively short paper as this. What follows, then, is a quick survey of the treatments of this interaction in three novels of three selected, now canonical, novelists from the period. The decision to limit the scope of this paper to novels is just as necessarily arbitrary as the selection of the texts—Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* (1922), John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925)—discussed below. While these novels do not necessarily represent the full scope, and especially not the extremes, of literary responses to technological civilization in the 1920s, in their range of treatments of machine culture they do serve the task of illustrating the image of technology in the literature of the 1920s.

II.

In the chapter called "Courting the Technological Sublime: Babbitt's Dance" in his analysis of *Babbitt*, Glen A. Love situates Sinclair Lewis's novel in the tradition of American writers "struggl[ing] with the contradictory meanings of a new machine

civilization [...] developing in America" (75). Undoubtedly, technology is an omnipresent entity throughout *Babbitt*: not only is it an integral part of Lewis's descriptions of the everyday life of his middle-class character, but, as will be shown, several of the governing metaphors of the novel are also technologically conceived.

Unlike several of his contemporaries, however, who at best exhibited a highly ambivalent attitude toward technological civilization, Lewis had a sincere belief in, even an admiration for, progress, technology, and efficiency. *Babbitt* is the most straightforward presentation of his real concern about technological development, which was over the tension between "the high achievements of a technologically advanced civilization—as represented by the bold skyline of Zenith—and the soft-bellied underachievers who are the city's inhabitants" (Love 75–76). Babbitt takes pride in being a part of the progress and efficiency he sees embodied in Zenith without ever realizing that his own contribution to the development of the city is rather insignificant. His own peculiar relationship to technology may be seen as a microcosmic representation of the larger relationship between humanity and the heroic modern world of science and technology.

Thanks to Lewis's almost photorealistically descriptive style whereby he frequently characterizes through objects, Babbitt is routinely seen as interacting with technology. No doubt, Babbitt is very comfortable with technology: he surrounds himself with the most up-to-date, scientifically designed and expensive gadgetry available on the market. His "nationally advertised and quantitatively produced" alarm-clock (7), his "very best of water-coolers, up-to-date, scientific, and right-thinking" (31), and his "priceless time-saver" of an electric cigar-lighter (46) are only a few examples of his obsession with keeping abreast with modern times. As the omniscient narrator reveals, however, Babbitt's worship of machinery does not originate from a true understanding of the same:

He had enormous and poetic admiration, though very little understanding, of all mechanical devices. They were his symbols of truth and beauty. Regarding each new intricate mechanism—metal lathe, two-jet carburetor, machine gun, oxyacetylene welder—he

learned one good realistic-sounding phrase, and used it over and over, with a delightful feeling of being technical and initiated. (58)

Babbitt may be seen here as epitomizing one of the predicaments of modern twentieth-century existence: too far removed from an immediate contact with his material environment, making “nothing in particular, neither butter, nor shoes, nor poetry” (6), he is stuck with a blind faith in progress and technology without comprehending the entirety of his situation and the potential dangers inherent in the kind of existence he leads.

The most prominent and symbolically most complex piece of machinery Babbitt (and his family) is seen interacting with in the novel is undoubtedly his automobile. The car, an extension and an expression of his own personality means “poetry and tragedy, love and heroism” to Babbitt: “The office was his pirate ship but the car his perilous excursion abroad” (23). He is noted to take good care of his automobile—little wonder since it is one of the most visible status symbols in his possession. He even takes his car for the three-and-a-half-block ride from his office to the Athletic Club—an ultimate example of wastefulness, inefficiency, and what Thorstein Veblen would call “conspicuous consumption.”

The automobile is also a frequent topic of conversation in the Babbitt household. In one of the early scenes Babbitt gets the whole family excited by announcing that he was “[s]ort o’ thinking about buying a new car” (62). The discussion about the practical advantages of sedans over open cars eventually boils down to “everybody’s got a closed car now, except us” (63), which allows the sarcastic narrator to remark that “in the city of Zenith, in the barbarous twentieth century, a family’s motor car indicated its social rank as precisely as the grades of the peerage determined the rank of an English family” (63). Having a car is not primarily about transportation—it is about social class. Such a misuse of technology originates from a misunderstanding of it, just as in the case of the scores of gadgets Babbitt accumulates.

Babbitt’s relationship to technology could be characterized as a mixture of self-righteous pride in achievements he has no real part in on the one hand, and a spiritual reverence stemming from his ultimate lack of understanding of the workings of technology on the other. Business (or his peculiarly distorted business ethic) is one of his

substitute religions, but technology is also frequently presented in spiritual or semi-religious terms: his god is "Modern Appliances" (8), or "the God of Progress" (11). His automobile, this ultimate symbol of technology in the novel, is at the center of Babbitt's substitute theological universe as indicated by Lewis's choice of words in the following and other examples: Babbitt is "a *pious* motorist" (7), buying gasoline is a familiar "*rite*" (26), and motoring is among the "*sacred* and unchangeable sports of Babbitt and Paul Riesling" (56; emphases added). Even Ted and Verona are referred to as "devotees of the Great God Motor, [as] they hymned the patch on the spare inner-tube, and the lost jack-handle" (19). Only a few pages before Babbitt himself was singing, inspired by "the lovely sight" of the skyline and the rhythm of his beloved city, his peculiar secular hymn to the God of Progress:

He beheld the tower as a temple-spire of the religion of business, a faith passionate, exalted, surpassing common men; and as he clumped down to breakfast he whistled the ballad "Oh, by gee, by gosh, by jingo" as though it were a hymn melancholy and noble. (15)

In addition to characterizing Babbitt through his interaction with machinery, Lewis suggests, throughout the novel, the machine-like qualities of Babbitt himself. He leads a mechanical existence: waking up every day at the same hour, driving routinely to and from his office, engaging after work in all the standardized social activities prescribed for middle-class suburban people like himself. As the plot progresses, Babbitt is beginning to resemble a malfunctioning machine that needs to be fixed, or perhaps even more a malfunctioning cogwheel in the larger machinery of society. In this larger system of interchangeable parts, there is, of course, a danger that the malfunctioning part, Babbitt, will easily be replaced by another identical part as in the case of the real estate deal lost to the competition, the Sanders, Torrey and Wing Real Estate.

Mechanization and standardization are the two ultimate technological metaphors employed by Lewis to signify his objections to middle-class lifestyle. In his rebellious state of mind Babbitt himself is eventually beginning to realize how sterile, standardized, and mechanized the existence he leads really is. He deliberately

abandons his routine and attempts to break out from the monotony of his personal and public life. Babbitt never gets far beyond the recognition of the dreariness of his life: the prospects of losing the security offered by this kind of existence, however bleak, frightens him and he backs off at the first opportunity. As merely a part of a larger mechanism without an individuality of his own, he can only function properly in place in the bigger machine of middle-class existence. Even though the novel ends on a happy note for Babbitt himself, the reader is made acutely aware of the sad state of affairs for George F. Babbitt and the millions of Babbitts throughout the world in the 1920s or in the 1990s.

The radical lawyer, Seneca Doane, who could be considered more than anybody in the novel as Lewis's mouthpiece, resolves best the ambivalent relationship toward progress and technology. Just like Babbitt (or Lewis, for that matter) he is an admirer of material and technological progress: "Zenith is a city with gigantic power---gigantic buildings, gigantic machines, gigantic transportation" (84), he says exaltedly to the less than enthusiastic scientist, Kurt Yavitch. Significantly, he defends the notion of standardization as necessary for efficiency and progress, but insists that it should be confined to its place in the technological sphere. What he is fighting against is the standardization of thought, in other words, the extension of the technological and industrial principles to society. He (and through his voice, Lewis) insists that an element of incalculability will always remain necessary in order to maintain our basic human nature and to avoid the danger of becoming machines ourselves: "Personally, I prefer a city with a future so unknown that it excites my imagination" (85), he says. Whether the next generation of Zenith's inhabitants, best personified by young Theodore Roosevelt Babbitt will measure up to this new technological civilization remains an open question at the end of the novel, signaling Lewis's own doubts about the outcome of the interaction between humanity and technology.

III.

"Like many of his generation, Dos Passos had a love-hate relationship to the machine age" (202), writes Cecelia Tichi in her

analysis of technology, literature, and culture in modernist America. His ambivalence toward technology and urbanization clearly pervades his 1925 novel, *Manhattan Transfer*. “A great deal is going to happen in the next few years. All these mechanical inventions—telephones, electricity, steel bridges, horseless vehicles—they are all leading somewhere,” prophesies the real-estate agent at the very beginning of the novel; then he adds: “It’s up to us to be on the inside, in the forefront of progress” (15). Mechanical inventions, progress, technology—these concepts seem to be central to Dos Passos’s rather pessimistic vision of modernity. It is not technological development *per se*, however, that Dos Passos was protesting against; rather, it was the accompanying disappearance of certain human values. The acute problems with interpersonal relationships are made clear in the novel: friendships are superficial, marriages are breaking up, families are becoming dysfunctional in the microcosm of *Manhattan Transfer*. It appears that human relationships are just as disposable, or freely replaceable with one another, as if they were standardized pieces of machinery.

While the automobile is not a central symbol for Dos Passos as it is in Fitzgerald’s work, its significance in the novel cannot be overlooked. Instead of individual cars, Dos Passos frequently uses big-city traffic as a background to the story of *Manhattan Transfer*: the emphasis is thus put on the facelessness and impersonality of urban existence, since even the singularity of the vehicles is dissolved in the mass of automobiles comprising the traffic, let alone the individuality of the passengers in those vehicles.

It is interesting to note in the following examples how Dos Passos recreates the urban atmosphere by using repetition as a device to underscore the notion communicated and to suggest monotony also on a linguistic level. “Behind them automobiles *slithered* with a constant hissing scuttle in *two streams along the roadway*” is repeated on the next page as “[b]ehind them limousines, roadsters, touringcars, sedans, *slithered along the roadway* with snaky glint of lights running in *two smooth continuous streams*” (163–64; emphases added). In a similar example, also involving automobiles, we see through the eyes of Ed Thatcher sitting at his window “looking out over the *endless stream of automobiles* that whirled in either direction past the

yellowbrick row of stores and the redbrick station” (197; emphasis added). The image of the monotonous (as suggested by the word “endless”) lines of traffic is further impressed upon the reader when it is repeated two pages later: “Thatcher turned his face [...] to look out the window at the two *endless bands of automobiles* that passed along the road in from of the station” (198–99; emphasis added).

Characteristically, most of the individual vehicles depicted in the novel are either taxi cabs, or fire engines, with only three exceptions to this tendency. Early in the text, Dos Passos described one of the “automobile riots” (24–25) that were common on the streets of cities in the early years of the automobiles. Later, we get a detailed description of “Dingo,” Stan Emery’s loose-muffled, freshly-painted blue wreck, and his ride on the streets of New York. Finally, late in the novel, we catch a quick glimpse of the Rolls-Royce of the wealthy bootlegger, Congo Jake, alias Armand Duval. Arguably, all three automobiles are presented in negative terms, although in different ways: as potential killing machine, as ugly and noisy environmental hazard, and as status symbol purchased with dirty money, respectively. These three individual cars are counterbalanced by a multitude of unnamed and unidentified vehicles making up the traffic on the streets of New York City.

Dos Passos’s use of symbols of modernism in *Manhattan Transfer*—the skyscrapers, taxis, revolving hotel doors, fire engines—all underline his preference for a set of alternative values to the ones of consumerism and technological development. His apocalyptic vision of the city burning from within, as symbolized by the frequent appearance of fire engines, either horse-drawn or later motorized, makes it clear that Dos Passos’s ideal was closer to the Jeffersonian model of agrarian America than to Franklinian urbanism. This is accentuated by the final pastoral image of a horsecart (as opposed to a motorized vehicle), “a horse and wagon, [...] a brokendown springwagon loaded with flowers, driven by a little brown man with high cheekbones” (403) coming aboard the ferry, with Jim Herf looking on it while deciding to leave town for good. Thus, the final conclusion of Dos Passos, at least in *Manhattan Transfer*, seems to be a rejection of the valueless modern urban existence, as presented through his various, technologically conceived, symbols.

IV.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's fiction has frequently been compared to social history, especially in regards to the 1920s, or to use the expression coined by Fitzgerald himself, "the Jazz Age." His 1925 novel, *The Great Gatsby* is no exception; in fact, this is the novel that manages to capture most effectively the influence of modern technological civilization on the physical and cultural landscape of the United States in the 1920s. Fitzgerald lavishly uses in this novel many new elements of the changing American culture, including technological ones, but the most prominent and most complex technological symbol of *The Great Gatsby* is undoubtedly the one that was most visible and influential in the 1920: the automobile. The extent as well as the complexity of Fitzgerald's use of automobiles for literary purposes in *The Great Gatsby* is unprecedented. The automobile is the principal image of modernity and technology, one of Fitzgerald's most effective ways of characterization, as well as a major dramatic device in the novel. For the characters of *The Great Gatsby* it variably represents a means of transportation, commodity and "medium of exchange," object of desire, status symbol, or means of escape and freedom.

Fitzgerald defines his characters partly through their relationship to technology when commenting on the kind of car they drive on the one hand, and the way they drive on the other. The most conspicuous example of the novel's automobile symbolism is obviously Gatsby's "circus wagon" (94). It sums up, as Leo Marx states, the quality of life that Gatsby aspires for; and it serves later in the novel as "a murder weapon and the instrument of Gatsby's undoing" (*Machine* 358). The function of Gatsby's "splendid" and "gorgeous" automobile keeps changing throughout the text: initially, it is the ultimate status symbol, a mobile version of his mansion, a vulgar display of Gatsby's wealth scorned by Nick (Marx, *Pilot* 317), only to become by the end of the novel a major dramatic device, as much a killer mechanism as the gun used by Wilson.

Tom Buchanan's blue coupé, as shown by O'Meara, also functions in a variety of ways. On one level, it is seen as a piece of hardware, pure technology, a means of transportation between East Egg and New York. On a second level, similarly to Gatsby's car, the blue coupé also functions as commodity, a status symbol for the

Buchanans, a means of expressing their social and financial status. Furthermore, claims O'Meara, in specific situations between Tom and Wilson, the car also becomes a currency, a medium of exchange. Wilson (incidentally a car mechanic leading a rather mechanical existence), for whom the coupé could become a "literal and figurative means of escape" (82) hopes to buy it from Tom Buchanan so that he and Myrtle can sell it with profit and go West. Daisy Buchanan, typically of affluent women in the 1920s, has her own car: a little white roadster. It is ironic, as Echevarría points out, that at the beginning of their aborted relationship, Gatsby "has no 'chariot' to facilitate his romantic pursuit" (73); Daisy, the dream girl, however, already drives her own automobile.

The question of what the novel's characters drive situates them socially in a hierarchy similar to the one suggested by Lewis in *Babbitt*, but how they drive is an indication of personal, even moral values in the novel. *The Great Gatsby* abounds in examples of poor driving, traffic violations, accidents, and near-accidents. After Gatsby's first party a drunken guest drives his car into the ditch (45). Next, Jordan Baker (whose very name evokes automobile memories) nearly runs over a group of road workers, passing them so close that the "fender flicked a button on one man's coat" (48), thus deserving the unflattering epithet of a "rotten driver." In New York, Gatsby is pulled over for speeding, but he gets away using his "gonnections," by simply showing the officer a card from the police commissioner (54). These incidents culminate in the hit-and-run scene when Myrtle gets killed by Daisy, driving Gatsby's car on their way back from New York. It seems that Nick is perhaps the only character not in the category of careless drivers. Clearly, misuse or abuse of technology such as reckless driving may be seen as symbolic of the general wildness, carelessness, and irresponsibility of the Jazz Age (cf. Echevarría 76) and provides a way for Fitzgerald for making indirect moral statements about his characters.

The Great Gatsby also makes use of other elements of the technological environment, such as trains, Gatsby's hydroplane, or gas stations, but these are more for the purpose of creating an authentic modern background than conscious exploitations of a technologically conceived metaphor, such as in the case of the automobile. One of the

central symbols of the novel, however, cannot be overlooked in any discussion of technology and *The Great Gatsby*. Conceived in Eliot's newly established framework of wasteland imagery, the infamous "valley of ashes," a modern, man-made, industrial wasteland, stretching between West Egg and New York City, is thus described in the opening of Chapter Two of the novel:

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor-road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile so as to shrink away from a desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens, where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. (21)

Critics have since identified the original of this "valley of ashes" as the Corona dumps, a swampy area in the borough of Queens filled with ashes from coal-burning factories and the garbage of the city in the 1920s. (Cf. Matthew J. Bruccoli's "Note on Geography" on page 211 of the Cambridge edition of *The Great Gatsby*.) This repugnant landscape, "modern city at its ugliest" (*Pilot* 224) as Leo Marx called it, is presented in the novel clearly as the product of modern industrial and urban existence. Industrial and urban waste becomes symbolic of moral corruption and spiritual barrenness. Significantly, Fitzgerald first evokes his version of the wasteland by agricultural metaphors ("fantastic farm," "grotesque gardens"), where the adjectives signal the inappropriateness of such rural, or pastoral imagery. The garden is transformed, then, in the same sentence, into the image of a city with houses and chimneys and men moving "dimly and already crumbling in the powdery air" (21). This passage, an excellent illustration of the intrusion of the machine—as symbolizing industry, technology, or the city—into the pastoral garden (to use the central metaphor of Leo Marx's *Machine in the Garden*) also indicates Fitzgerald's awareness of the potentially dismal consequences of urban and technological civilization allowed to go awry.

V.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the most conspicuous technological image shared in these and a number of other novels from the period is undoubtedly the automobile, replacing such technological icons of previous periods as the steam engine, the railroad, or Henry Adams's dynamo. While the three novelists discussed above do not offer a unified technological vision, the examination of the image of the automobile does offer a sense of continuity, or development, from Lewis's *Babbitt*, through Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*, to Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*. On the one hand, the image of the automobile evolves from an innocent piece of hardware, into an alienating and potentially dangerous technology, and finally into an actual killing machine. On the other hand, association with the finest technology—as exemplified by the superb pieces of automobiles owned by Congo Jake and Jay Gatsby—seems to be tied to instances of individual corruption. Both of these tendencies seem to reinforce the negative aspects of the artists' judgments on technology's role in society.

As evidenced by the three novels discussed above, technology has become an inescapable part of modern life, one that the writers of the 1920s could hardly ignore. In his analysis of American writing in the postwar decade, Frederick J. Hoffman puts forward what he sees as the three typical responses of 1920s poetry to the machine:

In some cases the poet looked at the machine in an attitude of respectful incomprehension, trying to find in it a kind of emotionless utopia of the spirit, but endowing it nevertheless with the language of emotion. In other cases the machine was personified—or at least some of its functions were translated into an analogy with human nature. In still other poems the machine became a symbol, as it was for a time for Henry Adams, of the metaphysical force or forces whose energies it presumably channeled and controlled. (293–94)

The novelists' response in the 1920s does not easily fit into any of these categories. The typical attitude toward the gradual assimilation of technology into mainstream culture might best be described as a mixture of fascination and condemnation, but reactions really showed a bell curve pattern: fewer novelists seemed to unambiguously reject

or fully endorse machine civilization and most of them—as exemplified by Lewis, Dos Passos, and Fitzgerald above—related to the new technological world order with a healthy ambivalence, or a somewhat skeptical enthusiasm.

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ANDRÁS TARNÓC

ENTROPY AND ECSTASY: THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN
RELATIONSHIPS IN BERNARD SLADE'S *SAME TIME*
NEXT YEAR

I.

The research objective outlined in the title will be realized through a three-pronged approach. Bernard Slade's 1975 drama, *Same Time Next Year* will be examined from three vantage points, the applicability of the entropy theory, the analysis of the shared mental images held by the participants in the adulterous affair described in the drama, and the investigation of the role of confession in the play. In connection with the first research component it has to be declared that a forceful application of a law of physics to society or human interaction is by no means a purpose of the present effort. The entropy concept serves as a possible explanation, or a research tool to explain the dynamics of George and Doris' marriage and adulterous affair.

The second law of thermodynamics asserts that in a closed system, due to a lack of external stimulation, the previously varied energy levels will equalize, the system slows down and eventually stops and reaches the state of thermal or heat death. This also implies that any physical system left to itself tends to move spontaneously toward disintegration or entropy. Treating George and Doris' marriages and affair as separate physical systems, the present essay is based on the core assumption that human relationships yield to the laws of physics and consequently just as in any physical system, George and Doris are considered to be molecules operating at differing energy levels. As the entropy theory can only be applied in a closed system, the characters'

marital and extramarital relationships have to be examined in order to establish whether the above metaphor is relevant. Furthermore, the deployment of the entropy metaphor is based on Abádi-Nagy's observations assigning the former a principal function of conveying a sense of crisis, a mental or emotional breakdown characterized by such concepts as depression, isolation, disintegration, solitude, or guilt (41-42).

II.

In my view George and Helen, and Doris and Harry's marriages can be regarded as closed systems. According to Ludwig von Bertalanffy open systems communicate, experience a metabolism and exchange their components (Cramer). Consequently a closed system is characterized by a lack of or insufficient communication, a decreased metabolism and the inability to exchange the system's components. George's marriage meets the requirements of the closed system. Despite the exchange of words and ideas between George and Helen, the recognition of the other's personality is not present. George's emotional side remains hidden from his spouse. For Helen George appears as a somewhat insecure, yet well-meaning person. He is yearning for romance and Helen's "socially responsible" attitude about sex and intimacy stifles his passionate side. The lack of effective and sincere communication also plagues Doris and Harry's relationship as Doris' eavesdropping on Harry's conversation with his friends during a wedding anniversary celebration reveals that the best time of her husband's life was not experienced while living with her, but it occurred in the army, a period which included a brief stay in a Japanese prisoner of war camp.

Consequently, certain aspects of George and Doris' character remain hidden from their spouses, moreover, the latter are surprised when the emotional or romantic side of their partner comes to light. In addition to a lack of effective communication, the marital relationships suffer from a decreased metabolism as both George and Doris' marriage reached a "comfortable" phase during which they appear to be stranded in a "personality rut." George consistently emanates the father and husband image, while Doris principally appears to Harry as

a mother and homemaker. Whereas the extramarital affair is clearly motivated by an escape from the onset of entropy, the liaison's time frame and spatial arrangement suggest a closed system as well. George and Doris meet every year at the same time and at the same place. The predictable schedule of the encounters indicates temporal closure and the enclosed meeting space suggests spatial limitation.

While George and Doris function in a closed system, their marital relationships also display signs of entropy. The entropic nature of the marriage is suggested by the exchange of stories between George and Doris concerning their spouses' best and worst deeds framing the personalities of Helen and Harry into a bipolar system respectively. Helen's almost supernatural ability to sense George's potential disloyalty keeps George in a closed system, figuratively limiting his movement. Doris' story concerning Harry's best feature also suggests entropy. Harry, intending to spend some quality time with his son Tony by flying a kite, took him along to a public park. As there was not enough wind to fly a kite, Tony's initial excitement subsided and Harry alone spent all his energies trying to make the kite fly. It can be argued that Harry and Tony formed a closed system, and as a result of limited stimulation due to the low wind, the original fervor decreased and Tony with his energy level dropping to zero fell asleep.

The upheavals of George's conscience over his absence during his daughter's loss of a baby tooth create a personal crisis. When in order to ease his troubled mind, George wants to leave earlier, Doris insists on him staying. Thus foils his breakout attempt from this closed system. This is the first indication that the relationship between George and Doris tends to develop into a restrictive framework. Also Doris's reminder of George's commitment within their relationship functions as another reference to figurative enclosure. Scene 3 of Act One offers further indications of the enclosed nature of both characters' marriage. George suffering from temporary impotence blames his wife for his sexual misfortunes. George's association of sexuality with guilt suggests entropy. The description of George and Helen's sexual desire level also reveals entropy as the former's increased, the latter's decreased, bringing Maxwell's demon and its ability of classifying or separating molecules commensurate to their heat emission capability to mind. Another reference to closed systems

can be found in Doris' dreams of making love with George under water "in caves, grottos, swimming pools," (271) that is always in closed spaces. Doris's view of her pregnant self: "catatonic, incredulous, angry, pragmatic, and finally maternal" (275) displays an increasing energy level during the first three terms, and declining intensity in the second half of the continuum. The amount of energy emitted in a "catatonic" state is zero, one can experience a slight increase in energy output in the "incredulous" state reaching the highest intensity level in the "angry" stage. The term "pragmatic" means reluctant acceptance and "maternal" connotes concession to and acceptance of the pregnancy. George's sexual arousal over the pregnant Doris coincides with the beginning of her labor pains and the birth process and once again this results in a guilt attack

The next scene contains a reference to personal or psychological entropy as George mentions the walls he built up to hide his true personality (296). This time it is Doris who complains of the declining intensity of the relationship, which can be considered another symptom of entropy: "George, you ever get the feeling we're drifting apart?" (298). The feeling of guilt awakened in Doris (300) also reinforces the applicability of this concept and George's reference to the "emotional straitjacket" (303) connotes entrapment, or functioning in a closed system as well. The final scene also offers entropic elements. First of all the closed system of Harry and Helen is literally eliminated by Helen's death, but it is continued figuratively. George's life is in disorder, and is unable to function in this semi-closed system, thus he invents the story of Connie and his desire to marry her in order to force Doris to leave Harry and marry him. The energy level and intensity of George come full circle when he emotionally admits that the previous scheme was just a ploy and he is ready to continue the relationship to the end

As the law of entropy focuses on the energy level of the components of a closed system, the energy emitted by the drama's characters should be examined. The vigor or power radiated by the given scene can be gauged by the author's description of the activity and mental state of the characters. At the beginning of the play George noticeably operates at a higher energy level. His actions displaying "intense nervous energy, sitting bolt upright in the bed" are frantic.

Slade uses the following terms to describe George: "agitated, he moves quickly, he grabs a bottle"(240) or "anguished"(242). Doris's energy output at this point is lower, she acts as a spectator to George's anxiety driven performance. George displays high velocity action and Doris shows the opposite. The adjectives and the expressions connected with George connote heat and by extension high energy output. George's thoughts and actions move frantically without any order or consistency and Doris emanates steadiness and tranquility. George's suggestion of leaving the children behind and running away with each other leaves her astonished. The description of George at the beginning of Scene 2, "wearing a charcoal suit, his insecurities flashing through, " along with references to "mercurial moods" (257), connotes thermal output, in a broader sense, energy. However, his previously frantic energy level is decreased as he is more subdued and controlled. Doris also functions at a similar energy level. The energy equilibrium, however, is upset by a phone call from George's daughter Debbie. George's expression drastically changes, he assumes a tense position, and becomes overwhelmed with guilt. Doris responds with equanimity and continues her business as usual attitude toward her lover's personal crisis. Furthermore, as a result of his guilty pangs and as another reference to heat, George suffers indigestion, or heartburn. Doris' energy level also changes as she throws a hairbrush at George and explodes at him as the scene concludes with a passionate embrace.

At the beginning of Scene 3, once again it is George described by such terms as "angry, exasperated, incredulous, frustrated." who radiates more energy. His energy level, however, masks deep frustration over his impotence and indicates his disappointment concerning Doris' pregnancy. The scenario or the set up is familiar, George radiates more energy, Doris is more subdued and this does not change even at the conclusion, when George helps Doris to deliver her baby. However, at the end of the scene George becomes more controlled and his frantic action gives way to steadiness partly inspired by Doris' tranquility.

Summing up the energy map of Act One it can be concluded that while energy dissipation can be discerned, the state of inertia cannot be detected. As in any closed system external information can have a negentropic effect, and the former plays a significant role in all three

scenes. In the above scenes when the energy level of the characters appears to even out, a phone call or some other new information disrupts the development of equilibrium. The ensuing intensity of energy dissipation between the characters or the mutually high energy output prevents the formation of the entropic condition. In Scene 1 a knock on the door sends the characters into frantic action, in Scene 2 Debbie's phone call stirs George up both emotionally and physically, and in Scene 3 Doris' pregnancy exerts a negentropic effect.

Act Two starts with reversed energy output levels as it is George who responds in an astonished manner to the changes of Doris. She bursts on to the scene and George appears more reserved. George forced to react to Doris' personal metamorphosis becomes more agitated as his tirade also includes his views on the society of the 60's. Eventually his revelation of his son's death prevents the setting in of entropy between the two lovers. In Scene 2 George by assuming the very values of society he previously rejected appears to have achieved an inner serenity. The change of apparel from suits to jeans indicates that an insecure accountant gave way to an artist at peace with himself. Just as when the internal calm and stability of the characters virtually results in a mutual decline of energy levels Harry's phone call jolts George out of his tranquility and forces an indirect confession in the name of Doris, eventually repairing the relationship between her and Harry. The last scene of the drama shows a definite decrease of energy, the passionate embraces are replaced by affectionate hugs and the upcoming state of inertia is avoided only by George's announcement of Helen's death and his subsequent marriage proposal to Doris. Having been rejected by Doris, George leaves the stage only to burst in again moments later. Upon George's exit Doris exhibits a trance like behavior and intends to leave the hotel room suggesting that the closed system would experience a heat death. But once again, George reverts to his old self and his passionate declaration of commitment to Doris exerts a negentropic effect. In conclusion, in Act Two a reversal of the intensity of the characters' energy output notwithstanding, outside information provides additional impetus as Michael's death, Harry's phone call and George's proposal all prevent the onset of entropy. The energy map of the play in fact comes full circle, as by the end of the play George

becomes the same agitated, frustrated person and Doris the identically astonished yet reserved individual as she had been at the beginning of the drama.

Thus while George and Doris function in a closed system, they experience a continuous renewal as new information or facts are injected into the story providing additional momentum to the play and to the characters' energy level. The extramarital affair contains entropic elements, including George's guilt, or Doris' rejection of his marriage proposal, but it never reaches the entropy or disintegration stage. In fact it operates as an open system, because communication, metabolism and the exchange of components can be discerned. Contrary to the character's marriage, George and Doris' true identities and hidden personalities are mutually revealed. The characters' personal crises, George's guilt attacks, his impotence, the death of his eldest son, Doris's pregnancy, her personal and psychological awakening provide an endless flow of external stimuli. Furthermore, while George and Doris appear to be the same in their marriages, they are presented as different people in each scene of the affair. Whereas to Helen George comes into view as an insecure, frustrated businessman in search of his true identity, he assumes several selves in the adulterous relationship. He is the guilt-ridden parent, the sexually frustrated individual yearning for romance, the confused father mourning his son, the rebellious artist and the conformist professor. Doris also undergoes personal development from a frustrated housewife to an educated and successful businesswoman.

The entropy metaphor's principal function is the expression of a personal crisis. The drama in fact presents two people experiencing personal calamities ranging from sexual, and psychological crises to economic instability. The signs of the crisis include the feeling of entrapment, and the drama indeed offers an escape, but only at the fantasy level. In fact these two people themselves represent closed systems functioning in several closed frameworks.

Another issue we have to examine is the reason for the continuation of the affair. While at first one would draw the conclusion, that

George and Doris' ongoing relationship is an escape from the humdrum state of their comfortable marriage, it can also be argued that in a broader sense the respective spouses are substituted by their equivalents in the affair. That is the very reason George continues meeting Doris is that her internal characteristics remind him of Helen, and it is George and Harry's similarity that acts as the primary attracting force for Doris.

This can be proven by a closer examination of the stories related by George and Doris concerning their spouses and the respective subsequent reaction. In fact the drama reports the story of ongoing personal crises on both sides and the reaction of the cheating spouses is definitive in this regard. When George confesses to Doris that their previous night's encounter was the first instance of adultery in his life, she reacts bathetically by inquiring whether she could eat his breakfast (248). At this point George realizes subconsciously that Doris has the same basic features, including a dry acerbic wit and a peculiar sense of humor, as Helen does. Furthermore, George's confession of a mishap during his first sexual encounter elicits an anticlimactic reply from Doris as she only expresses her concern whether George had any insurance after the accident accompanying the tryst. Doris also likes the way Helen reacts to George's impotence and upon hearing Helen's reaction to George's most embarrassing experience of walking into a closet during a visit, she expresses an open identification with Helen: "I've been meaning to tell you this for years, but I think I'd like Helen"(289). George's personal voyage into himself elicits the same reaction both from Helen and Doris, as the former throws a grapefruit at him, the latter expresses her great dissatisfaction in a verbal form. Furthermore, Doris upon learning Helen's death states that she feels as she lost her best friend.

Doris appreciates the same features of George that are present in Harry as well. The stories about Harry's foiled attempt to take his son kite flying or acting as a den mother to local girls in her absence reveals him as a caring, awkward and sincere person. Harry also has trouble with adapting to Doris's awakening self-assertion and economic success. He tries many jobs, but "lacking the killer instinct"(263) he becomes a failure as a provider. His features are summed up in Doris' evaluation of George's character as she points

out that the latter “used to be crazy—and insecure and dumb and a terrible liar and—*human*” (290). It can be argued that this is the subconscious personality pattern or model she seeks in George, whose physical awkwardness, constant self-doubt and soul-searching form a parallel with Harry.

The third issue to be explored is the role of confession in the drama. The relationship between George and Doris is based on or motivated by several confessions and it is also noteworthy, that George does most of the confessing and Doris reacts. The reader witnesses numerous personal crises alleviated by confessions. The latter can be seen as a reaction to a crisis and by involving another person in one’s drama the closed system is forced open and at the same time a moral obligation is foisted upon the listener or receiver. The roles of the confessor and “minister” shift throughout the play. It is remarkable, that while Doris is a Catholic and emphasizes the need for confession, it is George, a Protestant, who confesses the most.

George’s first confession concerns his views on sexuality and marriage. His admission of his desire to enliven his marriage, or the “old book” by another relationship is motivated by guilt. On the one hand George wants to relieve his conscience, but also, one could apply Foucault’s assertion that sexuality does not exist, only when it is confessed (<http://cgi.student.nada.kth.se/cgi.-bin/d95-aeh/get/foucaulteng>). Thus it can be argued that by confessing his view on sexuality and marriage his identity is established as well and consequently, he asserts himself as a man:

“When it comes to life I have a brown thumb. I mean nothing goes right. Ever” (243). This quote reveals George’s deep internal insecurities, and establishes a frame of mind, or an intention to make sure that everything in the future will indeed go right and thus the relationship with Doris appears to be his greatest success. George’s confessions can be grouped into three categories reflecting the roles society expects from a male: man, husband, and father-provider. Three of George’s confessions are related to the fatherhood role. The first one concerns the admission of having three children instead of two,

the second is the guilt attack brought on by his absence during his daughter Debbie's loss of her baby tooth, and the third one is his announcement of Michael's death. George's declaration of his eternal love for Doris reaffirms his identity as a lover. This is in straight contrast with the admission of his temporary impotence in Scene 3 of Act One. The anxiety over his inability to perform sexually is countered by the reaffirmation of his male or lover's identity. Consequently, since most of George's confessions are relevant to fatherhood, it can be concluded that his greatest worry concerning the affair is the potential undermining of his ability and status as a father.

The confession at the end of Scene 2 Act Two is a unique one. The confession technically could be regarded as Doris', but it is delivered by George for Harry, Doris' husband. In fact this indirect confession is the climax of the play. By this time George's guilt level reached its zenith, the relationship lasting over 20 years achieved maturity, and his need to succumb to long-stifled impulses of honesty is overwhelming. Whereas the confession starts ambiguously implying a routine admission of adultery and cheating, the real confessor is not George, but Doris. George confesses Doris's love for Harry and realizes the lack of communication between the two, and attempts to break up the entropy by revealing Doris's true feelings for Harry. Furthermore, during the confession George assumes the identity of a priest, in itself a bizarre turn of events, reversing the order of confessing between priest and parishioner.

The relatively lower frequency of Doris' confessions is partially explained by the fact that she is not tortured by guilt to the same extent as George is. Her confessions also revolve around the roles society assigns to women: mother, wife, homemaker, and career woman. In Scene 1 of Act One she asserts emphatically:

Well, look at my life. I got three little kids underfoot all the time, so I'm never alone. I live in a two-bedroom duplex in downtown Oakland, we got a 1948 Kaiser that's almost paid for, a blond, three-piece dinette set, a Motorola TV, and we go bowling at least once a week...I mean, what else could anyone ask for? (251)

The first part of her confession asserts her role as a mother, the description of her home, the equipment, and the appliances are

connected with her homemaking function, and the rhetorical question reveals stifled desires for romance. At the beginning of the play Doris also admits that she never finished high school, a situation clearly in contrast with her later development as a successful businesswoman.

Doris also confesses her desire to contact George during the year in between their clandestine meetings, thus in fact she would break the rules of the game:

George, during the past year I picked up the phone and started to call you five times. I couldn't seem to stop thinking about you. You kept slopping over into my real life and it scared the hell out of me. More to the point I felt guilty. So I decided to stop seeing you. (266)

In addition to an admission of feeling guilty Doris informs on the crisis the relationship exerted on her marriage. This confession is motivated by a desire to force an obligation onto George. Doris makes a similar confession at the end of the play when she reveals her secret wish of being proposed by George. This is her final confession and by thanking George for the duration of the affair and its ability to help her cope with various crises she reasserts a retrospective commitment between the two lovers. Also, her view of marriage: "We share the same memories. It's—comfortable. Maybe, that's what marriage is all about in the end—. I don't know" (310) makes the play come full circle. While at the outset of the romance George emphasized sexuality and compared marriage to a book, here she highlights the mutual experiences, viewing marriage as a community of memories, a virtual space. Doris' greatest concern is to obtain proof about being truly loved, either by George or Harry.

One can, however, never overlook another question, namely how can the duration of the illicit affair be justified? One could eagerly conclude that something is lacking from the characters' marriage. While George's manhood is affirmed by Helen, he needs further reinforcement by Doris, and in return Doris seeks self-fulfillment. Thus, two people suffering a series of personal crises search for certain types of positive reinforcements. The uniqueness of the situation is that they seek the equivalent of their spouses in the other person, and to a certain extent find it.

III.

The analysis of this drama rested on three pillars. The application of the second law of thermodynamics, or the concept of entropy to the relationship, the examination of the mental image concerning the other partner held by George and Doris, and the investigation of the role of confession in the play. The application of the entropy formula offers a partial explanation. Whereas George and Doris' marriage and adulterous relationship take place in a temporally and spatially closed system, entropy only affects their respective marriages. The shared relationship functions as a virtual continuation of the marriage and the separately experienced crises provide the necessary negentropic effect. As it has been shown the primary reason for the duration and success of the affair is that both participants seek the equivalent of their spouses in the other. George and Doris undergo personal crises and the spouses' reaction is unsatisfactory for them, but they realize that they cannot escape the boundaries of the marriage. In fact their relationship is the projection or extension of the respective marriages.

Throughout the drama the concept of confession is not used in a religious sense. Despite several religious references the drama does not examine that issue from a religious point of view. The confessions offered in the play include a realization of one's secret side, a communication of hidden desires, an indirect or direct assertion of one's identity, and an establishment of personal obligation.

Finally, one more issue has to be discussed. Do George and Doris really commit adultery? In a literal sense they both engage in a sexual and emotional relationship outside the boundaries of the marriage. However, they are driven by a desire to find the equivalent of their spouses in the other and consequently, a subconscious desire at improving their marriage can be discerned. The relationship between George and Doris expands the narrow boundaries of the marriage, but does not destroy it and the emotional climax of the play, George's indirect confession, helps Doris' marriage. Bertalanffy's definition of an open system, described as one digesting influences from without while experiencing interaction among its various levels can be helpful in this case. The digestions of influences from without indeed prevent George and Doris' relationship from slowing down or reaching the

state of entropy, and the resulting interaction among the components in fact functions as an extended marital therapy session.

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SÁNDOR VÉGH

ADOPTION OR ADAPTATION?: INTERPRETATIONS OF THE AUTOMOBILE

Introduction

To offer potential interpretations of the automobile it is necessary to begin with the observation of its way into American society. Contrary to the common assumption that the automobile worked its way into the American cultural scene on the *veni, vidi, vici* basis, I believe its spreading occurred according to a prefabricated agenda which aimed at business interest rather than social improvements *per se*. Consequently, the changes in the social and cultural landscape that followed the appearance of the automobile were clear examples of a set of business-driven decisions on the way to the formation of a modern, capitalist consumer society.

The development of the automobile was certainly a gradual process. However, for the common man the automobile seemed to become reality overnight when Ford's Model T came out in sufficient quantity to fill the streets of American cities. Most of the people did not see the actual stages of development from Nicolaus Otto's four-stroke engine to Ford's Flivver. Therefore, it is also necessary to pay attention to how, and in what phases, the automobile was integrated into the lives of American people. Whether the automobile had to be changed to suit the needs of society, or actually society had to be reshaped to fit the automobile; that is, whether society *adapted* the car and altered it to its needs, or the process seemed rather an *adoption* which would suggest that it was society which was in constant change in order to accommodate the car.

It follows from the thesis that certain changes had to be implemented in society prior to the wide—range sale of the automobile. In my opinion, this preparation for mass distribution happened during the automobile's "plaything of the rich" period and included manipulation of the masses through advertisement emphasizing the car's advantages, such as mobility, equality, and individuality. These appeals will be examined in the paper.

But why the great need for the automobile? The answer is not at all simple, as one would think at the first glance. "Our need for cars is a 'false' need created through the manipulation of consumer desire," says Interrante (90). In his essay, he also states that the car did satisfy a *real* need for transportation, but argues that this need has changed as the social and spatial patterns of American culture have changed. People use their cars far more often than it would be necessary. If they can afford to do so, they buy better-looking, faster, more powerful, and more expensive cars than they really need. To be able to provide a complete answer to the question one has to go beyond the concept of the car as merely a means of transportation. For the automobile may also serve as an exemplary object in examining the structure and operation of a consumer society in its adolescent period as well as an exciting piece of consumer article which came to mean much more through its mutually influential relationship with society. Therefore, it might help understand the automobile's integration into American culture if one looks at the automobile not only as a means of transportation, or a consumer item, or even as a fashionable contemporary obsession, but as a unique and cohesive mixture, an incarnation of the American dream, the manifestation of America itself.

The automobile's way into American society

To fully comprehend how Americans relate to revolutionary technical inventions, one has to observe the car as a concrete manifestation of an abstract idea of technical evolution in the American environment. From the very beginning America was struggling to develop self-consciously and rapidly to make up for the few hundred years it skipped in history. It was a new nation that had to prove its right to exist and its power to survive, advance, and

eventually to lead. It had to show the world—especially England and Europe—that it was possible to establish a new order, “to transplant upon a wilderness environment a culture centuries old” (Nevins IX)—to grow into a new, a unique civilization. And the “eyes of the world” were upon America. Thus, the secular understanding of the “city upon a hill” concept had determined the attitude of the American people toward the notion of progress in civilization. During this evolution, they cheered and applauded every single person—in an outstanding manner—who did achieve something of any importance that moved the nation to the cutting edge of progress.

This activist understanding of national progress was especially true in the 1920’s considering what we already know about the mood of the period. It is evident that one of the advancements of the era was the automobile itself among, of course, other technical and technological inventions. Moreover, the automobile’s future orientation was typically American. It had no past, and pointed toward the future. Undoubtedly, the car smoothly suited the American *Weltanschauung* and fitted in the course and concept of American destiny and identity. In the view of this notion, it is understandable why there was a great public appreciation for the automobile. In fact, I think, the same explanation holds true for other technical innovations that received an overwhelming welcome, such as the airplane, the spaceship, and the computer. Foster’s statement that “Americans have traditionally manifested remarkable enthusiasm toward technological advances” (24), explains why automobile ownership for transportation purposes resulted in a national automobile mania. Since then the family car has often been chosen to symbolize (the best of) American life. To what an extent it became an inseparable part of everyday life was very well illustrated by Martin Wachs:

They are, in fact, the critical link between our homes, jobs, and social lives. Marriages are proposed in cars, and children conceived in them. A parent tells a child about his or her birth by relating the story of a hurried trip to the hospital in a snowstorm, and the end of life is marked by the solemn ride to the cemetery. (86)

From a popular cultural perspective, the automobile in its early years could be looked upon as the “current American mania.” As it

has become evident by the infinite number of examples by today, American popular culture needs only an impulse to explode into some contagious infatuation, especially when supported by the media. The object of the frenzy may be the automobile itself, such as the Flivver from 1910 until the middle of the 20's, or the Model A from 1927, or it may be just a part of it, like the tailfin craze of the late 50's, early 60's. By the end of the century, automobiles, now omnipresent in popular cultural products, have had various characteristics always peculiar to the era. For instance, today's vehicles equipped with a computer on board can "think and talk." These material cultural manifestations always reflect the mood of the period and the national economic situation. American culture has been in constant interaction with the automobile, one endlessly forming the other. This cycle ensures the automobile to remain a cardinal pillar of American culture, to remain mostly American.

Consumerism and the automobile

The automobile definitely provided a broader definition for equality. First, especially in its early age, the automobile did not make distinctions between riders on the road; it equalized them in a way. Second, it provided a democratic access to goods. Theoretically, it looks like a promising leap ahead on the road of modern democracy—providing each and every car-owning consumer with the same access to goods. However, in my opinion, it was rather a controlled process to establish a broader segment of society who are consumers of that particular product. The providers of society found ways to every potential customer through the establishment of mail-order stores where one could buy practically anything from a catalogue by mail, or over the phone. This institution spectacularly succeeded in integrating those without the possession of an automobile into a more complex group of consumers.

For the purpose of this essay, it is worthwhile to revisit the basics of capitalist control. In case of the automobile also, it was exactly a group of capitalists who made decisions upon what product they should make, how they would distribute it, and whom they would make it accessible to. The idea was to take advantage of the consumer's limited position while convincing them that the entire

system was working *for* their benefit. In fact, it was working *because* of them, and the aim was achieved by simply de-emphasizing capitalist interest and overemphasizing consumer choice. The automobile, which apparently brought about immediate changes in society, established new institutions, and created roadtowns, suburbs, shopping malls had, in fact, no automatic consequences—its whole existence was under the control of corporate leaders in key decision-making positions, i.e., controlled by the providers of the consumer society. Every decision was dictated by business and the effort for higher profits. The consumer did not really get what he wanted, but what was offered. There was, of course, a considerable feedback from the customers regarding their desires and needs, but it was the providing capitalist who monitored, filtered, and decided mainly on the basis of the profit demands and—to a less extent—on the consumers' desires. This fact was supported by the highly manipulative commercial advertisement, of which the main goal was to have the consumers buy the merchandise with the cheapest production cost at the highest price possible, while they still thought that they had made a bargain. Although this is not surprising at all if one is aware of the fundamentals of economics, free market capitalism, free competition, and is able to look at the automobile as a piece of consumer product, not only as an ingenious invention that can take one to distant places. The car for the masses arrived at a time when Americans had extra money and "free time." The prosperity of the 1920's had its role, but the nation's overwhelming acceptance of the automobile was also due to several other factors. Let us examine some of them.

Self-awareness of the average American in the early years of the automobile

The automobile was a distinguished manifestation of the enormous change in the thinking of the American public during the first decades of the century. A growing self-awareness in the nation had actually begun after the economic recession in the 1890's when the average American became increasingly aware of his impersonalization as a worker, his insignificance as a citizen, his helplessness as a human being, and, finally, a diminished understanding of his rights as an American. The peak of the individualization movement coincided

with the coming of the automobile's—and the question arises: Did the automobile play an initiative role in the process that resulted in an increasingly self-conscious average American citizen or did this happen the other way around? Or is there a meaningful link operating at all? Well, the answer is no to the first two questions; however, as to the interaction between the two, a viable link might exist.

The changes in the popular consciousness had started in the 1890's. By the end of the first decade of the 20th-century, it had developed to a widely noticeable extent amplified by the Progressive movement, the nationwide workers' unions, and the increased reform activity in journalism and literature. On the other hand, the automobile had not been mass produced until 1913¹; without which it was impossible to have an effect on a considerable segment of society. Even when mass-produced, the automobile did not become available to the working class for another decade or two. As a matter of fact, the classic case study of the impact of the automobile in Muncie, Ind., Middletown, conducted by Robert and Helen Lynd in the 1920's, has been proved to be wrong in its prediction, because of the facile assumption that the automobile had revolutionized the lifestyle of the American society of the 1920's (*Automobile Age* 158). As Flink rightfully noted in his masterly historical narrative of the automobile, the statement itself is not true without pointing out that the period of the 1920's was a revolutionary time *only* for the middle and upper classes, while the change in the life of the working class came as late as the 1950's. In fact, in 1927, more than half of the American families did not own a car (130). The connection between the self-awakening of the American worker and the automobile lies in the fact that the automobile industry and mass production techniques are very specific instances of the environment where the American worker found himself oppressed and for which he demanded changes. At the same time, the automobile itself is a particular object that—in its

¹ In fact, Ransom E. Olds had introduced the method earlier with the two main principles that the work should be brought to the worker, and that the line should be elevated to the waist level so the worker did not have to stoop. Thus, the 1903 Oldsmobile was the first car ever made on the assembly line, but its production output had not been more than a few hundred and Ford was the one who refined the method and put it to work more effectively.

development—was a pioneer in the new consumer culture and manifested the change which the American citizen experienced.

Mass production and its technical realization, the assembly-line, had far the greatest social impact on the industrial workers of the era. It proved to be a controversial issue with its enormous industrial success, but serious social consequences and bitter public response. The success was hardly disputable in the light of the rising production curve. It was apparent at the same time that early manufacturers did not consider the human factor of mass production. True, however, that Henry Ford attempted to compensate his workers by paying five dollars for an eight-hour day, but it came at the price of the Ford Company's direct interfering with the private lives of its employees to verify their qualification for this new "profit sharing plan."

Mass production caused many changes in everyday life that were perceptible by the mid-1920's. The simplicity of the task the workers had to perform allowed a considerably wider range of possible labor force. In fact, young and energetic people became more valuable workers than their fathers (quoted in *Automobile Age* 119); therefore, in blue-collar families respect for age, as well as parental authority was undercut. At the same time, since the newly available workers also included women, the democratization of the American family was actually furthered by mass production. On the other hand, from the perspective of traditional American values, the impact of mass production on the worker was disastrous. The slightest chance to become a self-made man, or to move upward socially simply vanished. This social *cul-de-sac* made the assembly-line worker rightfully frustrated. Flink also points out that the meaning of work "long sanctified in the Protestant Ethic" diminished to moneymaking at a job was rather a "treadmill to escape than a calling to find fulfillment" (*Automobile Age* 120). At the Ford Motor Company workers were already protesting against inhumane working conditions, because they felt that their identity and personality were being oppressed. The assembly-line workers had no chance for social advancement at Highland Park.

In this new era and new concept of life with the economic stabilization and prosperity of the country between the turn of the century and 1929 people quickly adopted technological inventions

into their lives, and culture was in a process of continuous formation. The consumer society was just adjusting to the new circumstances. Susman observed that people entered from the world of scarcity into the world of abundance, leisure became as important as labor, and they did not hoard their savings anymore, but spent much of it.² While in the 1870's, as W. G. Sumner wrote, the savings bank depositor was the true hero of civilization, now Americans learned that they were largely to think of themselves as consumers (111). The change in human nature followed soon: the values of Puritanism were being replaced by ideas of Modernism, which caused a serious rift between the two generations involved.

Generally, the self-awareness and individualization movement juxtaposed with mass production and mass consumption shows an interesting and controversial duality. One might wonder how it is possible to satisfy the needs of so many individuals by providing mass-produced cars for them. It is known that newspapers and magazines gave the motorcar generous and extensive coverage, both in the format of news reports and commercial advertisement. On the whole, the national taste about the automobile was consciously formed and manipulated, thus; the mass automobile industry could more easily satisfy the needs of the consumers. Mass consumer culture makes it possible through mass communication not to control the consumer article only, but to manipulate directly the consumers' demands. Loewy complained that "whatever was chosen by the major manufacturers became the accepted style through saturation" (Gammage 146). Certainly, a range of media products played a key role in the popularization of the automobile. With Hollywood in the lead, they even managed to form popular taste abroad and thus created an international market for the American-made automobile overseas.

In the new world of mass consumption people still wanted to express their individual needs. For instance, soon after Ford had provided them with a cheap and reliable family car they realized that price and efficiency were not enough—they demanded new inventions and luxuries. This claim is supported by numerous instances when people actually suggested improvements themselves directly to car

² This phenomenon can be very well demonstrated by Ford's 8-hour 5-dollar day, which resulted in more money to spend and more time for leisure.

manufacturers. Wik reported that an average of 300 letters a day had reached the Ford plant from customers recommending possible additions to the Model T, such as turn signals, self-acting windshield wipers, four-wheel brakes, and automatic transmissions (43). Customers, especially farmers who made the most diverse use of the Flivver, wanted to participate in the development; to contribute to the automobile so as to make sure their individual demands would be reflected in the new models. Furthermore, by contributing to a wide-scale, mass-produced, all-American product for themselves, consumers felt that they—the individuals—became significant at a level where they had had no voice before.

Automobile manufacturers soon implemented effective methods to make mass-produced, similar cars unique, tailored to individual needs as the consumers demanded. In the upcoming decades more and more automobile parts could be personalized, adjusted to one's own needs, or equipped with personally chosen accessories. These parts that make the same models different are, for instance, the body that could be painted any color, the seat cover that could be of any material, the seats and wheel that could be adjusted, the car radios that offered a wide variety of choices in quality and appearance as well; today, even the license plates can be customized. One reason for the fall of the Model T was, in fact, a misplaced marketing strategy; namely, the refusal to add luxuries to the Model T. Ford's commitment to the common man was admirable, but he failed to perceive that people "did not want to feel common anymore" (Susman 140), especially in an age when Americans were becoming increasingly self-aware.

In this changed world, as in the case of the automobile, the luxuries, the more convenient and more modern innovations help civilization to advance as far as human needs are concerned. In Walter Engard's words, "To keep America growing we must keep Americans working, and to keep Americans working we must keep them wanting; wanting more than the bare necessities; wanting the luxuries and frills that make life so much more worthwhile" (*Car Culture* 149). By 1960, the purchasing habits of the nation had been altered by economic factors. Smaller and more compact cars were introduced on the market. But Americans have not given up their desire for more stylish and extravagant models: the manufacturers came out with new

categories, such as the “luxury economy cars” to satisfy the needs of costumers who still perceived their automobile interiors as substitutes for living rooms, a mobile extension of their houses.

Social consequences

Individualization of transportation should result in the rise of the individual. However, this was a spurious conclusion since a greater level of individuality can only be estimated if it is compared either to the previous level of the individual, such as those who used, for instance, horse power for transportation, or to other individuals. But the arrival of the automobile after the 1920’s was so overwhelming that horse-drawn carriages rapidly vanished from city streets, not leaving ground for either side-by-side comparison, or doubts about the usefulness of the car. However, it has to be reiterated that automobilization happened in waves—the first of which provided the rich with the possibility to own an automobile. Thus, its effect on the state of the individual meant the expansion of the gap between the elite of the society and the working class rather than the expansion of the individual’s dimensions.

It follows from the above that some historians firmly believed that the automobile erased class barriers, while some others said it made the gap even wider. In my opinion, the automobile defined an *alternative class system* (ACS) on top of the existing one: while the basis for distinction in the 1920’s was whether one had a car or not, toward the end of the century the determining factors came to be quantity, quality (including year and make), and price. In the ACS, the social standing is dynamically determined on the road by the attributes of the vehicle driven. It follows that while the lowest layer of society includes those without property, in the ACS, the poorest are those on foot. The ACS was finer and even more complex combined with the traditional one if we note that one’s social status in the “traditional” system did not necessarily coincide with one’s position in the “automobile-based” one.

Before the automobile, especially at the end of the previous century, many Americans had been humbled by poverty and by their own insignificance in the business order. However, by owning a car, one gained a new sense of authority. The car was ready to take the

riders wherever they personally pleased. If one was driving a bus or a huge truck trailer—as historian F. L. Allen pointed out—he felt even more kingly since he felt responsible for the wielding of a sizeable concentration of force. According to him, this phenomenon was especially noticeable in the South where black people had been oppressed to the greatest extent by racial status. Whites began to complain about “uppity niggers” on the highways where “there was no Jim Crow” (*Big Change* 130). Hence, the instant demand of the upper class for more luxurious vehicles that only they could afford, in order to partially restore their weakened position on the road.

From the beginning, the automobile has been an ultimate status symbol. Mowry believes that “people are giving less thought to the home and more to the car as an indicator of social position [see ACS]. The house stands still; only a chosen few can see the inside. But the car goes about; everybody sees it, and many observers know what it cost” (46). At the turn of the century, the automobile meant a decent social status. In the era of mass production and the Flivver, the unique, better-looking, more stylish, and more expensive models meant social appreciation. In the 1950’s, the emphasis shifted to the size of the car; later the number of cars one owned was the main indicator of affluence. Today, since most families can afford a car (nine out of ten in 1994)³, the more expensive, the more luxurious, or the more equipped the car is, the more likely that the owner maintains a high social standing. Moreover, the possession of a remarkably expensive car is a social expectation for the upper layer of the society. By the end of the 20th-century, rather the lack of the car became a social indicator, thus, “the car ... has become a measure of failure as well as a symbol a success” (Sanford 142).

In fact, an interesting analogy can be discovered between the political and social events of the 1920’s, and the progress of automobility in the popular consciousness. The 1920’s seemed to have been an extravagant and careless decade with its sensational news, criminal trials, horrifying murders, heroic achievements, and famous

³ In 1994, 89.3 percent of the American households owned a motor vehicle. In details, 33.1 million households owned one motor vehicle (35.3 % of the total), and 50.8 million (54.0%) owned two, or more. (Source: Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1994)

heroes, but under the surface there was the truth which covered political intrigues, cultural crisis, and the shadow of an economic disaster. Similarly, people tended, or rather wanted, to look at the automobile as a perfect gift which would transform the world automatically into an ideal one, utilizing only its advantages. However, the changes did not at all surface immediately, and several—actually foreseeable—problems and negative effects came up in the following decades which raised certain doubts about the automobile's overall beneficialness.

In his list of the early negative effects of the motorcar, F. L. Allen identified the automobile as the source of family friction, a place for misconduct, the cause for a rising death toll on the roads, and an easy getaway for criminals (*Big Change* 123). Today, the most pressing ones are air pollution, exploitation of and encroaching upon the natural environment, and the parking problem. Historians have attempted to link other, not so direct consequences to the automobile as well.

Examining the impacts of the automobile, for instance, Flink found that class differences, as well as localism and ethnicity, suffered a well-perceivable decline (*America Adopts* 3). The long-term consequences are evident now at the end of the century. The automobile did open roads to and from remote villages, farms, and faraway places. It certainly destroyed localism, poisoned traditional morals and lifeways, but it opened up space for development and provided isolated settlements with an easy access to modern civilization. The degradation was realized and acted upon rather late by authorities whose main concern today is to rebuild these places, restore the atmosphere and preserve the American past of which localism was definitely a part. Although this reconstructed environment very well resembles the past, it is only a replica. By the masses it attracts, it does promote awareness of cultural heritage for Americans; however, its concealed falsity may give basis for criticism for counter-advocates of American culture. In my observations, Europeans who share a traditional and rich cultural history of a thousand years or more, vehemently protest against the unstoppable U. S. commercial influence and "low-brow" popular taste. While the average European is stimulated—by commercial interest—to identify American culture

with well-known food-chains and Hollywood blockbusters, we have no reason to wonder about this resistance.

Ethnicity, too, has fallen victim to the automobile. Originally closed ethnic communities were opened up, which undoubtedly helped them to be recognized and to promote their ethnic heritage, but destroyed their integrity. Geographical mobility loosened up these communities, scattered them around the country to become easy subjects to assimilation which certainly helped America to become a more unified nation, but also resulted in the loss of ethnic identity. Worst of all, the already fully operating consumer society tore off elements of ethnic cultures—national food in most cases—and identified the whole ethnicity with them. Certainly, the automobile is not responsible for the derogative connotations of these associations.

Summary

Even today, the development of the automobile continues to advance. The motor vehicle has become an inseparable and cardinal piece of the American scene; one foundation-stone of contemporary American civilization. Historians often concluded their research of the history of the automobile by slightly exaggerating statements. Schneider remarks that “the automobile is the greatest self-generating, self-sustaining development since the living cell first appeared on earth and began to populate it with the species” (Schneider 265). Flink's opening statement in his comprehensive study of the car is, “the Model T and the Fordson tractor more profoundly influenced 20th-century American historical development than the collection of reforms emerging from the so-called Progressive Era and the New Deal combined” (*Car Culture* 2). In his introductory essay, Neuman implies that “[t]o mechanical convenience has so enthralled a jaded public, as the automobile has the American public” (123). I agree with the experts of automobile history that no other technological advance opened up space for human habitation and habitude, and other use, in such a brief period than the automobile.

Undoubtedly, the automobile industry initiated other industries, improved and established many new types of small businesses, and positively affected most branches of the economy. American lifeways were reshaped; patterns of courtship, residence, socialization of

children, education, work habits, and use of leisure time have been radically altered by the adoption of the automobile (*America Adopts* 3). It reformed social values, altered the everyday routine of people, and progressively transformed American communities and daily living habits and gave direction to American life. Its most obvious advantage was that it meant a new way of mobility, which was no longer a steady, westward movement driven by "Manifest Destiny," but rather a frequent routine drive between the city and the countryside.

If I had to summarize the history of American automobility emphasizing its enormous influence on American life I would quote Foster who gave the most compact summary by saying: "Colonial Americans had little choice but to walk to their jobs in the city. Their heirs had almost no alternative but to drive" (35). While a much more bitter voice of one of the most concerned historians concludes, "they completed the rape of the land the frontiersman had begun" (Nye 131).

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LEHEL VADON

THE AMERICAN ENLIGHTMENT: A HUNGARIAN
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The intention of the editor of *Eger Journal of American Studies* is to launch for a bibliographical series of major American authors in Hungary.

The present bibliography is satisfying to make available for the first time a reasonably complete record of publications – both primary and secondary sources – of the writers of the American Enlightenment: Benjamin Franklin, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Royall Tyler, Phillis Wheatley, Philip Morin Freneau, Joel Barlow, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Washington Irving, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet and William Cullen Bryant.

The books in Primary Sources are listed in order of date of first publication in English, followed by the Hungarian translation in chronological arrangement. Selections from the works of the writers in Hungarian translations are arranged in order of publication date in Hungary.

The entries of the Secondary Sources are presented under the names of the authors, listed in alphabetical order. The entries by unknown authors are arranged in chronological order.

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Material for this bibliography has been collected from periodicals and newspapers, listed in the book: Vadon Lehel: *Az amerikai irodalom és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiája a magyar időszaki kiadványokban 1990-ig.*

A key to the Hungarian abbreviations and word: évf. = volume, sz. = number, kötet = volume.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706–1790)

1. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN IN HUNGARY (Primary Sources)

1/a

Benjamin Franklin's Books in Hungarian
Translation and Editions

THE WAY TO WEALTH. 1757.

FRANKLIN AZ ÖREG RIKHÁRD NEVE ALATT. (A' jámbor Rikárd tudománya, vagyis a' vagyonszágra és az adófizetés könnyítő módjára vezető út.) Nagyvárad: Tichy ny., [1848.] 20, [4] pp. Translated by Lajos Szilágyi.

A GAZDAGODÁS ÚTJA AMINT AZT A SZEGÉNY RICHARD EGY PENNSYLVÁNIAI KALENDÁRIUMBAN VILÁGOSAN MEGMUTATJA. Budapest: Franklin – Társulat, 1914. 36 pp. (Olcsó Könyvtár, 2110.) [=Popular Library, 2110.] Translated by Mihály Láng.

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FRANKLIN BENJÁMIN ÖNÉLETRAJZA. Budapest: Franklin – Társulat, 1921. 123, [1] pp. Translated by Pál Pruzsinszky.

FRANKLIN BENJAMIN ÖNÉLETRAJZA. Budapest: Rózsa-völgyi és Társa kiadása, [1921.] 271 pp. Translated by Ödön Wildner.

SZÁMADÁSA ÉLETÉRŐL. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1961. 225, [1] pp. Translated by Tibor Bartos.

1/b

A Collection of Benjamin Franklin's Works in Hungarian
Translation and Edition

FRANKLIN' ARANY KINCSES-LÁDATSKÁJA VAGY ÚTMUTATÁS, MIKÉP LEHET AZ EMBER MUNKÁS, OKOS, KEDVES, JÓLMAGABÍRÓ, RÉNYES ÉS BOLDOG. MINT AZ ÉLET MINDEN VISZONYAIBAN SZERFELETT HASZNOS, VÉNEKNEK ÉS IFJAKNAK, DE KÜLÖNÖSEN AZ ELSŐKNEK, NÉLKÜLEZHETŐ TANÁCSADÓT, ÚGY AJÁNlja HONFITÁRSAINAK S. J. KASSÁN 1836. [=Franklin's Golden Jewel-Box, or Instruction How to Be Industrious, Clever, Kind, Healthy, Virtuous and Happy. S. J. presents the collection to his countrymen as a very useful source of advice for both old and young, but especially the first in all the ways of life.] Kassa, 1836. 81 pp.

Selections from the Works of Benjamin Franklin

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- A' SZEGÉNY, ÖREG RICHÁRD, VAGY MÓDOK, MIKÉP LEHET MEGGAZDAGODNI. (A gazdagodás útja, 38. fejezet.) (The poor old Richard or methods how to get rich. The Way to Wealth, 38th chapter.) Translated by anonymous. In: *Franklin' arany kincses-ládatskája.* [=Franklin's Golden Jewel-Box.] Kassa, 1836.
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THE WAY TO WEALTH. In: Sarolta (Charlotte) Kretzoi (ed. and selected): *Amerikai irodalmi szöveggyűjtemény a kezdetektől 1900-ig*. [=An American Reader from the Beginnings to 1900.] Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1987. 45–52.

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A “SZEGÉNY RICHARD” MONDÁSAI. (Bölcséleti mondások.) [=The Sayings of “Poor Richard”.] (Moral sayings.) Translated by anonymous. *Vasárnapi Újság*, 1873. XX. évf. 14. sz. 163.

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A Work Based on the Writings and Spirit of Benjamin Franklin

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J. HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECOEUR
(MICHAEL GUILLAUME JEAN DE
CRÈVECOEUR)
(1735–1813)

1. CRÈVECOEUR IN HUNGARY
 (Primary Sources)

Crèvecoeur's Letters

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2. HUNGARIAN PUBLICATIONS ABOUT CRÈVECOEUR

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THOMAS PAINE (1737–1809)

1. THOMAS PAINE IN HUNGARY

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THOMAS JEFFERSON LEVELE JAMES MADISONNAK.
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ROYALL TYLER
(1757–1826)

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(Primary Sources)

Royall Tyler's Work in Hungary

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PHILLIS WHEATLEY
(1753–1784)

1. PHILLIS WHEATLEY IN HUNGARY
(Primary Sources)

Phillis Wheatley's Poems in Hungary

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PHILIP MORIN FRENEAU (1752–1832)

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JOEL BARLOW (1754–1812)

1. JOEL BARLOW IN HUNGARY

(Primary Sources)

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(1748–1816)

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(1790–1870)

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(1794–1878)

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LEHEL VADON

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER: A HUNGARIAN
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The intention of the editor of Eger Journal of American Studies is to launch for a bibliographical series of major American authors in Hungary.

The present bibliography is satisfying to make available for the first time a reasonably complete record of publications – both primary and secondary sources – of James Fenimore Cooper.

The books in Primary Sources are listed in order of date of first publication in English, followed by the Hungarian translation in chronological arrangement. Selections from the works of Cooper and his short stories in Hungarian translations are arranged in order of publication date in Hungary.

The entries of the Secondary Sources are presented under the names of the authors, listed in alphabetical order. The entries by unknown authors are arranged in chronological order.

Material for this bibliography has been collected from periodicals and newspapers, listed in the book: Vadon Lehel: *Az amerikai irodalom és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiája a magyar időszaki kiadványokban 1990-ig*.

A key to the Hungarian abbreviations and word: évf. = volume, sz. = number, kötet = volume.

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- b. Cooper's Hungarian Omnibus Volumes
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(Secondary Sources)

- a. Bibliography
- b. Studies and Articles
- c. Book Reviews
- d. Review of a Play
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JAMES FENIMORE COOPER
(1789–1851)

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Review of a Play

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Writings Based on Cooper's Works

75. CHRISTIAN: Woolston Mark, az amerikai Robinson. (Elbeszélés Cooper nyomán.) [=Woolston Mark, the American Robinson. A short story based on Cooper's tale.] Translated by Ilona Győry. In: Joachim Heinrich Campe – James Fenimore Cooper: *Beszélyek távoli világrészekből*. [=Short Stories from Remote Parts of the World.] Budapest: Lauffer Vilmos kiadása, [1891.] 75–115.
76. DANESI, MARIA: Az utolsó mohikán. J. F. Cooper nyomán. [=The Last of the Mohicans. Based on Cooper's Novel.] Translated by Nóra Simon. [Budapest,] 1997. 46, [2] pp.
77. CS. HORVÁTH TIBOR – ZÓRÁD ERNŐ: Az utolsó mohikán. Színes képregény. J. F. Cooper regénye nyomán írta Cs. Horváth Tibor, rajzolta Zórád Ernő. [=The Last of the Mohicans. A color picture-novel based on Cooper's novel, written by Tibor Cs. Horváth, drawn by Ernő Zórád.] Budapest: Ifjúsági Lap- és Könyvkiadó Vállalat, [1987.] 48 pp.

PÉTER EGRI

VADON, LEHEL. *AZ AMERIKAI IRODALOM ÉS
IRODALOMTUDOMÁNY BIBLIOGRÁFIÁJA A MAGYAR
IDŐSZAKI KIADVÁNYOKBAN 1990-IG*

[A Bibliography of American Literature and Literary
Scholarship in Hungarian Periodicals till 1900]. Eger,
EKTF Líceum Kiadó, 1997. 1076 pp.

This massive volume of bibliography created by Lehel Vadon, Chair of the Department of American Studies of Eger's Eszterházy Károly College, is both a breath-taking enterprise and an outstanding scholarly achievement.

First of all, the mere size and scope of the undertaking are impressive: the bulky volume lists 9,920 itemized entries; in exploring the relevant data in the periodical literature, Vadon pored through 1,619 periodical publications, incorporated 9,920 numbered data, explored the totality of pertinent material available in what used to be pre-World War One historic Hungary, he drew upon and registered the evidence of Hungarian periodicals issued in other countries. Thus, in the enormous field of his subject, he aimed at completeness.

Secondly, his investigative searchlight penetrated hidden nooks and corners over an exceedingly long period: from the first Hungarian periodicals published up to the year 1997.

The Hungarian version of this review was published in *Filológiai Közlöny*, 2000. XLVI. No. 1–2. The present publication was translated by Professor Zsolt Virágos at Professor Péter Egri's personal request.

Thirdly, on this vast and apparently chaotic wilderness he has imposed an exemplary order: the volume is logically segmented, its arrangement is lucid and based on solid structural premises.

The detailed, though never lengthy introductory chapter (35–47)—a separate disquisition in its own right—offers a helpful description of the undertaking's thematic range and clarifies the principles of its structural layout.

The second large structural unit of the volume (49–864) contains the personal entries, which range from Edward Abbey to Eugenia Zukerman. In the personal bibliography the distinction between the primary and secondary sources is rigorously maintained. The same principle of organization recurs in the treatment of each author, which makes the arrangement of the material especially attractive, for the reader/researcher will find in the same entry what our dailies and journals have published both by and about, say, Hemingway. It was a felicitous idea to have the names of the respective authors included in the table of contents: the alphabetical list immediately arouses interest and helpfully draws the attention of the user, facilitates reader orientation, and readily offers the kind of initial information that most users need.

With regard to this latter unit of the book I might add, by way of supplement, that on the evidence of András Benedek's O'Neill monograph (Budapest: Gondolat, 1964. 137) the American playwright's drama *Különös közjáték* [Strange Interlude] was first published in *Színházi Élet* [Theater Life] in 1929, and so was *Amerikai Elektra* [Mourning Becomes Electra] in 1937, both translated into Hungarian by Zsolt Harsányi.

The bibliography's third unit (865–867) references the works of unidentified authors: novels, short stories, sketches, feuilletons; even a reportorial account is separately listed.

The fourth part (868–871) presents folkloristic material, successively arranged as American folk-poetry, Native American oral poetry, and African American folk-poetry.

The fifth chapter (872–940) is made up of a bulky general bibliography. As such, it serves as a counterpart of the personal entries. This unit, to quote the author, "includes the kind of literature (studies, essays, articles, book reviews and other kindred publications)

that focus on American literature in a general sense and not on individual authors or their works. Texts on particular authors were also accommodated in the general section only if this was justified by the nature of the texts, that is, mainly in those cases when their themes also pertain to more general issues" (39).

The multifaceted comprehensiveness of the general bibliography is manifest in its various subcategories: prose, poetry, drama, theater, literary history, literary theory, criticisms, Hungarian-American links, reception, comparative studies, bibliography, publishing, press, book reviews on literary anthologies in Hungarian, and finally, miscellaneous writing not readily classifiable in the other categories.

In subsequent editions it might be expedient to streamline the terminology and to use "epic genre" instead of prose, "lyric genre" instead of poetry because drama, as dictated by the logic of the tripartite breakdown, appears as the third dominant generic class, and the majority used by other authors, it still seems expedient to avoid unnecessary overlaps and abrupt shifts in generic focus. *Omnis determinatio est negatio*. It also appears useful to ponder whether or not the more general classes (bibliographies, literary theory) should be given more priority and be moved higher in the list.

The concluding part of the volume is an appendix (941–1076), which provides alphabetical information on the periodical literature surveyed, in which asterisks mark the titles of dailies, weeklies, journals, and annual publications with a special focus on American literature. The appendix also accommodates a general name index, as well as a separate alphabetical register of the names of the translators mentioned in the volume.

Fourthly, Lehel Vadon's bibliography, which is dedicated to his one-time mentor Professor László Országh, is an exemplary work, almost uncharacteristically thorough, painstakingly accurate, and professional. The relevant data in the respective dailies, weeklies, journals, and yearbook were not gleaned from other bibliographies; in exploring them, the author had physical contact with each item, he held them all in his own hands. He did indispensable research, among other places, in the National Széchényi Library, the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Sciences, in the libraries of Kossuth University in Debrecen, in libraries and archives in Pozsony

(Bratislava) and Kassa (Košice), but also in U.S. libraries: Grand Canyon University, Arizona State University, Florida State University, as well as the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

All in all, Mr. Vadon's work—a single-handed achievement—offers more than it promises: in supplying the dates of the respective authors' birth and death, for instance, the volume assumes the features of an American literary encyclopedia; when explaining initials and variants of personal names and supplying pen names, it moves in the direction of a literary lexicon; by enumerating English and Hungarian textbooks (40–46) use to check data, a large amount of American Studies *book* material is specified and, as a result, the user of the work gets a glimpse of American cultural history. In providing all this additional information, the volume also offers extra dimensions beyond the 1990 time limit and it almost extends to the end of the millennium. The bibliography's latest data are from 1997, the year of its publications.

It is hoped that, by reaching beyond the volume's assigned time frame, Lehel Vadon was actually gearing up for a couple of new undertakings: the extension of the *periodical* bibliography and work towards the publication of a *book* bibliography. This, of course, would have to encompass the research and published work of László Ország, Zoltán Abádi-Nagy, Zsolt Virágos, and other Hungarian experts of American Studies. Although it is only natural that the more urgent and difficult task of exploring the periodical material should have been given proper priority, the completion of a book bibliography would also be more than worth the candle.

When László Ország published his *Bevezetés az angol nyelv- és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiájába* [Introduction to the Bibliography of English Linguistic and Literary Scholarship; *Műhely* 7: 63–63]—also published in Budapest as a separate off-print in the following year—, in the introduction to his work he observed that “the objective of the present bibliographical outline is to offer a first-aid to those who wish to receive orientation in the fields of English literary scholarship and linguistics” (3). It was a similar incentive that motivated the publication in 1972 of his textbook entitled *Bevezetés az amerikanisztikába* [Introduction to American Studies]. In the preface to his bibliographical volume Lehel Vadon makes the following

remark: "This book is intended to serve as a philological first-aid by satisfying the bibliographical needs of Americanists and librarians, and hereby facilitating their work" (36). The time gap between 1943 and 1997 is considerable. Yet the need to provide a bibliographical first-aid is well discernible in both ventures, which thus ring a pleasing intellectual rhyme between mentor and disciple.

TARNÓC ANDRÁS:

CSILLAG ANDRÁS: *JOSEPH PULITZER ÉS AZ
AMERIKAI SAJTÓ*
[JOSEPH PULITZER AND THE AMERICAN
JOURNALISM]. BUDAPEST, OSIRIS KIADÓ, 2000. 214 PP.

Joseph Pulitzer is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures of the Hungarian–American community. Csillag’s carefully researched and thoroughly documented ambitious work commemorates the life and personal achievements of the press tycoon. The book, however, surpasses the boundaries of a simple biography as it incorporates its protagonist in the continuum of Hungarian and American history. The work does not remain on the level of information reproduction as it analyzes the historical and cultural role of its main subject. The book is not only a milestone in the recording of Hungarian–American relations, but provides a thorough demonstration of an immigrant’s integration into the host society.

The well-structured monograph is divided into ten chapters. The work concentrates on three aspects of Pulitzer’s life, presenting Pulitzer as a journalist, as a politician and as an immigrant. However, these roles are interrelated. Pulitzer, after all is primarily known as a journalist and all his activities are and should be judged from this vantage point. His political activity, his role as the “king-maker” in the 1884 presidential election, the peace maker function in the British–Venezuelan border dispute, the infamous war mongering of the yellow press and the legal conflict with the Roosevelt administration, in addition to his relationship to Hungary and to the Hungarian–Americans are all derivatives of *The World* and the personality of its

publisher. That is Joseph Pulitzer, the politician, the peace activist, the war monger, the benefactor, the champion of the freedom of the press and the immigrant lacking an identification with the old country, or displaying a limited ethnic consciousness cannot be understood without his main achievement, the cornerstone of his empire, *The World*.

Csillag presents a thorough and scholarly evaluation of Pulitzer's life and career. Joseph Pulitzer was as it is well known, one of the leading, if not the most dominant figures of journalism in the United States. The monograph presents a figure with tremendous contradictions, and these inconsistencies form the basis of this review as well. In fact the reader sees two Pulitzers, a dedicated journalist displaying public consciousness as one of the founders of new journalism, a responsible political activist, and a champion of peace and freedom of the press, while the other Pulitzer is the dejected political supporter turning against Cleveland, and the irresponsible inciter of war during the Spanish-American conflict over Cuba. Based on the facts provided by the monograph, this review will examine Pulitzer's political socialization process, and the development of his immigrant experience including the evolution of his liminal consciousness.

Pulitzer's tremendous successes and devastating defeats can be partially explained by his political socialization process. Political socialization is the result of the interaction of such factors as the family, schooling, peer groups and religious influences (Harris 184). Pulitzer was an offspring of a Jewish family with a Moravian background. His father was a well-to-do merchant, whose assignment as a procurer for the Hungarian troops during the 1848-1849 Revolution and War of Independence demonstrated a commitment to freedom and democracy for the young Pulitzer. Furthermore, Joseph Pulitzer's uncle fought in that struggle as well. Pulitzer was the fourth child of a large family, in fact out of his four brothers and four sisters, only his younger brother Albert survived to adulthood. Another important and dramatic element of his upbringing was the death of his father and the ensuing economic misfortune. As Csillag concludes, Pulitzer's main heritage from his family was the love of freedom, the commitment to struggle against tyranny and the respect of Hungarian culture.

As far as his school experiences go, Pulitzer at first was taught by home tutors and as an adolescent he was instructed in a vocational trade school. Here he learned languages, primarily German and French and the basics of business. Soon after his arrival in America he enrolled in a law school and by age 20 he completed his legal studies. Schooling in America played a definitive role in Pulitzer's life as both his legal and business studies implanted the willingness toward logical and organized thinking, cool-headed rational reasoning and the respect of the law.

Peer pressure, or peer group experience is another important agent of the socialization process. Csillag emphasizes two episodes, Pulitzer's joining the Union army, and his relationship to Carl Schurz. Pulitzer's enrollment in the Union army and his support of the Northern cause in the Civil War reflects his life long commitment to democracy. Schurz, the great German freedom fighter, social reformer and newspaperman functioned as an early role model for Pulitzer.

The role of religion in Pulitzer's case is somewhat limited. As Csillag points out religion played a negligible role in Pulitzer's upbringing, and his Jewish background partially explains his support of democracy and the less fortunate. Despite all this, Pulitzer used religion effectively during his career, suffice to point to the publication of the "Belshazzar's feast" political cartoon during the closing stage of the presidential election of 1884, his successful appeal to leading figures of the British clergy to ease the Anglo-American tension ensuing the Venezuelan border dispute, or his attack on the Blaine campaign for using the degrading "Rum, Romanism Rebellion" slogan to describe the supporters of the Democratic Party.

Thus Pulitzer's journalistic, public and political career are the end product of the abovementioned socialization factors. However, this is only the public Pulitzer, there exists another facet of this individual's character, the somewhat hidden private person, formed by the immigration experience. As one should not forget, even though Pulitzer himself reluctantly treated the subject, he was an immigrant. The distribution and structure of Csillag's work reflects this situation, as out of the ten chapters only one is clearly dedicated to the exploration of Pulitzer's Hungarian ties. An immigrant naturally, lives a liminal life, that is being suspended between two cultures he or she

attempts to maintain ties with the old country and the new one. In Pulitzer's case the connection to American society seems stronger. From the time of his very arrival he seemed not to follow the traditional career of the immigrant, that is, he did not seek the assistance of the Hungarian immigrant community, but joined the Union army. This is all the more so interesting as Pulitzer's English proficiency was not satisfactory and despite this he did not resort to the emotional security offered by the Hungarian diaspora.

Whereas most works dedicated to Pulitzer examine him within the American context, that is dissect his contributions to American culture and society, Csillag offers a more subtle view of the press tycoon. Pulitzer's ambiguous and somewhat reluctant attitude to Hungary and his family notwithstanding, he is an immigrant whose career can be analyzed according to the well-known aspects of the laws and explanations concerning the immigration process. One of the most acknowledged scholars of immigration, E. G. Ravenstein offers certain analytical tools to examine this event. (Daniels 17). Push factors include all elements that drive the would-be immigrant away from his or her homeland, pull factors include certain characteristics and features that draw the individual toward the new country. Arthur Mann's famous classification of the acculturation process can also be applied. As acculturation means the process during which the host society absorbs the foreign born, four stages can be distinguished. Total identifiers are individuals who remain with the original ethnic community throughout their immigrant career primarily for emotional and economic security. Partial identifiers are immigrants who maintain divided loyalties to both cultures. This is the category which applies to most immigrants. Disaffiliates are the individuals who figuratively "cannot go home again" as primarily due to education they broke away from the original community and are unable to return. Hybrids are individuals from whom immigration and ethnicity are all "but washed out"(78).

Having applied these analytical tools, the following conclusions can be drawn. The push factors in Pulitzer's case are the thirst for adventure, escape from poverty, breaking out of the restrictive family and society and leaving behind religious persecution along with a desire for self-actualization. However, Pulitzer does not fit the mold of

the traditional immigrant. While he became part of the second wave of immigration to the United States, and acted as one of the main representatives of the first significant Hungarian arrival contingent, his original destination was not the U.S.. His restless spirit originally attracted him toward Maximilian's failed Mexican expedition, in fact potentially serving the emperor of the very nation which put down the Hungarian revolution which his father and uncle so actively supported. Pulitzer wanted to join an international legion of adventurers fighting in Mexico and he remained in New York primarily due to economic reasons. Once again, the fact that he did not seek the assistance of the local Hungarian community should be pointed out. Instead he followed the traditional American migrant's pattern of movement, participating in the second reincarnation of the Westward Expansion reaching the Gateway to the West, St. Louis. Thus, for Pulitzer, the U.S. did not originally function as a pull factor. He wanted to escape from home, and Maximilian's Mexican adventure supplied ample pretext for the realization of his intentions.

The examination of Pulitzer's acculturation process yields the following conclusions. Csillag's thorough compilation of data relating to Pulitzer's Hungarian connections leads us to believe that he can be characterized as a disaffiliate. As he left Hungary, he nursed a tremendous grudge and dissatisfaction toward that country and this partially explains why he maintained an emotional and physical distance from the very beginning of his immigrant career from the Hungarian community and the country itself. He rarely or never spoke Hungarian in public, and seemed to sever all connections with his family and further Hungarian arrivals. His relationship, or the lack of it, with his brother Albert is instructive, as while both men were involved in the same business in the same city, they rarely contacted each other. Pulitzer, however maintained some connections with the Hungarian community, and the best example of his efforts in this regard is the welcoming of Mihály Munkácsy to the United States. However, in this case Munkácsy's appreciation was not primarily driven by a Hungarian consciousness, but by a cosmopolitan's desire for genuine artistic value.

The liminal consciousness of immigrants can be demonstrated by other elements as well. After his health started to decline, Pulitzer

primarily stayed on his yachts, that is not on American soil. While he participated in the most important American political event, the presidential election of 1884, and he significantly influenced its outcome, he was soon forced into the role of the political outsider following his fall out with the Cleveland administration..

His efforts to stave off an armed conflict between the U.S. and Great Britain were appreciated more in Europe, than in his adopted country. The infamous suit brought by the Roosevelt administration described him as a person attacking the American people and violating American interests. Whereas nativism cannot openly be discerned, Theodore Roosevelt's tirade accusing Pulitzer of denigrating and disparaging the American people, suggests a rejection of the foreign born tycoon.

András Csillag's book achieves its ambitious research objective as it presents a multilayered, subtle, and painstakingly detailed Pulitzer portrait. The work surpasses the traditional boundaries of biographical efforts as the examination of Pulitzer's life reveals not only his personal evolution and career, but sheds light at the developments of American history and the internal dynamics of American society. The author's interpretation of John Singer Sargent's famous Pulitzer portrait is a fitting illustration of the tortured soul of this special individual. Just like the face hidden in the shadow and protruding in the light, the true Pulitzer remains a mystery. In this respect András Csillag's effort to pierce the veil covering Joseph Pulitzer's enigmatic self is the best attempt up to date.

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