PRO&CONTRA

Central European Studies in Humanities

Volume 3
Issue 1

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Madmen In and Out of Time
A McTaggartian Reading of Madness in Fiction

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to familiarize readers with a philosophical essay by J.M.E. McTaggart and then to employ it as a basis of literary analysis. The early-20th century arguments on the unreality of time by metaphysician J.M.E. McTaggart's are applied to the temporal experience of madmen in 19th-20th century British and American prose pieces. It is the intention of this study to decipher the thoughts of certain characters in works by Bernard Malamud, Virginia Woolf and Edgar Allan Poe, in the hope that we can uncover logic, truth-value, or a channel of communication with them. The purpose is not to prove that they did not suffer from psychological illnesses, rather it is to challenge the idea that the inability to exist in linear, everyday time is a symptom of madness. By familiarizing the reader with McTaggart's assertion that time is unreal, and approximating it to the quantum-physical theories of Stephen Hawking, I attempt to outline how McTaggart's ideas concerning time align with those prevalent today. By analyzing how the characters in certain prose pieces think about time or live in time, I contend that their experiences offer an opportunity for us to learn and understand.

Key words: time, unreality of time, madness in fiction, J.M.E. McTaggart

Introduction

For millennia, the concept of madness has fascinated scholars and authors alike. We cannot help but be intrigued and oftentimes terrified by individuals who "act deviant from the societal canon", lacking a unified vision on reality different from the way "normal" (neurotypical) minds do. The purpose of this paper is not to attempt to change the physiological and psychological definitions of madness and mental illnesses. It is without question that mental illnesses signal a fragmented state of mind that requires careful assisting, monitoring and examining, whether it is just with talk therapy, a combination of medications, or institutionalization. However, what this article does question, is the refusal to accept the logic of certain mentally ill individuals in certain works of fiction, based on the idea that their thoughts appear incoherent or strange viewed from one specific ontological point of view: namely that linear time exists, and that it is a valid system of inertia around which to arrange the elements of reality.

J.M.E. McTaggart was a British philosopher in the Idealist tradition. According to J. A. Bernstein, McTaggart's 1908 essay "The Unreality of Time", raised more than a few eyebrows upon its publication, primarily due its central argument: *time is unreal.* Bernstein mentions that McTaggart's idea was not well received at first "not least because it ques-

tioned three thousand years of spatial-temporal metaphysics".[1] It is interesting to note that McTaggart himself did not view his essay as paradigm-changing, as he himself highlighted at the start of "The Unreality of Time" stating that he was not the only philosopher of his own time (Sic!) to ponder upon the reality of time.[2] Undoubtedly McTaggart was correct, however, what makes his essay particularly intriguing is his reasoning. He notes that: "I believe that time is unreal. But I do so for reasons which are not, I think, employed by any of the philosophers whom I have mentioned."[3] Of course, from a contemporary standpoint this is likely no longer the case. Edward Freeman argues that McTaggart's arguments may sound somewhat obsolete to the modern reader,[4] however, I am still particularly drawn to using them to analyze the temporal experience of "madmen" in fiction. Why McTaggart? Why not Bergson, Husserl, or Heidegger? To me, the answer lies in the organic relationship between the character of the author, his subject matter and style with regard to my thesis. He was undoubtedly a significant philosopher and well-known in academic circles, but I feel his work is somewhat overlooked in light of the significance of his oeuvre.

Coming from a fiction writing background, my interest in studying "The Unreality of Time" also stems from a semi-conscious professional interest in the character of J.M.E. McTaggart. On reading "The Unreality of Time", it appeared to me that he had a very profound, yet often vaguely communicated drive to understand the metaphysics of our existence, but that this profound, quasi-logical drive was somehow fuelled by a deeply emotional, personal human experience that is the peculiarity of non-neurotypical minds. This is not to assert that McTaggart had mental problems, but that his specific approach to the temporal feels particularly pertinent whilst the goal is to present an empathic bridge of understanding between our neurotypical perception of time, and the perception of those we deem non-neurotypical. It has been highlighted that McTaggart displayed ec-

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[1]   J.A. Bernstein, "'No Audible Tick': Conrad, McTaggart, and the Revolt against Time," *The Conradian* 37, no. 1 (2012): 32. www.jstor.org/stable/23264493

[2]   "In philosophy, again, time is treated as unreal by Spinoza, by Kant, by Hegel, and by Schopenhauer. In the philosophy of the present day the two most important, movements (excluding those which are as yet merely critical) are those which look to Hegel and to Mr. Bradley. And both of these schools deny the reality of time". J. M. E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time". *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy* 17, (1908): 456-473. http://www.ditext.com/mctaggart/time.html

[3]   McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," 456-473.

[4]   "Nowadays, few philosophers who take up the problem of time endorse this sweeping metaphysical thesis. Most see fluid time as entirely illusory. The rest are split between those who believe to the contrary and those who hold both fluid time and static time to be equally real." Edward Freeman, "On McTaggart's Theory of Time," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2010): 389. www.jstor.org/stable/25762149

centric behavior. As noted in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: "He was on most accounts an unusual fellow, with a big head and a crab-like walk (Rochelle 1991, 97). Peter Geach (1971, 10) reports that, 'To the end of his days he walked down corridors with a curious shuffle, back to the wall, as if expecting a sudden kick from behind.' (…) McTaggart saluted cats whenever he met them (Dickinson 1931, 68; Rochelle 1991, 97). (…) His preferred method of transportation was a tricycle."[5] McTaggart believed that mysticism was an essential approach to experience and the transcribing of reality.[6] He frequently described a hypersensitive experience called "the Saul feeling"[7] based on Browning's poem, *Saul*, which begins: "I know not too well how I found my way home in the dark". His musings on the nature of existence lead him into a mystical universe—he believed in "the harmony of immortal spirits"[8] and that the fundamental glue that holds the Universe together is Love.[9]

Though he certainly wasn't the only unusual philosopher in history, applying his ideas to the thoughts of non-neurotypical fictional characters instantly unraveled a particularly interesting, even emotional connection to these characters. I would like to take the reader on a journey through McTaggart, and hopefully, as sentimental as it sounds, convey the same empathic connection to the strange and unusual I have been lucky enough to experience through him.

Time, just like madness, has fascinated the minds of scholars and authors alike, for thousands of years. Even our everyday, individual perception of time is constantly changing, let alone the scientific proposals which familiarize us with its nature. Not even the greatest minds of history can account for certain properties of it (even Stephen Hawking struggled to provide a way to account for the direction of time for example[10]). The purpose of this article is not to state something fundamentally new about the nature of time. However, it is proposed to draw several links between e.g. arguments of McTaggart and the thoughts of Stephen Hawking, in an attempt to explain what, with our present understanding, can be accounted for what McTaggart calls "time" as a whole in his essay.

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[5] "Biographical Sketch of McTaggart" in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward N. Zalta (1995), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mctaggart/

[6] "Theology never holds itself apart from mysticism for any long period, and almost all mysticism denies the reality of time." J.M.E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," 456-473.

[7] G. Lowes Dickinson, *J. McT. E. McTaggart* (Oxford University Press, 1931), 94.

[8] Dickinson, *J. McT. E. McTaggart*, 96.

[9] Dickinson, *J. McT. E. McTaggart*, 96

[10] "To summarize, the laws of science do not distinguish between the forward and backward direction of time." Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (London: Bantam Books, Penguin Random House UK, 2016), 172.

Looking at "The Unreality of Time" through the lens of Hawking, as opposed to other 20th century philosophers who also dealt with the non-linearity of time, lends itself to my thesis. As this will be elaborated on later, my understanding is that what McTaggart calls "time" is in essence what we might associate with our linear, everyday perception of time, which according to Hawking's scientific proposal, is the so-called *"psychological arrow of time"*. It should come as no surprise that literary characters coping with some sort of psychological deficit, find it challenging to arrange their existence around some mysterious entity labelled as the *"psychological arrow of time"*, the concept, perceptions and rules of time that sane, neurotypical minds prescribe to.

After an introduction to McTaggart's essay, and his arguments, I will conduct an analysis of three characters from three pieces of prose: Isaac from Bernard Malamud's short story "Idiots First", Septimus Warren Smith from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Roderick Usher from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher". The method will involve exploring, through a McTaggartian lens, their inner mental logic and/or the non-typical behavior they display in their respective texts; that is, the behavior and thought that result in them being perceived as "mad" in their environments. I will attempt to show how, with a McTaggartian reading (i.e. our linear perception of time is not necessarily true to reality, a.k.a. the psychological arrow of time is something which is only fully adaptable by neurotypical minds), their thoughts and actions can be decoded in a different way. This is not an attempt to reject medicine or psychology and conclude that these three characters are indeed "normal" –, the objective is to present a bridge of understanding, an unbiased, non-judgemental method through which to connect with these characters in a more profound manner. Such a reading can also assist in us connecting with the respective authors, also: it should be noted that two out of the three authors (Woolf and Poe) coped with similar conditions to their fictive characters. Not only this, but McTaggart himself was somewhat non-neurotypical, thus, this paper might also somehow help to unpick the relationship of the authors to their texts.

I. The Unreality of Time… and what remains of it now

As per the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, McTaggart was "one of the most important systematic metaphysicians of the early 20th century. His greatest work is *The Nature of Existence* (...). In addition, he authored many important articles on metaphysics, including his famous *The Unreality of Time* in 1908 (…)."[11] McTaggart was "also a dedicated interpreter and champion of Hegel, (...)" and his most important recurring conclusions

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[11] Zalta, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* https://plato.stanford.edu/

in relation to the Hegelian dialectic and cosmology were "that time is unreal, that existence exhausts reality, that modal notions cannot be applied to reality as a whole, and that absolute reality contains imperfections".[12]

One of the most important and axiomatic notions that needs to be re-iterated before engaging with McTaggart's essay is that even though he argues for the non-existence of *time*, he argues so at a point in history when the notions and approaches towards the temporal were based on a certain set of philosophical, empirical and scientific ideas. Therefore, even though McTaggart denounces the existence of time, he does so on the basis of what that term meant during or before that period: the pre-Einsteinian absolute time. His observations are, if not exclusively, primarily on a linear, horizontal scope of events. More precisely, time, which is technically based on and measured by an exterior system that reduces it to units that can be directly positioned onto a horizontal line of events. This line is based on either the moments' position in history, that is past, present, or future (this notion he calls the *"A Series"*) or the more abstract temporally fixed quality of each moment in correlation with each other as to being either earlier or later than one another (this he calls the *"B Series"*) or a notion on the position of events having a fixed atemporal order of M, N, O P – a sequential order only, and not a direction *("C Series")*.[13] As will be clarified later, there are several internal paradoxes between these three "Series". These paradoxes are a vital element of McTaggart's final conclusion, and have been also generating long-standing debates between those generally inclined to accept the *A Series* to be true and those who do so with the *B Series*. The so-called *B-Theorists* are accepting of the theory of relativity based on the *B Series*, ergo it can be argued that traces of Einsteinian time are already evident in McTaggart's ideas.

The *A Series* describes events happening in a moment that is past, present, or future. Clearly, these are not fixed positions. An event, which is occurring at one moment was once the future and will be the past later. As opposed to this, the *B Series* is a fixed, permanent notion. An event, which precedes another, will always have this fixed position of being earlier as opposed to being later than another, a moment which occurs after it. We were always born after our mothers, and they after theirs. According to McTaggart, events

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[12] Zalta, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* https://plato.stanford.edu/

[13] "The paradox that he introduced has become seminal in contemporary philosophy, engendering what are essentially two warring camps of theorists: the "presentists" and the "eternalists;" or, those who see time as occurring only in the present (the A-Series), and those who see it as occurring at all points but dependent upon the frame of reference (the B-Series). To some extent, this debate predates McTaggart, owing much to the arguments between Leibniz and Newton over what time is, and, specifically, whether it is "real" or not— meaning whether it can be said to exist independent of human conception, a question that dates back to antiquity." Bernstein, "No Audible Tick," 33.

are the "contents of a position in time" and moments a "position in time".[14] McTaggart argues that since the *B Series* is a permanent notion, it should be more accurate than the relative *A Series* when it comes to describing time. However, the *A Series* appears to capture the essence of time, but it is contradictory, and less accurate than the *B Series*, therefore, existence is most likely not temporal. McTaggart begins to argue for the non-existence of time since the notion, which would describe it in a more perceptually accurate way is contradictory and less accurate than a permanent, therefore objective notion. An interesting side-note from Richard M. Gale should be inserted here, an assertion that I am inclined to agree with. Gale, in contrast to the popular conviction that McTaggart's article is essentially metaphysical in outlook (Freeman[15], Bernstein[16]) proposes a different route to deciphering his thoughts, claiming that in fact, McTaggart's essay takes a phenomenological approach, "being based on the way in which temporal positions appear to us, but everything he says could be recast, and for purposes of clarity needs to be recast, in a linguistic idiom which describes the different ways in which we *talk* about temporal positions."[17] He illustrates his point by rephrasing an argument of McTaggart's, underlining that McTaggart's issue with the reality of time stems from intuitively tapping into a discrepancy between *how we talk about time* and time itself.[18]

I would argue that citing a phenomenological approach is vital at this point, in order to ease the reader into applying a specific lens of focus whilst studying McTaggart. One that will draw us closer to the most important point yet to be made: namely, that all his ideas are based on (or rather, attempt to answer) the question as to *whether the concept of linear time actually has a valid system of reference in reality or not*. This will also bring us closer

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[14] McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," 456-473.

[15] "Nowadays, few philosophers who take up the problem of time endorse this sweeping metaphysical thesis." Freeman, "On McTaggart's Theory of Time," 389.

[16] "McTaggart's question – how we perceive time – is essentially metaphysical; (…)" Bernstein, "No Audible Tick," 34.

[17] Richard M. Gale, "McTaggart's Analysis of Time," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1966): 146. www.jstor.org/stable/20009201

[18] "He begins by saying: 'Positions in time, as time appears to us prima facie, are distinguished in two ways. Each position is Earlier than some and Later than some of the other positions. … In the second place, each position is either Past, Present, or Future. The distinctions of the former class are permanent, while those of the latter are not.' This can be rephrased linguistically as: There are two fundamentally different ways in which we make temporal determinations. First, we can say that one event is earlier (later) than some other event; and, second, we can say that some event is now past (present, future). The sentences employed in making claims of the first sort make statements having the same truth-value every time they are uttered, while the sentences employed in the second sort of temporal determination may make statements having different truth-values if uttered at different times." Gale, "McTaggart's Analysis of Time," 146.

to the conclusion of how to relate McTaggart's terminology of "time" to the current scientific approach.

As already mentioned, McTaggart describes time with a relative and a fixed notion. He claims that the fixed notion, technically, should be more accurate in grasping the nature of time – and the pre-requisites it has to apply upon itself to have a valid system of reference in reality, however, that is not the case. Inaccuracy is not the only issue he raises with the *A Series*. He elaborates on his proposal by asking the question whether time *actually forms* an *A Series* as well as a *B Series*, or whether the distinctions of past, present, future, however vital and crucial they seem, are merely tricks of the mind. Of course, time is experienced as a mixture of both, but maybe our *perception* is not valid: "It may be the case that the distinction introduced among positions in time by the *A series* – the distinction of past, present and future – is simply a constant illusion of our minds, and that the real nature of time only contains the distinction of the *B series* – the distinction of earlier and later. In that case we could not *perceive* time as it really is, but we might be able to *think* of it as it really is."[19]

Realizing the discrepancy between how we are able to perceive time versus how we are able to think about it is a very important point. This is where it becomes clear that McTaggart makes a distinction between time as an exterior, objective concept (our perception, which is false), and the interior realisation of this discrepancy. The supposition that time is something we *perceive* within an objective framework entails the notion that it is completely internal, that everything is essentially created by our minds. Sane minds create notions, consciously (we create names for months, years, days, we divide time into units) or unconsciously (perceiving the temporal as events in the past, present or future). Yet these notions are fragile and can be altered when one's state of mind changes. Even McTaggart argues that one of the abilities, which makes us exist in time, is the ability to remember things: with this, he fundamentally reflects on the fact that sane, non-traumatised, conscious minds are more able to fully experience time as this objective, external notion. It is reasonable to derive the conclusion that in this case, biased minds (mentally ill, dying, dreaming, hypersensitive) are unable to exist in time, as far as time is this external, perception-based, and insufficient set of rules.

This is the point at which in my opinion, Stephen Hawking's work can expand on what McTaggart calls "time": Hawking's so-called "psychological arrow of time". I would argue that McTaggart's concept of time connects somewhat with Hawking's concept. Hawking argues that time (linear time) has an "arrow", emphasizing its direction, moving as it does from the past to the future, from birth to death. The reason why time's

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[19] McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," 456-473.

arrow points in the direction it does is potentially due to three factors, or three supposed types of arrow: the psychological arrow (the direction in which we actually perceive it to pass: we remember the past and anticipate the future, but not the other way round), the thermodynamical arrow (the direction in which entropy or disorder increases) and the cosmological arrow (the direction of time in which the universe is expanding and not contracting).[20]

Without engaging too deeply with quantum-physics, it is sufficient to argue that Hawking's idea appears to account for McTaggart's concept of time; that is, a mere perception. A complex perceptive entity whose system of reference in reality is constructed and maintained by our minds, based on factors existing independently from us (the thermodynamical and cosmological arrow), but reduced into a system of internal and external (everyday) inertia, which is able to cope with it and give it a shape and a form according to our mental capabilities. But is it actually a reflection of "reality"? That, of course depends on what we call "real", but according to Hawking, that is not even the point: he claims that every theory necessarily only exists within our minds, so as opposed to asking what is real and what is not, it is better to ask which is a more useful description.[21]

At some point Hawking began to talk of a concept called "imaginary time", which he used to account for certain quantum-physical explanations to the nature of our universe (essentially, a universe which is like a perpetuum mobile forever existing without a beginning or end, as opposed to one that was "born" and will "die").[22] His arguments for the necessity of such a concept (imaginary time) essentially validate McTaggart's claims, or at the very least give a nod of approval to his musings on the absolute/sole "true to reality value" of "real time".

Through Hawking's lens it can be concluded that McTaggart's "time" is in essence *a canonised set of rules derived from an internal, psychological perception of time by sane, neuro-typical minds*. Can we fault non-neurotypical minds, unable to align themselves perfectly within this externally canonized epistemological lie, even if our lives are ordered around these

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[20] See Hawking, *A Brief History of Time,* 164.

[21] "But (...) scientific theory is just a mathematical model we make to describe our observations: it exists only in our minds. So it is meaningless to ask: which is real, 'real' or 'imaginary' time? It is simply a matter of which is the more useful description." Hawking, *A Brief History of Time,* 159.

[22] "This might suggest that the so-called imaginary time is really the real time, and that what we call time is just a fragment of our imaginations. In real time, the universe has a beginning and an end at singularities that form a boundary to space-time and at which the laws of science break down. But in imaginary time, there are no singularities or boundaries. So maybe what we call imaginary time is really more basic, and what we call real is just an idea that we invent to keep us describe what we think the universe is like." Hawking, *A Brief History of Time,* 158-159.

external rules and prerequisites (like how we measure time in hours, or assign ourselves a birthdate)?

There is another part of McTaggart's essay which still needs to be expounded upon: the so-called *C Series*. After failing to demonstrate the reality of time with the *A* and *B Series*, whilst embarking on a quest to discover a different equation that can explain time, McTaggart introduces the *C Series*, an atemporal fixed order of plain, timeless events having a permanent order of M, N, O, P in relation to each other. They form a *B Series* (temporal relations existing earlier or later) with the help of *change*. This does not mean, however, that he has established the existence of time as there is a discrepancy in that *change* would come from a presumed *A Series* which he has already argued to be a plain *perceptive illusion*. The meaning of the concepts of past, present and future can be illustrated through examples, but this does not define what is meant by them, what they really *are*.[23] It is but an abstraction. Examining McTaggart's essay as a whole, returns us to the notion that *what he calls time* is a construction of the mind, because no equation can properly describe it without *mentally/internally/subjectively* assuming its existence.

It is important here to take a moment to note that the unreality of time to various degrees is one of the greatest axiomatic notions of 20th century philosophy. However, McTaggart's reasoning has many unique focal points, including when, at the very end of his essay, he makes a small, almost insignificant-seeming remark about the fact that even though he has refuted time, the temporal, the *A* and *B Series*, etc., he cannot do so just yet with the *C Series*. As discussed above, the *C Series* is in essence an atemporal position of *things yet to become what he calls events since they don't have a temporal quality* which are in a fixed order of M, N, O, P. When he described this Series, he used the example of numbers, and how 17, 18, 19 and 20 are always in that given order. It could be experienced in a reverse direction, as 20, 19, 18, 17 and still make sense, but it contradicts with our basic perception of the direction of change (unless it is for some dramatic/momentary function like a countdown). But it is not possible to have an order of e.g. 17, 19, 21, 18. At the very end of his essay, McTaggart states:

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[23] Rightfully so because even Hawking argues that as far as science is concerned, there is essentially no difference between past and future: "Where does this difference between the past and the future come from? Why do we remember the past but not the future? The laws of science do not distinguish between the past and the future. More precisely, as explained earlier, the laws of science are unchanged under the combination of operation (or symmetries) known as C, P and T." Hawking, *A Brief History of Time,* 164.

But the question whether such an objective C series does exist, must remain for future discussions. And many other questions press upon us which inevitably arise if the reality of time is denied. If there is such a C series, are positions in it simply ultimate facts, or are they determined by the varying amounts, in the objects which hold those positions, of some quality which is common to all of them? And, if so, what is that quality, and is it a greater amount of it which determines things to appear as later, and a lesser amount which determines them to appear as earlier, or is the reverse true? On the solution of these questions it may be that our hopes and tears for the universe depend for their confirmation or rejection.[24]

How can we interpret these mysterious elements, which have an amount but not a temporality, varying amounts in the objects, which hold certain positions, and an objective, undeniable fact value under any circumstance? It might not be completely accurate, but there is a possibility to interpret them simply as *numbers*. With this brief remark, McTaggart could have been postulating a universe based on numbers as opposed to a temporal quality. This universe is, in fact, a computer program. In 1999, two film directors, the Wachowskis directed a film called *The Matrix*, which confronted viewers with the possibility that life is no more than a computer simulation. How is it that a philosopher in 1908, without any possible understanding or knowledge of the future appearance of computers and computer programs comes to the very same unconscious conclusion? And why, in this particular segment of his essay, pondering upon the puzzling nature of the *C Series*, did he abandon his normal prose style replacing it with a poetic voice? He writes of "hopes and tears for the universe" which is pure poetry – it entails a very primal, a very desperate, fearful and profound understanding of the importance of the subject without being able to express it in a fully rational way. Though it is not the task of this article to explore this issue, it is worth mentioning, correlating as it does with the idea that he had a certain kind of semi-conscious sensitivity about the understanding of greater powers at work, as did the sensitive narrators/protagonists explored below.

II. Madness and what is meant by it

Madness is a somewhat derogatory term which describes minds who process reality in an abnormal fashion, and this neuro-fault can result in the afflicted harming of others or themselves. More acceptable terminology for describing such a condition includes: a changed mental condition, a psychological condition or a mental illness; however, for the purposes of this essay "madness" is understood as a poetic term which is describing a

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[24] McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time", 456-473.

set of fictional characters, whose internal logic rearranges the elements of the external universe in an order unrecognizable to the majority. It is not a condition based on an altered physiological state (dreaming, stupor), but a lifelong (Isaac in "Idiots First") or an acquired (Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Roderick Usher in "The Fall of the House of Usher") condition of the conscious mind which fundamentally shifts the individual's perceptive conclusions into an internalised, rearranged set of "parallel universes". It is a parallel universe because the rules and logic, which define their existence, are vastly different than those of the sane mind. They live within this rearranged interior universe, with little regard to the exterior. That is why it is so hard to understand them and why some claim that their reflections and thoughts are chaotic and lack consistency. However, by viewing their thoughts, musings and words through a different lens, an intriguing and special logic can be seen to be at work. This alternative reading of their interior logic is possible by analyzing it through McTaggart's notions on time.

The Hungarian term for a senseless person is "idétlen" which stems from the word "időtlen", meaning timeless, unable to exist in time: derived from the original root of the word "idő", "idé", it means "before time", "prematurely born baby". These prematurely born babies were usually mentally challenged, hence the original connotation of the word.[25] But the underlying, fundamental argument about these entities is their timelessness, as for example in Hungarian Folklore this term is employed to describe souls of dead babies who die prematurely, with their spirit returning to haunt the living[26]—they become timeless creatures, stuck souls, not functioning under the rules of the sane minds' exterior reality. It is fascinating how even such a simple construction of language associates being mentally challenged with a fault, a malfunction existing in time. In the second part of this study, we turn to the minds of the madmen, and examine how their minds rearrange the linear sets of rules McTaggart uses to describe time, and to what extent their universes are temporal at all.

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[25] "*Idétlen.* Az idő régebbi idé- tövének fosztóképzős származéka, s eredetileg idő előttit, koraszülöttet jelentett. Az ilyenek, főleg régebben, többnyire elmaradtak a szellemi fejlődésben, innen a szó ma eleven jelentése." *Magyar Etimológiai Kéziszótár.* Arcanum Digitális Tudománytár. https://www.arcanum.hu/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Lexikonok-magyar-etimologiai-szotar-F14D3/

[26] Beke Ödön, "Idétlen" in "Magyarázatok". *Magyar Nyelvőr, A Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság Folyóirata* 76, no. 1 (1952): 56.

III. Madness in fiction

Before analyzing the literary texts, it is important to expand on the reasons for studying the temporal experience of mentally ill individuals in fiction.

First, there is the case of temporal experience *in fiction*. What temporal experience can be talked about given the fact that the construction of the fictional text itself is already a structural alternation of reality, and the novel or short story itself always entails a "fictive experience of time"?[27] As Paul Ricoeur remarks in his 2nd volume of *Time and Narrative,* "the experience of time at issue here is a fictive experience that has an imaginary world for its horizon, one that remains the world of the text".[28]

While not wishing to disagree with Ricoeur, I argue that fictional prose is a possible genre to consider in attempting to understand character-driven temporal experience that can have a system of reference in and of extratextual reality, and stretches beyond the fictive experience of time. This analysis attempts to examine how time, as an exterior concept, is challenged by characters who themselves experience a rift between "reality" and "fantasy" (or more like delusion). These characters do so by essentially living in a *linear reality* of the prose, which is similar to temporal reality or at least functions within a system of logic which is familiar to us (a.k.a. a prosaic storyline which passes from A to B) yet the characters are able to drift away from time, which passes in a linear way. Prose is significant in so far as it allows for a description of reality as a human experience, even if it entails structural alternations due to the medium of fiction itself. The three texts selected are "tales about time".[29] And while not wishing to disagree with Ricoeur's assertion that the temporal experience in fiction is a "fictive experience", I will attempt to outline how these fictive experiences themselves are ordered and constructed by a character-driven, internal feeling of discrepancy between internal subjective and external "real time", the same epistemological clash that so puzzled McTaggart. Furthermore, in the case of *Mrs. Dalloway* for example, it is argued that the temporal experience portrayed within this work, however constructed and fictional, reflects the reality of human, conscious temporal experience. I propose that it is not merely a work of art but also a work of subtle, sensitive, quasi-scientific grasping, or, to put it another way, the documentation of a truly metaphysical experience.

But the question remains, in what sense can fiction be an apt territory to draw real-life conclusions, and in what sense can these *characters* have temporal experiences, which can

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[27] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), 100.

[28] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, 100.

[29] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* vol. 2, 101.

be directly related back to the "reality" of time and temporal reality? It is necessary to note that fiction is not the opposite of reality, their relationship is complex and intertwined. It is argued here that these characters are psychologically accurate, hence I also believe that the approach taken echoes what Ruth Ronen calls an "integrationist" approach to fiction.[30] It is noteworthy that two out of the three authors of the texts under consideration had eerily similar personal psychological experiences to their characters'. Being partly a fiction writer myself, I believe that *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Fall of the House of Usher* are works of personal exorcism, that the temporal experiences Woolf and Poe described through their characters reflected their own personal temporal experiences - or at least, were inspired and influenced by them. In the case of Bernard Malamud, the portrayal of Isaac, however poetic and fictional, can be viewed as a presentation of a very particular case of severe autism. Hence the characterization, again, fictional in terms of concrete characters, reaches beyond fiction in terms of psychological reference – it is these psychological accuracies, and the temporal experience outlived *through* them that are the focus here.

IV. /1. Isaac from the postmodern (premature) Matrix

American author Bernard Malamud's short story, "Idiots First", first published in 1963, recounts the tale of a dying father in New York called Mendel struggling to get his mentally challenged son Isaac onto a train to his uncle. Mendel is short of time, as he got a notion (from a mysterious entity called "Ginzburg") that he will die within a day. "The time of the things narrated"[31] is roughly one day (Unlike Virginia Woolf, who fills almost two hundred pages describing just one day, Malamud's story is rather short, twelve pages in the edition I read). The fictive temporal experience of Mendel is vastly different from the fictive temporal experience of Isaac and for now, I will solely focus on Isaac's, with reference to McTaggart's observations rooted in real temporal experience.

   What is striking whilst reading the story is the conflict between Mendel's extreme sense of pressure due to the passing of time, and Isaac's total ignorance of it. Throughout the entire story, the dying Mendel races against time to settle affairs around Isaac and get him to safety before dying. Yet Isaac has absolutely no idea what is at stake. He has no grasp on the temporal, or what the temporal pressure might entail. It is possible to state, that Isaac has no reflective, perceptive relation to the temporal universe. Neither the

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[30] "Integrationalist approaches repress the ontological differentiation between worlds and posit an unproblematic accessibility between world-systems." Ruth Ronen, *Possible worlds in literary theory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11.

[31] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* vol. 2, 100.

physical elements of it (clocks), nor the constraints imposed by these elements (passing of hours), nor the threat proposed by a finite, temporal existence. It is fair to claim that within the scope of McTaggart's arguments, Isaac does not exist in a temporal universe, as he has no grasp or understanding of the notions that are used to describe existence in time: the *A Series* which would require him to have a sense of past, present and future, and the *B Series*, which would require him to have a temporal understanding of a fixed order of events. But then, in what universe does he exist? Is there a logical/traceable parallel reality, which governs his every step or should we assume he lives in an inner state of chaos? With reference to McTaggart, we can prove the first assumption to be true. For there is a concept to which he has a traceable relation. The *C Series*, which is the assumption that all units of existence have a fixed, atemporal orderly position of M, N, O, P. McTaggart illustrates this series with numbers, claiming that 17, 18, 19, 20 have a fixed ultimate position of following or preceding each other. What is striking about Isaac is that he seldom speaks or reacts to his fathers' words with gestures or sentences that would assume his understanding of them. Most of what he says consists of numbers. Isaac *counts*: "'Isaac' he ultimately sighed. In the kitchen, Isaac, his astonished mouth open, held six peanuts in his palm. He placed each on the table. 'One…two…nine'"[32] His irrational counting is a beautiful parallel to the causal reality of the passing time, which pressures his dying father into action… the ticking of a clock that we can hear in our heads whilst reading the story… One, two, three.

Let us presume McTaggart's arguments to be true and accept the fact that the temporal universe is a perceptive illusion, whereas a universe based on the *C Series* might be closer to reality. What we witness here is an entity who lives precisely within this assumed universe. Isaac, whom we have already shown doesn't live in the temporal universe appears to have his existence ruled and rationalized by the universe of *C Series*, a numeric universe. In the terminology of the *Matrix* he is a premature Neo. He sees beyond the rules of the exterior universe and follows another.

He counts in the wrong order which can be explained in one of two ways: one is that he is an "Idiot Neo", i.e. even though he is experiencing and perceiving the universe as numeric and not temporal, he still functions as an "idiot" within it, because he is unable to maintain the order of units fixed. However, there is another explanation: He is *not* counting. He is communicating. If we assume that Isaac's reality is based on a numeric universe, it is fair to assume that his whole system of communication manifests in the use of numbers. Since the exterior universe presumes reality to be based on temporal and spatial notions, and humans have evolved to have certain physical and mental abilities when it

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[32] Bernard Malamud, *Idiots First*, (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1963).

comes to expressing themselves, expressing yourself in a temporal universe whilst you live in a numeric one is not simple. There has to be a communicative discrepancy between a person communicating with a conscious temporal mind (especially if the temporal forces him to experience intense pressure) and a person with a conscious numeric mind.

There is the potential to uncover some real sense in what Isaac says – furthermore, maybe in his own special way, he very consciously resonates with his father's quest and indeed, tries to react to him. But he does so with a special pattern of numbers - how else would he communicate from a numeric universe; therefore, his attempts remain un-resolvable and undecodable. However, not all is in vain, if there is one thing clear from this story, it is that regardless of their troubles communicating, there is a luminous thread of unconditional love between these two people, which is felt throughout the story. The kind of love McTaggart described as his most cherished experience, as the fundamental organizing element of the universe: "I had a curious sense of being literally in love with the world. There is no other way in which I can express what I then felt. I felt as if I could hardly contain myself for the love which was bursting within me. It seemed as if the world itself was nothing but love. (…) At the back and foundation of things I was certain was love – and not merely placid benevolence but active, fervent, devoted love and nothing less."[33] This is the love, which saves Isaac: the love, which is eternal within him, because he is living outside of that temporal universe which can put an end to everything, including Mendel's life. Ginzburg might have taken Mendel, but in the end, I would like to believe that he still somehow escaped the grasp of mortality by loving his son unconditionally.

IV. /2. The mental time travels of Septimus Warren Smith

Septimus Warren Smith, a character in British author Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway* first published in 1925, is a World War I veteran, coping with what in our present under-standing is a clear case of post-traumatic stress syndrome. However, a careful reading of his issues might suggest (with a modern reader's mind) that there are symptoms in his condition which could be diagnosed as either a surfacing case of dissociative disorder/ schizophrenia, or as Seyedeh Sara Ahou Ghalandari and Leila Baradaran Jamili claim in their essay "Mental Illness and Manic-Depressive Illness in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dallo-way"[34], an apparent case of bipolar disorder and manic depression. Ahou Ghalandari and

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[33] G. Lowes Dickinson quotes from J.M.E. McTaggart, *Nature of Existence,* in: *J. MćT. E. MćTaggart*, 168.

[34] Seyedeh Sara Ahou Ghalandari and Leila Baradaran Jamili, "Mental Illness and Manic-Depressive Illness in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway," *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences* 3, no. 5 (2014): 482-489. http://jnasci.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/482-489.pdf

Baradaran Jamili assert that in "Mrs. Dalloway", Virginia Woolf separates her own mental condition in what they call a "bipolar experience". She does so by dividing herself into two parts, one which struggles with the reality of her illness, a "psychotic" person (Septimus) and the other a "euthymic"[35] person, Clarissa Dalloway – a hypersensitive creature able to maintain a healthy and ongoing relationship with the reality around her whilst struggling with the intensity of an experience that is a deeper, more sensitive understanding of it.

As argued above the "fictional experience" detailed in this novel strikes me as an accurate portrayal of the entity of time as experienced by conscious human beings, and I find Septimus' "fictive temporal experience" more intriguing from the point-of-view concerned with the psychological accuracy of the character, than the metaphorical relation it has to what Ricoeur calls "monumental time" (historical time which entails chronological time - the symbol of authority figures in the novel). As Ricoeur remarks, "the art of fiction here consists in weaving together the world of action and that of introspection, of mixing together the sense of everydayness and that of the inner self."[36] Or as one could say, *life*. The temporal life of conscious, human beings. And Septimus is a real, breathing figure within it. Virginia Woolf's time is anything but strictly linear, anything but absolute. It is full of hoops, loops, ellipses and "internal time travel". All the while with so much sensitive truthfulness, capturing the true nature of each moment, that present, which is in contradiction to McTaggart's *A Series*, to McTaggart's "time". Woolf and Septimus demonstrate how the clash, felt and implied by McTaggart on what sane minds tell us everyday time is, as opposed to the internal realization of its discrepancies, leads us to the inevitable result incorporated in living within the canon of the idea of everyday time – death, an end. For where there is time, there has to be death.[37]

If Isaac is completely outside of the temporal universe, what we witness in the case of Septimus is a dire battle between trying to grasp it and completely shifting out of it. Whereas in the case of Clarissa Dalloway, due to her hypersensitive quality, she becomes a breathing portal that is able to fluctuate between layers of a multidimensional reality in which the temporal becomes a reinvented concept, Septimus experiences a rift, a quite lethal rift between the objective exterior temporal reality and his interior experience. The unreality of time (McTaggart's "time", which is also Ricoeur's "'monumental time', of

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[35] Ahou Ghalandari and Baradaran Jamili, "Mental Illness and Manic-Depressive Illness," 486. Originally quoted from: Thomas C. Caramagno, *The Flight of the Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic-Depressive Illness.* (University of California Press, 1992): 33.

[36] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, 104.

[37] Or as Ricoeur puts it: "the experience of the mortal discordance between personal time and monumental time, of which Septimus is both the hero and the victim." Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, 108.

which chronological time is but the audible expression"[38]) transforms Clarissa – and kills Septimus.

Septimus undoubtedly experiences being removed from reality in many ways, not just temporal. He himself claims that he is struggling with a certain sense of apathy, his wife, Rezia desperately reminisces about how far Septimus has shifted from her and himself, how he mostly resembles a vegetable when he is mumbling to himself without any connection or intention to communicate or react to the world or her. This perceived apathy, a sense of unresponsiveness, abstaining from the ability of ordinary human communication recalls Isaac. It can be assumed that there is a pattern here: non-neuro-typical characters, who are struggling with external temporal notions and internal parallel universes, have a troubling epistemological alienation from their surroundings.

What Septimus also experiences is constant alienation from ordinary *sensory* experiences: he can no longer taste food, he can no longer hear (he can hear birds singing in Greek), or see as others do (he hallucinates his dead comrade to be with him), clearly, in all aspects, he is shifting out of the sensory prime universe of humans. Since the concept of time is one of these sensory deceptions, at least according to McTaggart, it is no wonder he dissociates from it as well. But how heart-wrenching, and at the same time, how understandable is Rezia's (not negatively, but objectively) selfish fear of this sensory alienation, this apathetic state in which she lost her loving husband and the happy marriage she hoped to have on leaving Italy and moving to England. How desperate is the struggle to witness a mind falling apart, and not being able to connect with it.

It is pertinent here to analyze the most prominent visual hallucination of Septimus in detail: the ubiquitous presence of Evans. The visualization of Evans is a clear case of his subconscious mind succumbing to an internalised, self-poisoning pathological sense of guilt as well as the inability to cope with the trauma of witnessing the senseless death of his friend. However, in theory we could argue that ghosts are timeless creatures, apparitions from a non-linear, non-temporal universe. In this way, the hallucination of the ghost also serves our purposes in illustrating how rifts between exterior temporal and interior atemporal universes collide in Septimus's mind. Our reality, Mrs. Dalloway's reality is temporal, and Septimus is desperately shifting away from it, to a territory unknown.

Septimus also illustrates a shift from exterior temporality by displaying an ever-growing inability to internalise the perceptive presumptions of the *A Series* and *B Series*, namely a clear sense of past, present and future, and the temporal order of events. Note this passage where Septimus hallucinates dogs becoming men, the logic of which we will not

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[38] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* vol. 2*,* 106.

examine further, because the gist of his musing is not *what turns into what*, but that this is an ability to see into the future:

> No crime; love, he repeated, fumbling for his card and pencil, when a Skye terrier snuffed his trousers and he started in an agony of fear. It was turning into a man! He could not watch it happen! It was horrible, terrible to see a dog become a man! At once the dog trotted away. Heaven was divinely merciful, infinitely benignant. It spared him, pardoned his weakness. But what was the scientific explanation (for one must be scientific above all things)? Why could he see through bodies, see into the future, when dogs will become men?[39]

Note how desperately Septimus tries to determine the *scientific* reason behind his hallucination and *ability*. How conscious he is of the fact that the rules of the new universe in which he lives need to be explained and rationalised, or how real these parallel experiences and how they re-arrange elements of reality are to him– so real that he searches for a scientific explanation for it.

Once again, Septimus has not abstained from the concept of time like Mendel's son, he is conscious of exterior time – when Rezia tries to bring him out of a hallucination in which he is talking to himself (he believes he is talking to his dead comrade, Evans), she asks him if he knows *what time it is* (Woolf 84-85). And he does answer, it's quarter to twelve. Once again, here's a complex moment when the interior atemporal reality and the experience of it (Septimus talking with Evans) clash with a voice from the exterior temporal (Rezia asking what time it is). Septimus can switch between the two, he listens to the strike of the clock, can instantly tell what the exterior time is. But inside his head, the past, the present and the future are muddled. He lives with a ghost, and thinks he can foresee the future - the psychological arrow of time is reversed.

Septimus, internally, has clearly lost track of the order in which events supposedly take place in the exterior reality. And via this ever-growing rift between exterior temporal notions and his interior universe, he makes a most baffling assertion, not long before he ends his life: that there is no such thing as death. Rezia, his wife, is irritated by this irrational announcement, but the truth is, for a mind which is (partially) atemporal, or at least, has the ability to experience an atemporal dimension parallel with a temporal one, it is indeed a logical conclusion, since temporality is linked to beginnings and ends, birth, life, and death. For a mind which does not exist within this framework, or is able to see past it, the notion that death does not exist is indeed a fairly logical one. Could it be true? Does the idea that reality is not temporal in nature entail the fact that neither is existence? Or are we living according to the rules of linear time to force the structure of our linear

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[39] Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 82-83.

physiological decay onto the universe around us? Are we part of infinity, intertwined and connected, or just momentary morsels stuck between the wheels? Septimus clearly had intriguing ideas about it. But of course, since he could only articulate these ideas in a temporal dimension, once again like in case of Isaac, the message is lost in interdimensional translation. But it does not mean that he is senseless or irrational – his thoughts have a logic within their own system of existence.

Septimus's brain is a fascinating road map. Everything is confused, from temporality to spatial constructions and generic mechanics of reality. It's one of the most profound yet relatable journeys into the mind of a madman.

IV. /3. The metaphysical downfall of Roderick Usher

One of the last thoughts of Septimus, as we have already seen, was that there is no such thing as death. Indeed it may appear an irrational idea, but not in a non-temporal universe. The question of what does the "end" become without time, or what happens when time ends is something which is of great significance for one of the most famous characters created by Edgar Allan Poe, Roderick Usher of "The Fall of the House of Usher"*, our next "Atemporal Madman". The temporal structure of Poe's short story is complex and intricate: the fictional experience of the temporal is driven by and constructed around one, unified arrow of the temporal angst. This arrow is so strong it feels that this story is not unlike a fictional black hole: the density of the inner gravitational force of temporal angst twists and turns the plot elements and character experiences towards one, homogenic experience of total collapse and fatal cessation (at least from the "outside").

Everything in Poe's short story crudely points towards the inevitable fact that the Usher House (both as a family line and as a physical home) is nearing its end. This feeling is so powerful and so well-illustrated by the perceptive experience of the narrator that it becomes almost tangible, the feeling of this growing black hole towards which the characters of the story irreversibly gravitate. Not a spatial, but a temporal back hole (sic!). Even the spatial (the house and its' natural surrounding) is simply there to illustrate the effect of temporal horror. "The Fall of the House of Usher" is one of the most primal yet brutally symbolic descriptions of time *nearing its' end* and the dreadful fear of temporal creatures being sucked into this paradox. For how could time end? As per McTaggart it does not - because it does not exist. Yet what we can profoundly feel and witness in this short story about the very last descendant of a family line and the act of this family line becoming extinct, is the epistemological fear of the end of a temporal universe as a whole. The Universe of the Ushers symbolically and quite physically ceases to exist by the end, and Poe describes in a poetic and symbolic way the last intense moments before the

complete metaphorical and physical (nota bene: the house collapses in the end) downfall. One could interpret this story as a poetic and prophetic vision of the Big Crunch, more than a hundred years before Hawking formulated this idea. The end of our existence, our universe – the end of time.

As we are nearing the total end of time, drawing closer and closer to it, the characters in "The Fall of the House of Usher" irreversibly change from temporal to atemporal creatures. Note for example the catalepsy[40] of Madeleine and Roderick, which is a more extreme version of the condition Isaac and Septimus suffered from: a loss of the ability to communicate with, interact and react to the exterior reality of a temporal nature. Essentially, catalepsy gives the afflicted an appearance of being dead whilst still being alive, so much so that cataleptic patients (including Poe) were constantly terrified of being buried alive whilst in a cataleptic trance. I have always found this condition extremely intriguing, especially from vantage point of an essay concerned about characters unable to exist within the framework of a reality which is judged to be temporal in nature. People who fall into catalepsy essentially surrender all sense of motion and change, both so-called pre-requisites of a temporal experience as per McTaggart. Yet they do exist. They are not dead. It is as if they involuntarily "tuned out" of a temporal experience, dictated by the direction of time's psychological and thermodynamical arrows: the direction in which entropy grows: they sink into a state which creates the least possible chaos. Steady, motionless, stale, at peace. Yet it seriously distorts our natural perception of "being alive", so much so that cataleptic patients were frequently buried alive in the early 19th century.

Roderick also experiences the extreme opposite of Septimus's sensory apathy, he develops a form of sensory overload, he is troubled by even the faintest of light, the most innocuous of smells, the blandest of taste. His appearance also changes drastically: "Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief period, as had Roderick Usher!" (Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher", 645). What the narrator describes here is essentially Roderick Usher growing *very old* (at least by appearance) in a *very short* period of time, which is fundamentally a paradox, a fault in the temporal matrix, and a complete overturning of the rules of the temporal experience. In essence, he is half a ghost - with a severe anxiety disorder.

Here an interesting question arises; because if we examine this story from the point of view of the narrator, we can truthfully claim that he is in contact with ghostly figures who are somehow trespassing into the temporal universe in front of his very eyes, and the

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[40] Catalepsy is a curious condition that even Poe himself experienced throughout his life. According to Merriam-Webster it is "a trancelike state marked by loss of voluntary motion in which the limbs remain in whatever position they are placed." https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catalepsy

fact that he is in touch with them and able to see and hear and experience them means he himself is shifting away from the experience of the temporal universe. Such a meta-claim is appropriate here, acknowledging that this story could be read as a symbolic description of the fear of the end of existence (of a temporal universe), therefore, characters and objects at all levels of the story will resonate with and experience the effect of this fear and this fateful possibility of an event.

Madeline, Roderick's sister is in an even further advanced state of transition, and witnessing this process terrifies Roderick yet more. At the moment that Madeline appears to die, all notions of the exterior temporal causality cease to exist, as the universe is sucked into the temporal black hole at such a pace that it is not possible to distinguish between the living and the dead any longer, that Madeline might or might not be alive in the grave, that she might or might not already be a ghost when she comes back for Roderick. In fact, she is in a state of limbo between the temporal and atemporal, and her final transformation scares Roderick to death.

What kills Septimus is the curiosity that killed the cat, almost like an overpowering urge to fully succumb to the atemporal universe in his head, and what kills Usher is the thought of having to do so. On a deeper level, Usher is all of us, dreading as we do the possibility of our linear, causal, external perception of the world being shaken to the core and denied to us – Usher is the epistemological fear of humans of nearing the end as per our perceptive universe, from transforming from a temporal universe.

Indeed, it is a short story with characters and plot, but it could also be interpreted as a sensitive description of our brains, desperately attempting to process reality for what it might be, an atemporal universe where our perceptions are futile and invalid. But because we are unable to rid ourselves of these futile perceptions and see reality for what it is, with such claim in the subconscious picture, our minds immediately perceive this possibility as a threat to our very existence. We cannot process the concept of there being no time because we live in time. Therefore, the nonexistence of time, the reality behind reality, even though it could quite possibly be a means of expanding our consciousness, is interpreted in our minds as *the end time* which is *the end of our life* due to it being a temporal experience for us.

Conclusion

Handled with a proportionate contemporary gaze, "The Unreality of Time" remains an intriguing text to apply to literary analysis. My goal was to employ J.M.E. McTaggart's particular arguments about the unreality of time to decipher the logic behind the chaotic seeming (fictive) temporal experience of literary characters with psychological problems.

I believe that the analysis is still to be fine-tuned, but it does manage to illustrate the thesis that an empathic bridge of understanding can be built that moves us towards these characters via McTaggart. A thorough analysis of McTaggart's essay was essential before delving deeper into the psyches of Septimus, Isaac and Roderick, since I consider McTaggart, due to his own neurodiverse disposal, as the fourth "character" whom I set out to analyse, with whose thoughts I hoped to create a bridge of understanding. McTaggart's essay is often considered overly poetic, vague and subject to interpretation. With "decoding" his *C Series*, I believe I have managed to capture a different reading, and by viewing it through the lens of Stephen Hawking (whose arguments I found the most pertinent for my thesis) I hope I have managed to present his work constructively. McTaggart, of course, is not a fictional character, unlike Septimus, Roderick and Isaac, hence important (if ever so brief) points needed to be made about the medium-based nature of the temporal experiences of the three fictional characters, and the borders and restrictions of my analysis. However, since two out of the three stories (and "The Unreality of Time") are products of authors who themselves coped with psychological and neurological problems, my main motivation in deciphering the temporal experience of Septimus, Roderick and Isaac was to uncover the true-to-life psychological value behind them, more so than their fictional nature.

I believe that time is one of the grand mysteries left in this world. Many scholars, scientists and artists have looked upon its face over the centuries (or the illusion of centuries…) and attempted to stare into its soul to discover out what it truly is: is it an external set of rules, an internal experience, or a bit of both? Is it a complex factor that is inseparably interlinked with the fabric of our universe, but ceases to exist without the framework of this universe? Is it an omnipotent force, a God of its own? Or is it just a story we tell ourselves to account for our own physical decay in a measurable, seemingly controlled manner? As long as there will be consciously or subconsciously driven thinkers, its' mysteries will continue to be investigated, whether in a poetic or a scientific way. I believe in Hawking's staunch faith that fiction authors and scientists should work hand in hand, together with the ordinary people, and each can (or should) learn from the other. I hope that my thesis has demonstrated that even non-neurotypical, quasi-fictional minds can hold more vital, intriguing and relatable information about the nature of time than what the surface of their seemingly irrational (fictional) experiences suggest.

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LUKÁŠ HEDMEG

Ivan Krasko (Ján Botto) and the Slovak Association of Detvan in Prague

Abstract

The article focuses on poet Ivan Krasko, his college years spent in Prague and his subsequent membership in the Detvan association. During his five-year stay (1900–1905) in Prague, Krasko became an active and valued member of Detvan. He held offices (auditor and treasurer) and participated in several activities, expanding Detvan's contacts with other student or academic associations. He gave lectures on various topics of interest and occasionally engaged in debates. The second part of the article attempts to reconstruct ongoing contacts and relations between Krasko and some members of Detvan, such as Milan Rastislav Štefánik, Vavro Šrobár, or Mikuláš Scneider-Trnavský, on the basis of their mutual correspondence over the years after their departure from the association.

Keywords: Ivan Krasko, Ján Botto, Milan Rastivlav Štefánik, Vavro Šrobár, Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský, Jaroslav Vlček, Detvan association, Prague.

Introduction

Ján Botto,[1] (pen name Ivan Krasko), was one of the greatest Slovak poets of the first half of the 20th century. As a representative of Slovak literary modernism[2] and symbolism, two of his most noted books of poetry are Verše (Verses) and Nox et solitudo (Night and Solitude). His poetry is generally known for expressing feelings and moods of loneliness, pessimism, melancholy and great personal sadness typically located in loosely drawn, grim or autumnal settings. Furthermore, in his poems he focuses on social issues such as the standing of the Slovak nation in contemporary Hungary, social injustice, and the passivity of the young Slovak generation. In his poetry, Botto also explores his feelings of being torn by the internal struggle between his faith and scepticism. His work was greatly influenced by contemporary Czech authors and French symbolists who had established themselves in Europe.

Botto was born on July 12th, 1876 in the Gemer county[3] village of Lukovištia[4] in the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary; today it sits in the Slovak district of Rimavská Sobota. He was born to a peasant family, with one of his distant relatives being the

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[1] Given that Botto did not use his pseudonym while active in Detvan, we refer to him by his birthname in this article.

[2] Dana Hučková, *Hľadanie moderny* (Bratislava: Ars poetica – Ústav slovenskej literatúry SAV, 2009), 86–96, 121–131.

[3] Contemporary Gömör vármegye.

[4] Contemporary Kőhegy.

historian Julius Botto and his namesake Ján Botto, one of the most prominent poets of Slovak romanticism and the author of the *Death of Jánošík*. Many researchers have commented on his choice of pseudonym. Among them Ján Brezina in his book, *Ivan Krasko, a literary-historical monography*.[5] The author assumes that one of the reasons Botto created and continued employing his most famous pseudonym, was a continuous intention to distinguish himself from his famous relative.[6]

He attended elementary school for five years in his hometown of Lukovište and then spent his high school years at a secondary grammar school. Botto initially studied at the Hungarian lyceum in Rimavska Sobota[7] (first five years). After being charged with pan-Slavism, he went to study at the German lyceum in Sibiu, where he attended his sixth year and then to the Romanian lyceum in Brasov, where he completed his seventh and eighth.[8] In 1896, he successfully graduated from Brasov's lyceum. Interestingly, it was during these years that he began to write poetry, as his oldest dated poem originates from 1895, although he had undoubtedly written poems before this. Over the following four years, Botto worked at his relatives' business, the family Kovač from Teplý Vrch,[9] helping them to grow their enterprise (1896–1897).[10] In the years 1897–1898 he completed compulsory military service in Trident, Tyrol and Vienna then, in the autumn of 1898, he travelled to Russia, and spent the year 1899 at home again with the Kováč family, where he worked as a supervisor on a factory construction site.[11]

In 1900, Ján Botto arrived in Prague to begin a course in chemistry at the Imperial-Royal Czech Technical University in Prague, today's Czech Technical University (ČVUT). He was matriculated, as evidenced by his preserved matriculation letter, on October 4th, 1900.[12] He successfully completed his studies in the year 1905; these last five years were spent on not only preparing for his future profession but also on developing and shaping his artistic activity. In the years 1900–1904 Botto was also a member of Detvan, the Slovak student association in Prague.[13]

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[5] Ján Brezina, *Ivan Krasko: literárnohistorická monografia* (Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied a umení, 1946), 108.

[6] His other pseudonyms were Janko Cigáň and Bohdana J. Potokinová. More information: Ján Vladimír Ormis, *Slovník slovenských pseudonymov* (Martin: Slovenská národná knižnica, 1944), 182.

[7] Contemporary Rimaszombat.

[8] Both lyceums are located in the territory of today's Romania.

[9] Contemporary Meleghegy.

[10] Michal Gráfik, *Súborné dielo Ivana Krasku 1.* (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1966), 196–197.

[11] Brezina, *Ivan Krasko*, 102–103.

[12] Literárny archív Slovenskej národnej knižnice (LA SNK) Martin – Literary archive of Slovak national library Martin, sign. 75 M 27. *Imatrikulačný list Jána Botta 4. 10. 1900.*

[13] Ján Zambor, Ivan Krasko a poézia českej moderny (Bratislava: Tatran, 1981), 11–17.

A Brief Characterization of the Detvan Association in Prague (1882–1914)

After the division of the Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague in February 1882 into Czech and German parts and creating favourable conditions for studying through the medium of the Czech language, many Slovak students began to study in Czech schools. Young Slovaks in Prague, especially students, thanks to their gradually increasing numbers began to feel the need for their own organizational basis. Among them were Jaroslav Vlček, a student of philology, later a well-known writer and literary historian, and Pavol Socháň, a fine art student and later writer, ethnographer and photographer. Through their combined efforts, they gathered together a group of Slovak students and drafted the proposition for the first statutes for an intended association. They chose to name their fledgling organisation after the lyrical poem Detvan from the Slovak romantic poet Andrej Sládkovič.

With official approval from the Czech Stadtholder,[14] the association was officially founded at its first general assembly in a café, the old "Slávia" on March 15th 1882.[15] The Detvan[16] association was largely made up of Slovak students studying in Prague. Membership was divided into four subgroups: honorary, founding, supporting and active. During its 32 year of existence (1882–1914), before the outbreak of World War I and the association's ensuing demise, Detvan had 268 active members. According to its first statutes from March 1882:

> The aim of the association is to concentrate intelligent Slovaks in Prague who are engaged in mutual education and amusement. The aim will be achieved by a) the founding and tending of a library for the needs of the associations' members, b). reading publications provided by the association, c). providing entertaining and educating lectures during sessions, d). organizing parties.[17]

In the first decade of its life, the association's activities primarily focused on the studying and critical assessment of selected literature works of Slovak and foreign authors, declaiming pieces of older or contemporary Slovak poetry, lecturing on interesting,

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[14] In the German language: Statthalterei für das Königreich Böhmen.

[15] Ústav dějin Univerzity Karlovy a archiv Univerzity Karlovy (ÚDAUK) Praha – Institute of history of Charles university and archive of Charles university Prague, fond Všestudentský archiv (VSA), kartón č. B 319, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica I. valného zhromaždenia 15. 3. 1882.*

[16] Nadežda Jurčišinová, "Zameranie činnosti slovenského spolku Detvan v Prahe (1882-1914)," *Annales Historici Presovienses* 9, no. 1 (2010): 136.

[17] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. Stanovy spolku Detvan v Prahe 1882.

educational topics and developing of Detvan's book collection. Close relationships were maintained with other students and similar Slovak, Czech, Moravian and foreign associations. Among them were the Slovak association in Budapest, the Slovak academic association of Tatran in Wien, Moravská beseda, the Academic reading association of Slavia and many others. In the late 1890's, Detvan's remit was extended to include more social and pro-national topics. These particular activities lasted until the years 1904–1905. The last decade of Detvan's existence was marked by a slow, but noticeable decline. The primary focus was on lecturing and providing financial support for its poverty-stricken members, which was considered at the time to be the most important activity of the association.

Over the years, the Detvan association acquainted the Czechs, primarily inhabitants of Prague, with Slovak culture and nurtured many young Slovaks who after completing their studies left Prague and returned home, where they actively participated in Slovak social and political life. Apart from Ján Botto, the most notable members of Detvan were the historian of literature Jaroslav Vlček, photographer and ethnographer Pavol Socháň, writers Martin Kukučín (Matej Bencúr), Ladislav Nádaši-Jégé and Jozef Gregor Tajovský, politicians Vavro Šrobár and Milan Rastislav Štefánik, painters Joža Uprka and Martin Benka, sculptor František Uprka, composer Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský and many others.

Ján Botto and his activities in Detvan association

Based on the association's minute-books, Botto's[18] name appeared for the first time at the general assembly of 3rd of November 1900,which was held at a Russian café,[19] while he was member in the years 1900–1904.[20] Here he was, among the other new members, welcomed by the society's chairman Ivan Fajnor and elected, together with Juraj Nerád, as the association's auditor. Initially, his activity ranged only within his role as an auditor, as during the winter semester of the 1900/1901 academic year, he did not engage in any other activity. This gradually changed when he was elected as

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[18] Viliam Turčány, "Krasko v Detvane," *Dejiny literatúry* 11, no. 6 (1964): 608.

[19] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica riadneho valného zhromaždenia 3. 11. 1900.*

[20] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA kartón č. B 522, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zoznam činných členov spolku Detvan.*

society's treasurer[21] on March 3rd, 1901.[22] Apart from sporadic engagements in plenary debates, Botto began to participate markedly in a critical assessment of the literary pieces read by other members. Members of the Detvan association generally lectured on either Slovak, Czech or foreign literature, or featured their own original titles. Due to the fact that Botto retained anonymity as poet, he did not appear in Detvan's sessions with his own poems.[23] Instead, he used the nickname Janko Cigáň (Johnny Gipsy) However, he often criticized other members of the association. His criticism was often very harsh mostly focussing on linguistic-stylistic aspects and clarity of expression. For example, in March 1901, after Milan Rastislav Štefánik's lecture on the treatise *On liberty* by the English philosopher John Stuart Mill, Botto criticized him, asking him "to lecture more Slovak".[24] The reproach was most likely to be attributed to the fact that Štefánik allegedly did not sufficiently diminish the soft consonants. Also, Gustáv Voda, coming from the territory of today's southern Slovakia, was criticized due to his strong Hungarian accent. Botto proved to be overly critical also of facial expressions and gestures. On the matter of the poetic expression of Ivan Juren he remarked that "the lecturer surely lectures for the first time, and should break from the habit of crude gestures."[25] Despite his criticism, Botto tried to motivate other members to make more frequent performances by emphasizing the importance of practice advising Gustáv Voda "to declaim more, for it is the only way to improve his Slovak and his public speaking".[26] Botto, on the other hand, was also able to appreciate the quality of a good speech. E.g. Mr. Guller, for his lecture on the development of the idea of Czechoslovak reciprocity called *Our retrospective*, was praised "that he never heard such a nice and nicely stylized lecture in the "Detvan" and "He expresses his amazement of such a nice

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[21] During this period, the association's meetings were held regularly in the cafeteria of Mr. Hlava (Hlava's Cafe) at the Royal Vineyards (Královské Vinohrady) in Prague. From October 1906, they were moved to other businesses, like the Cafe Royal, also in the Royal Vineyards.

[22] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica riadneho valného zhromaždenia 3. 3. 1901.*

[23] František Bublávek, *Slovenský spolok "Detvan" v Prahe 1882–1913* (Praha: Nákladom Slovenského spolku "Detvana" v Prahe, 1913), 14.

[24] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica I. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 9. 3. 1901.*

[25] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica I. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky22. 11. 1902.*

[26] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica VIII. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 14. 2. 1903.*

style and pure Slovak."[27] Botto could express his overly critical attitude even against other members of the executive committee. Especially if he was of the opinion that they were not fulfilling their duties. In one of his comments, Botto "also criticizes the reporter, that his words at the meetings are only superficially recorded."[28]

In general, however, Botto was not in the habit of frequently engaging in debates held in association sessions. Apart from his reports as treasurer, many of his recorded performances were quite strict. Typically, he would urge members to adhere to values of justice and morality while in session. He considered it important for Detvan to maintain positive relationships with important personalities of Slovak and Czech cultural or political life. In June 1901, for example, he suggested: "that condolences are to be addressed to doctor Daxner over the death of his mother, the student supporter".[29] He also tried to manage regular absences of members from the sessions, which was a long-standing problem that hindered the proper functioning of the association. He suggested "to declare discontent for members who do not attend meetings",[30] which essentially meant their admonition. The honest and conscientious performance of Botto is confirmed by the fact that there is no such absence record (so-called "dútka") associated with his name. Interestingly, despite his often austere attitude, the records show most of the members of the club referred to him using the informal "Janko" or "Janíčko" (Johnny), which suggests his popularity among the members of Detvan.

With seriousness and responsibility did Botto also approach the function of association's treasurer. He was elected four times in succession to this post, and held it until March 28th 1903, when he was discharged.[31] In the minute-books, it is repeatedly mentioned how he regularly reminded members of their membership fees, procured orders and paid magazine subscriptions. Also, during his tenure the treasury records, audited through balance sheet accounts, were flawless. However, since its foundation, Detvan had faced a continuing lack of funding[32]. Besides financial donations, Detvan's sole source of

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[27] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica III. riadnej týždňovej schôdze 7. 12. 1902.*

[28] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica IX. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky21. 2. 1903.*

[29] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica IX. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 8. 6. 1901*

[30] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VŠA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica II. týždňovej schôdzky 9. 11. 1901.*

[31] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica II. riadneho valného zhromaždenia 28. 3. 1903.*

[32] The Slovak association of Detvan in Prague, in the period before the First World War, operated in the years 1882–1914.

income was the regular fees of its active, founding and contributing members. In order to improve its financial situation, Botto suggested that "it would be necessary to distribute letters asking for paying membership around Slovakia".[33] Some members of Detvan were also financially insecure, as they came from a poor Slovak environment. Ján Botto was one of them. Botto attempted to secure some money from one of his unspecified aunts. In the letter, he asks for money: "money, as you well know, I do not have. So far I have lived from those 10 golden coins, which I have forgotten at home and which belong to Detvan. (...) Please therefore send me money for this debt and livelihood I hope you know that I cannot live out of nothing."[34]

The Detvan association had repeatedly undertaken steps to distribute magazines of Czech and Slovak origin in order to raise awareness of the serious socio-political and cultural issues in Austria-Hungary. Chosen members of the association were designated to receive prepaid or free periodicals. Their task was to study the contents of the periodicals and then to submit a summary in report form. This made it possible for all the members of the association to be aware of their content, even if they were unable to read the magazines either because of lack of time or interest. Botto was one of these members. Soon after his arrival in the association, in the summer semester of 1901, he was assigned the magazine Národný hlásnik and the Ľudové noviny.[35] Interestingly, Botto did not fail to show his artistic tendency even in this task. While, for example, during the summer semester of 1903, Štefánik lectured about Cirkevné listy, the Katolícke noviny, and Bohdan Pavlů about Slovenské pohľady and Časkoslovenská vzájomnosť, Botto only undertook Dennica (Morning star).[36]

Detvan also received several Hungarian journals. The issue of subscribing offers an interesting glimpse into Botto's opinions. At the end of November 1902, Botto adamantly opposed Štefánik's proposal, at that time chairman of the association, that Detvan request from different editorial offices of Hungarian magazines to send them free copies. Botto suggested that they be subscribed because, according to his opinion, "the association should not humiliate itself and ask for free magazines from our biggest enemies."[37]

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[33] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica III. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 7. 12. 1902.*

[34] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 CH 27. *List Jána Botta Bližšie nemenovanej tete 2. 11. 1903.*

[35] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica I. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 9. 3. 1901.*

[36] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica VIII. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 14. 2. 1903.*

[37] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica I. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 22. 11. 1902.*

Botto's proposal was overturned, due to Štefánik's argument, "that it is almost customary in all associations to ask for free magazines".[38]

More direct insight into Botto's opinions about cultural relations with Czechs, ideas on Czechoslovak[39] reciprocity[40], contemporary Hungarian politics and its associated social issues can be gleaned from his reaction to the aforementioned lecture *Our retrospective – Naša retrospektíva* presented by medical student Eduard Guller. A week after the said lecture, Guller recorded Botto's thoughts on the matter:

> "Our Slovak, especially Slovak culture is weak, poor, we do not actually have our culture in the broader sense. We and our culture cannot even be developed under Hungarian bayonets. Regarding speech, however, our Slovak language seems to be prettier than Czech, But as far as culture is concerned, we definitely have to accept Czech, respectively Czech culture, which is undoubtedly nice, developed, which stands the test of time and which - I deliver - not only it is equal to the Hungarian culture but in many cases, it is far ahead of it. We Hungarian Slovaks have a choice between Hungarian and Czech culture. For we alone are weak to develop a peculiar, independent, own culture, therefore it is our duty to join the Czech culture. If we were to adopt the Hungarian culture, we would cease to be Slavs."[41]

Given the fact, that this research attempts to reconstruct Botto's activities, and the forming of his political and social views during his membership of Detvan, it can only be achieved on the basis of his statements and appearances in association sessions which were less frequent.[42] However, here we can observe Botto's strong disapproval of the contemporary national politics of the Hungarian government, especially the process of Hungarization, as a cultural and language assimilation of other non-Hungarian nationalities in the Hungarian part of the dual-monarchy. This mindset strongly influenced his views on the significance of the Slovak language and culture in relation to the Czech. As an emerging representative of Slovak nationalism, he saw an alternative future for Czech-Slovak cooperation due to the common Slavic origin of both nations as more preferable and appropriate to the subsumption into one state with the Hungarians.

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[38] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica I. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 22. 11. 1902.*

[39] Czechoslovak reciprocity is a term referring to a political movement that originated in Czech and Slovak nationally oriented environments at the turn of the 19th and 20th century and was a result of escalating tensions caused by the national policy of the Hungarian government toward Slovaks.

[40] Nadežda Jurčišinová, *Československá jednota a Slováci (1896–1914)* (Prešov: FF PU, 2010), 91–95.

[41] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica IV. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 14. 12. 1902.*

[42] With this in mind, on the basis of available archival documents from this period, we are unable to reconstruct Botto's view on other nations such as Germans, Poles or Russians.

In the interest of expanding Detvan's contacts within the Czech environment and promoting the idea of Czech-Slovak reciprocity, Botto lobbied for Detvan's membership of the Union of Czech Students at the beginning of February 1902. Admission was hampered by fears of inappropriate actions by the Union. Botto argued that "in the case, that cliquefication takes reign in the Union, the club could withdraw without any inconvenience". He proposed Ján Procházka for the committee and Milan Sloboda as a substitute, while Krasko was particularly interested in the approach of the Union towards Corda Fratres (the International Federation of Students), founded in Turin in 1898.[43] Botto's positive attitudes towards developing relations between the Slovaks and Czechs can be evidenced in several of his lectures and comments. For instance, in the lecture *From the time of our awakening* by Štefánik, "he would have liked more from the biography of Rudolf Pokorný because this man has great merit for Czech-Slovak reciprocity".[44] Botto worked with Štefánik in the development of Czech-Slovak reciprocity at a party of Moravian Slovaks in February 1903, which was organized by the Academic Section of Czechoslovak Unity. The delegation represented Detvan in an attempt to establish contacts between Slovak and Moravian students.[45] Botto also occasionally submitted proposals for the purchase of new book titles for the association's library and was careful not to forget the publishing activities of affiliated Slovak student societies. One of them, the Nation in Vienna, was founded in 1892 as the successor of Tatran, had its activities stopped. In December 1902, Botto at the Detvan meeting "announces that the 'Nation' of Vienna has issued 'Almanach' and proposes its purchase".[46]

Interestingly, Botto occasionally participated in the debates that typically followed lectures: on November 14th, Milada Sísová, Czech redactor, publicist and feminist presented to the association's weekly meeting her lecture *About writers to whom woman was a problem – O spisovateľoch, ktorým bola žena problémom*. Among others, Botto took part in the debate and we learn that "Brother Botto liked the lecture. However, he reproached the fact, that she omitted opinions of Slavic man, such as Tolstoy or Turgenev. She did not

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[43] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica z IX. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 8. 2. 1902.*

[44] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica VI. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 24. 1. 1903.*

[45] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica VII. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 1. 2. 1903.*

[46] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica III. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 7. 12. 1902.*

contrast German and Slavic woman, and that has a great meaning for us."[47] This meeting
was later an inspiration for Botto's prosaic piece, a portrait study called *Naší*, published in
1907 in Slovenský obzor (Slovak horizon). Ján Botto, however, did not begin to develop
his own lecture activity in Detvan's sessions until 1904. Based on associations' records, it
can be assumed that Botto did not share his literary work with other members of Detvan,
and most likely concealed it. This caused the lectures to be directed towards his field of
study - chemistry and various related technical fields. Several times he was even forced to
improvise because pre-arranged lecturers did not show up. At the end of February 1904,
he lectured *On Agriculture*. Here, Botto "gave a short historical outline of the economy
from the oldest times to the latest times. He mentioned the Egyptians, the Jews, the
Greeks, the Romans, and the Middle Ages. - He talked about the superstition from middle
ages, where the crop shortage or abundance were attributed to the supernatural beings."[48]
In his lecture *About the production of glass* "he explained the production of glass in the old
days and times of the present, he also outlined the means of production and the chemical
composition of simple glass and beautifying glass."[49]

Botto's name appears only sporadically in the association's records and attendance lists
from the spring of 1904 as he prepared to finish his studies. Botto was mentioned for the
last time at a committee meeting at the end of February 1905. He is already listed as a guest,
in the records, as he was no longer a student and legitimate member of Detvan in Prague.[50]

Ján Botto's Correspondence with other Members after their Departure from the Association

Relatively well-preserved contemporary correspondence allows us to recreate the character
of Ján Botto and his relationships with selected members of the association after his
departure from Detvan. Ján Botto had, during his college studies and membership in
Detvan a friendly relationship with the astronomy student and three-times chairman of the
association, Milan Rastislav Štefánik. Their numerous, often humorous, correspondence in
which the tendency to open communication prevailed reflects their deep friendship. After

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[47] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica XV. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 14. 11. 1903.*

[48] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica VI. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 22. 2. 1904.*

[49] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica IX. riadnej týždňovej schôdzky 13. 3. 1904.*

[50] ÚDAUK Praha, fond VSA, kartón č. B 301, materiály k spolku Detvan. *Zápisnica VIII. výborovej schôdzky 25. 2. 1905.*

completing his education in 1904 and leaving the association for France, Štefánik became the collaborator of a major astronomer, Pier Jula Jensen at the Meudon Observatory in Paris. His desperate financial situation eventually forced him to write to Botto: "I have only a few francs in my pocket...you have to help me...I need about 30-40 golden coins. For some time, I have only been eating once a day, I am poor, and I am angry at this order of the world. But, I feel content, I knew I would not have a bed of roses prepared for me."[51] After leaving the association, they often sent each other postcards. Of particular interest are the postcards sent by Štefánik from his travels around Europe, which are often supplemented with various amusing texts. One postcard depicting the Basilica of Saint Paul is addressed to segnor Giovanni Botto, bearing the inscribed text: "I prayed today, my dear Johnny, for your sinful soul in the temple of St. Peter. Yours Milan."[52]

Botto also maintained friendly relations with former member, Fedor Albini, a construction engineer, publicist and later, prefect of the State Land Office in Prešov. This is demonstrated by his congratulations on Botto's wedding: "I read - I do not believe my eyes – was it you, the harsh ascetic, to marry, if so, there is nothing else left, only to wish you a lot of luck."[53]

Several letters are preserved from pre-war correspondence between Vavro Šrobár, a member of the Hlasism[54] movement and post-war politician, and Ján Botto, dated in the decades following their college education and membership of Detvan, despite the two not being in the association at the same time. Most of these were "lighter" in content, e.g. Šrobár's letters to Botto thanking him for his congratulations on the occasion of the appointment of Šrobár as a university professor[55] in 1935, or for an unspecified poetry collection in which Šrobár writes to Botto: "Thank you for the beautiful book of poems I was so glad to read and appreciate. I hope that I will soon reciprocate with some new literary work."[56] In their correspondence, however, there are also letters with a much more serious tone. E.g. in a letter from 1945, in which he recalls years of mutual friendship and

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[51] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 H 4. *List Milana Rastislava Štefánika Ivanovi Kraskovi so žiadosťou o finančnú pomoc 1906.*

[52] LA SNK Martin, sign, 75 H 4. *Pohľadnica Milan Rastislava Štefánika Ivanovi Kraskovi z Ríma.*

[53] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 A 1. *Svadobné blahoželanie Fedora Albiniho Ivanovi Kraskovi 27. 9. 1911.*

[54] The Hlasism movement was an association of nationally oriented, dominantly Slovak intelligence. The group was centered around Hlas (Voice) magazine (1898 – 1904), hence the name Hlasism. The aims of the movement were a moral renewal of the Slovak nation and society, civil rights and freedoms, activation of political, economic and cultural life, and democratic reforms in contemporary Hungary. As supporters of Czech-Slovak cooperation, the most important figures of the Hlasism movement were Tomáš Garrique Masaryk or Vavro Šrobár.

[55] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 G 51. *Ďakovný list Vavra Šrobára Ivanovi Kraskovi 7. 10. 1935.*

[56] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 G 51. *Ďakovný list Vavra Šrobára Ivanovi Kraskovi 19. 4. 1937.*

cooperation with Botto, he writes: "I remember vividly our cooperation, our plans, our aspirations, and our shared joyful moments (...) we made plans of better future for us and our descendants, a new generation to receive the legacy their fathers."[57]

Botto also maintained contacts with literary historian, Czechoslovak politician and historically first chairman of the Detvan association, Jaroslav Vlček. E.g. In 1922 Vlček informed Botto about the preparation of the unveiling of the memorial plaque to Pavol Jozef Šafárik: "A literary speaker at the unveiling of the plaque of Šafárik in Gemer will be Jožko Škultéty and Štefan Krčméry offered to write a leaflet for the wider audience..."[58] This letter documents Botto's interest in his home region of Gemer even years after his departure.

Botto also held an extensive, archived, correspondence with his long-time friend and association colleague, the important Slovak composer, Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský. This close relationship is evidenced firstly by the various friendly names they addressed each other with such as "Dear Janko" or "Janíčko". Interestingly, they also maintained a work related relationship to a certain extent, as Schneider-Trnavský put to music several of his poetic pieces as well as translating Botto's collection of poems, Vesper dominicae, into the German language. This topic is the theme of several letters.[59] However, more interesting are the letters in which both artists reminisce on their student years, like, for example, in the letter of 27th March 1956: "You know, my dear Janíčko, when I think of you, the most beautiful memories of spring of my life pop up. We were young, handsome boys, there was only love, only heart! There were a lot of us, and all of us have engaged in sincere friendship without envy and hatred."[60] Among their mutual correspondence there is also to be found congratulations on various life anniversaries. The last Schneider letter, pertinent to the subject under study, is the letter of condolences from Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský to Elena Bottová, the widow of Ján Botto, who died on March 3rd, 1958. Schneider-Trnavský writes: "The great Son of our nation has left!… It is a pity of His golden heart, His kind eyes, and His Light, which will never stop shining until there is a faithful Slovak on this mournful Earth."[61]

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[57] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 G 51. *List Vavra Šrobára Ivanovi Kraskovi 4. 8. 1945.*

[58] LA SNK Martin, sign, 75 H 44. *List Jaroslava Vlčeka Ivanovi Kraskovi 22. 3. 1922.*

[59] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 G 2 a. *List Mikuláša Schneidear-Trnavského Ivanovi Kraskovi o preklade zbierky Vesper dominicae 26. 12. 1942.*

[60] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 G 2 a. *List Mikuláša Schneidera-Trnavského Ivanovi Kraskovi 27. 3. 1956.*

[61] LA SNK Martin, sign. 75 N 49. *Kondolencia Mikuláša Schneidera-Trnavského Hane Bottovej 4. 3. 1958.*

Conclusion

Ján Botto (Ivan Krasko), one of the greatest Slovak poets of the first half of the 20th century was, during his university studies a member of the Slovak association, Detvan in Prague (1900–1904). Within the association, Botto served as a treasurer, participated in various debates and later, lectured on topics concerning chemistry and technical subjects. Despite the anonymity he retained over his artistic activities, he often criticized the artistic performances of others. He tended to encourage other members to be literarily and socially active. Similar social-political opinions on Czech-Slovak relations and reciprocity were shared with his long-time friend and association colleague, Milan Rastislav Štefánik, with whom he maintained contact, even after their departure from Detvan. Ján Botto was in contact with other former members of Detvan as well, among which were Fedor Albini, Vavro Šrobár, Jaroslav Vlček, and Milan Schneider-Trnavský.

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Barna Szamosi

Public Health Concerns Regarding Reproduction Structured by Race/ Ethnicity and Class during State Socialism in Hungary

Pro&Contra 3

No. 1 (2019) 47–66.

Abstract

This paper describes the means by which medical professionals of the socialist period integrated interwar public hygiene practices into the health management of gypsies from the perspective of the public health interest of the majority. In these practices, ethnic/racial stereotypes shaped public health action. Public-health officials justified these actions on the basis of their fear that gypsies would spread diseases if their hygiene issues were not controlled. A further development occurred in the discourse when gypsy ethnic identity came to be recognized as an important statistical variable in determining healthy birth rates. Regarding this question, it will be demonstrated that ethnic identity as a variable, appeared in the medical discourse as a problem that offset the overall reproductive statistics of the state. It is argued that the medical professional discourse with its arguments, practices, and measures, point towards a continuity between the interwar and socialist periods' public health regarding racial thinking.

Keywords: interwar period, eugenics, public health, socialism, Roma, gypsy, reproduction

Introduction

The public health discourse of Hungary during the 1950s prioritized contagious diseases with its main interest lay in finding ways to control these problems thereby safeguarding the interest of the majority. In this paper, I will describe the means by which medical professionals of the socialist period integrated interwar public hygiene practices into the health management of gypsies from the perspective of the public health interest of the majority[1]. In these practices, ethnic/racial stereotypes shaped public health action. Public-health officials justified these actions on the basis of their fear that gypsies would spread diseases if their hygiene issues were not controlled. Thus, the issue of ensuring good public-health standards was connected to environmental problems, class issues, and also to racial/ethnic identity. The aim was to develop the general public health conditions of the Hungarian gypsy communities, but these methods were not enabling but rather constraining and discriminatory measures. A further racial/ethnic issue occurred in this discourse when gypsy ethnic identity came to be recognized as an important statistical variable in determining healthy birth rates. Regarding this question, I will show that eth-

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nic identity as a variable, appeared in the medical discourse framed as means to develop the overall reproductive statistics of the state. It was discovered that gypsy reproductive statistics offset regional and national results, thus in order to relieve the burden that these adverse results meant for the national healthcare system a better understanding of gypsy non-gypsy biological difference and about gypsy reproductive practices was needed. The intention was to help gypsy people to achieve healthier reproductive results and this was justified primarily from an economic perspective informed by eugenic ideas.

Interwar Antecedents of Public Health Discourse on Gypsies

As a result of the unsuccessful attempts to assimilate the gypsies and the growing influence of Nazi race theory, medical professionals began a discussion on public-health issues. Csaba Dupcsik reviewed the debate that took place in the *Népegészségügy* (*Public Health*) journal between 1939 and 1944. This particular journal is key to the understanding of the official state relation to the 'gypsy question' since it was the journal of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs until 1932 when it became the journal of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In the pages of this journal, health professionals aligned their views with the official state position on this question[2]. I will organize this short review around the issues analyzed by Dupcsik but place emphasis mainly on narratives of public-health risks and on reproduction.

During the 1920s negative attitudes towards wandering gypsies grew more pronounced. Perhaps as a result of the general racism towards gypsies, the Minister of Internal Affairs enacted a law in 1928 (257000/1928) that compelled the gendarmerie to conduct raids in which they rounded-up wandering gypsies to curb the danger that these people presented to the general public. Dupcsik in his work highlights that typical punishments were interning them for hard labor, forced relocation, and also public disinfection[3]. The practice of public disinfection illustrates that the general sentiment towards the health standards of gypsies was extremely negative. Hungarian health professionals believed that these groups of people carried dangerous infectious diseases that had to be controlled regularly. This idea to control their diseases in a separate and radical way returned during the socialist period as I will elaborate later.

But it is also notable that these ideas that gypsies carried different diseases dangerous to non-gypsy people also contributed to the resistance that non-gypsies felt and

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[2] Csaba Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története. Történelem a Cigánykutatások Tükrében, 1890-2008* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2009), 119.

[3] Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története,* 103.

expressed when it came to the two groups living together. However, it was not only these imagined health problems that were widely shared by the health professionals who contributed to the discussion of the gypsy-question on the pages of Népegészségügy but also the idea that gypsy people were racially subordinate to non-gypsy Hungarians [4]. They disseminated the belief that assimilation was not viable therefore it was not desirable to foster the cohabitation of gypsy and non-gypsy Hungarians because that would inevitably lead to the degeneration of non-gypsies, and hence contribute to the degeneration of the Hungarian race.

The theme of degeneration surfaces more strongly in relation to the number of gypsy and non-gypsy descendants. The narrative, how reproduction is linked to gypsy behavior, fits neatly into an exclusionary discourse. It was argued that gypsies, because of their unproductive, lazy lifestyles are more sexually promiscuous; since they are not working in any socially productive sphere their only goal and pleasure in life is their sexuality. The difference between the reproductive growth of gypsy and non-gypsy communities, is explained by this previously described practice. According to Andor Olay, their racial characteristics predestine gypsies to such a way of life, therefore social assimilation is not a possible solution to the "gypsy-question"[5]. Instead of assimilation, assisted by reproductive interventions, healthcare professionals promoted the exact opposite.

They wanted to ensure that gypsy and non-gypsy people remained segregated because they believed that gypsies presented a grave biological threat to the Hungarian race. They approached the "gypsy-question" similarly to the "Jewish-question". Their aim was to manage these racial issues alike. For example, Ferenc Orsós, a physician and university professor, suggested prohibiting mixed marriages between gypsy and non-gypsy couples just as the third Jewish-law prohibited mixed marriages between Jewish and non-Jewish couples in 1941. Orsós differentiated between the two "questions" in terms of danger and class: he argued that while mixed Jewish marriages are dangerous biologically and politically for the upper classes, mixed gypsy marriages presented a danger to the working classes[6]. In addition to these measures, the discussion was directed towards more radical control of the population.

In order to strengthen their standpoint, healthcare professionals participating in the debate drew on utilitarian ideas: they claimed that gypsies were not economically useful elements of the body politic therefore their medical care is pure loss without any profit. They sketched two directions to address the above issue. Similarly to their German coun-

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[4] Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története,* 123–124.

[5] Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története,* 121.

[6] Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története,* 93–94.

terparts, Hungarian race-theorists supported the forced relocation of Hungarian gypsies to Eastern territories. They believed that the expulsion of gypsies from Hungary and from Europe would solve the health problems presented. Another method that was suggested by the contributors was forced sterilization on the condition that relocation could not be achieved. From the authors of 16 articles – which was the complete *Népegészségügy*-debate – 5 endorsed forced sterilizations, and the authors of 12 articles agreed that either relocation or internment to forced labor camps was the solution[7]. From these positions it is evident that health professionals embraced and endorsed the radical segregation of gypsies from non-gypsies for reproductive reasons as well as proposing to stop their reproduction through sterilization.

Neither of the above suggested reproductive interventions transpired, but the contribution, that is, the aim of healthcare professionals to shape the political discourse from their racially biased position based on stereotypes, is clearly visible in the debate. In this late eugenic era healthcare professionals – such as physicians, head physicians, nurses, researchers, and research assistants – actively engaged in shaping the discussion on how to improve the biological material of the Hungarian race. Their suggestions consisted in primarily negative eugenic interventions, along the lines of race, class, and gender, where gender meant the underlying principle in the control of heterosexual reproduction. In the following I will analyze the changes that took place during the socialist era in contrast to the events of the interwar period.

Racial/ethnic Stereotypes that Shaped Public Health Discussions and Public Health Practices after 1948

Perhaps one of the most important developments of the socialist era in contrast to the interwar period is that explicit racial discrimination became politically unacceptable from 1948, at least officially. This was evident in the official state discourse on problems related to education, criminal behavior, or public health as they were no longer explained through the language of biological essentialism which would explicitly support racial bias. However, there are plenty of cases to draw on to explain how racial/ethnic discrimination worked in the socialist Hungarian state.

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[7] Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története,* 127.

Legal Segregation: Black Identity Cards

On 26 August 1953, the Political Committee of the Hungarian Workers Party decided to equip all Hungarian citizens with identity cards. Their reasons for introducing IDs were the following: (1) the Hungarian population would need fewer documents yearly; (2) authorities would have less work; (3) it would frustrate class conflicts, and the goals of 'imperial' agents and criminals; (4) it would make the work of authorities easier in controlling border territories and cities[8]. In addition to the previously described decree, on June 26, 1955, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a supplement: those who could not prove their permanent address for two years and were not in work for at least six months must be categorized as people who maintained a wandering and work-avoidant lifestyle. Such individuals were to be provided with black identity cards on an annual basis. This law was not explicitly named as such, but this can be called the first racial regulation of the socialist period the goal of which was to control wandering gypsies.

In 1952 the Public Order Policing Department requested the Criminal Investigation Department to prepare a plan to settle and compel wandering gypsies to work[9]. The starting point of their argument was the stereotype that many gypsies were not taking part in productive work. It is important to note that there were no precise numbers but only exaggerations were used to justify the regulation. The image of the culturally backward, thuggish gypsy was used to rationalize government action. Gypsies were viewed as criminals who were not afraid to rob and kill settled working citizens. It was argued that they lived in shantytowns during the winter but left these places when spring arrived to roam the country. It was claimed that they were not only dangerous from a law enforcement perspective but that they represented a danger to the public health and safety of the majority population: they might carry and spread different infectious diseases.

The idea that this was a racially discriminatory regulation is supported by the statements which were written in the law that regulated the introduction of identity cards[10]. 'Wanderer' was used as a synonym for gypsies and the idea to introduce black identity cards served racial segregation. Since 1948, the beginning of the socialist era, it had been debated whether it was justified to legally acknowledge gypsy as a nationality. But it became a clearly established position by 1961 that in view of their *essential* difference from Hungarians they could not be acknowledged as a part of the Hungarian nation, therefore

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[8] Barna Gyula Purcsi, "Fekete Személyi Igazolvány És Munkatábor. Kísérlet a Cigánykérdés „Megoldására" Az Ötvenes Évek Magyarországán.," *Beszélő* 6, no. 6 (2001): 26–37, http://beszelo.c3.hu/cikkek/fekete-szemelyi-igazolvany-es-munkatabor.

[9] Purcsi "Fekete Személyi Igazolvány És Munkatábor".

[10] Purcsi "Fekete Személyi Igazolvány És Munkatábor".

it was decided to abolish the Cultural Association of Hungarian Gypsies. Furthermore, the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party categorized gypsies as not belonging to any state (or nation) and as being incapable of further development. Race as a terminology never appears in the official documents but with one exception. By 1961 it was decided – perhaps because of the objections from gypsy activist László Mária and members of administrative bodies (Executive Committee of Pest County), and police officers for its racially discriminative nature – that identity cards must be distributed uniformly to all Hungarian citizens and black identity cards must be withdrawn. With this act the unconstitutional racial discrimination of Hungarian gypsies ended at the official state level. However racial discrimination continued in the health discourse: it was argued that gypsies represented serious health dangers to non-gypsies because of their undeveloped living places and their nomadic lifestyle. In the following I will take up the line of debate that continued in *Népegészségügy* after the Second World War.

Racial Discrimination of Gypsies in the Public Health Discourse

The tone and themes that were described above on the pages of *Népegészségügy* continued after the war and discriminative practices were common towards gypsies during the decades of Socialism. I want to start with the debate on the 'gypsy-question' that took place in the articles of József Galambos, János Heicinger, and Ferenc Fellner – all of whom were physicians[11]. In these articles, the authors discussed the health threat that gypsies were thought to represent for the majority population after the war. The basis on which they built their position concerned the relationship between the large numbers of wandering gypsies and those gypsies already settled within villages and cities; it was believed that the latter might accommodate the former thus facilitating the spread of diseases. The attitude of healthcare professionals and police towards gypsies can be demonstrated in the case of Hajdúhadház – a village in Central-Eastern Hungary[12]. Gypsies had been living on the border of the village in shantytowns since the 1940s. In 1947 the village was quarantined because it was suspected that typhus had infected its inhabitants; later they discovered that it was not typhus but malaria. First it was suspected by physicians that the gypsies spread typhus, but when they realized that it was malaria, they destroyed the surrounding environment in an effort to kill the mosquitoes and their larvae. Despite this action, the majority population objected to leaving gypsies and their shanty-towns intact – they believed that they were still potentially dangerous to public health so the gypsy

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[11] Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története,* 143–144.
[12] Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története,* 145.

families (331 people) were relocated and their huts demolished all under the supervision of the authorities.

Another significant practice that was indicated as an urgent public health need was the continuous forced bathing of gypsies living in settlements on the borders of towns and villages during the Socialist period. It is significant as more than half of the gypsy population of Hungary was forced to take part in these bathings. It was introduced in the 1940s[13] but became widespread during the 1950s continuing until the end of the 1980s[14]. Forced bathing meant that health officers regularly inspected settlements. And with the help of the police, soldiers and gypsy leaders, health officers forced gypsies into big tents where they were forced to shower with cresol soap and be fumigated with DDT both of which were used for disinfection against lice; it was argued that typhus was spread mostly through lice living on the human body. Health officials typically surrounded and quarantined settlements, pitched an army tent, and methodically forced the inhabitants into the showers. In these tents, healthcare officials could bathe a hundred individuals per hour. Not only were these practices humiliating, but both disinfectants used are harmful, and DDT was banned accordingly in 1968 by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO); Hungary was among the first countries to sign the treaty. The process of disinfection was more about the exertion of power over the gypsy ethnic minority by the authorities (and those majority Hungarians who helped in this process); in addition to this, they usually depilated the body hair of all that which added to their humiliation. These practices were far from medical necessities as gypsies without medical issues were also forced to take part and, importantly, no non-gypsy Hungarians were checked for lice or any other condition and none of the majority Hungarians were forced to take part in communal bathing. What Bernáth and Polyák aptly indicate is the change in the rhetoric

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[13] The continuity of atrocities against gypsies can be traced back to 1940 as Péter Bernát and Laura Polyák (2001) show through the interview that they conducted with the physician abbreviated as K.P. and what is evident from their account is that the practices that were coated as public health measures eased off during the socialist period. The drastic actions that were taken against gypsies is illustrated through the interview with doctor K.P. He tells a story about a village in Transylvania where he worked as a military physician after the annexation in 1940. It was thought that typhus was spread to the soldiers from a village and particularly from the settlement of gypsies. It was ordered to relocate everybody from the shantytown but before that it was mandatory to depilate all of the inhabitants and disinfect them. As a final act of the public health measures that needed to be taken – he claimed – they burned down the huts of gypsies and forced them to move out from the village to an uninhabited territory between villages.

[14] Péter Bernáth and Laura Polyák, "Kényszermosdatások Magyarországon," *Beszélő* 6, no. 6 (2001): 38–45, http://beszelo.c3.hu/cikkek/kenyszermosdatasok-magyarorszagon; Dupcsik, *A Magyarországi Cigányság Története. Történelem a Cigánykutatások Tükrében, 1890-2008.*

and somewhat in the practice in comparison to the Interwar years and Second World War, but the general racially biased attitude remained during the socialist period and continued after the transition as well[15].

Gypsies at the Center of Socio-political Interest

It was in the 1960s, that the gypsies became the object of socio-political interest. To underscore this point, two state statutes can be referenced (1961 and 1979) that defined the areas that needed to be tackled so as to improve the living standards of gypsies and thus their integration into society. The areas requiring progress were educational, employment, housing, and hygienic conditions. Mária Komlósi and her colleagues[16] [17] discussed the significant improvements that had been made in the living standards (especially regarding their living conditions and their health) of gypsies, in the period between 1960 and 1985; but their quality of life was far less than that of the non-gypsy population. For example, the sociologist István Kemény, remarks that the practices in Baranya County were inconsistent with central ideas about integration, there, it transpired that new gypsy slums emerged as gypsies moved into smaller villages from their illegal settlements[18]. Though this was the case in general, researchers recognized that gypsies were not a homogenous mass, but a layered community; its layers defined by socio-economic status, educational background, geographical location, gender, and their ethnic identities.

Gypsy Identity Perceived as a Factor that Affects Birth Rates

Ethnic identity as a variable for reproductive results became relevant for medical reasons in the 1960s and 1970s. Initially, researchers were looking for various factors that negatively affected the outcome of pregnancy. They listed factors, such as "the alcoholism of the pregnant woman, the size of the womb, four or more miscarriages" but in addition to these problems, factors such as "lower educational level, unhealthy living conditions,

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[15] A recent example that they gave is racial segregation in schools. In 1997 in Tiszavasvári – a town in North East Hungary – the school-leaving ceremony was separately held for gypsy and non-gypsy children because of public health reasons. The school was sued, and the court fined the municipality. The municipality had to pay every gypsy family for racial discrimination (Bernát and Polyák 2001).

[16] Mária Komlósi et al., "A Cigány Lakosság Egészségi Állapota I. Rész," *Népegészségügy* 66, no. 5 (1985): 305–7.

[17] Mária Komlósi et al., "A Cigány Lakosság Egészségi Állapota II. Rész," *Népegészségügy* 66, no. 6 (1985): 339–41.

[18] Komlósi et al., "A Cigány Lakosság Egészségi Állapota I. Rész," 305.

gypsy status, and disadvantaged social circumstances" were also connected to premature birth[19]. József Kóbor and his colleagues argued that the most important factors that influenced premature birth were "nutritional possibilities, direct antecedents of birth, hygienic conditions, social-cultural environment, age and familial status, nurturing, and general health."

Their study is important because it is one of the earliest public health studies (focusing on birth statistics) that shifts concerns from various factors onto two overlapping differences. Researchers found that certain characteristics appear together thus they decided to exclude certain factors and focus on those that seemed to reflect multiple problems at once. Such factors were for example 'disadvantaged social circumstances;' researchers understood that these regularly appeared with poor nutritional possibilities and substandard housing conditions which led to poor health outcomes for the members of the group. They similarly noticed that being gypsy (or in their words "gypsy status") co-exist with other factors. They termed these "encompassing factors" and began to analyze how these encompassing factors affect birth outcomes. They found that being gypsy resulted in a high percentage of premature births (when they removed the gypsy results from their sample they noticed 2 percent fewer premature births in comparison to average). In addition to this, they further removed the category of smokers and together with the gypsy category the number of premature births fell to half of the average[20]. In sum, they concluded that by removing factors such as gypsy, smoker, hygienic housing conditions, and abortion, only 6.7 percent of the remaining mothers gave birth prematurely which was interpreted by them as a favorable result even in comparison to international standards. Thus, they argued that it is important to further analyze the complex nature of these social, economic and biological factors that contribute to these results.

Statistical Figures on Pregnancy and Birth Rates among Gypsies

When discussing gypsy pregnancies scholars highlighted the factors that influenced the birth rates of gypsy pregnancies[21]. For example, bad housing conditions, poor hygiene conditions, effects of smoking, inaccessibility to prenatal care because of geographical distances (there were no healthcare workers in the settlements or in the sample villages).

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[19] József Kóbor et al., "A Terhesség Kimenetelét Befolyásoló Faktor Néhány Analaízise," *Népegészségügy* 53, no. 5 (1972): 282–86.

[20] Kóbor et al., "A Terhesség Kimenetelét Befolyásoló Faktor Néhány Analaízise," 285–286.

[21] Mihály Horváth, István Piszér, and Zoltán Nagy, "Alacsony Születési Súlyra És Koraszülésre Hajlamosító Tényezők (Cigány Terhességekre Vonatkozó Adatok)," *Népegészségügy* 53, no. 5 (1972): 287–90.

Also, unfavorable nutritional possibilities, a high number of abortions, frequent medical conditions (hypotonia, anemia, cystopyelitis, helminthiasis), many and frequent pregnancies per woman, and the growing numbers of young mothers. As a possible solution, Mihály Horváth and his colleagues suggested distributing more information about personal healthcare as well as contraceptive methods, but at the same time they emphasized the need for institutional development in the region. Without considerable developments in medical offices and medical staff, and without the conditions to access hospitals the health statistics of gypsies would not change.

Others began from the observation that the number of live births increased as a consequence of the enactments of population policy decrees. New contraceptive technologies were introduced and thus the traditional form of birth control (i.e. abortion) began to decrease. However healthcare workers recognized that these new technologies unfortunately were not accessible to people living in economically and socially marginalized communities[22]. Bodnár for example analyzed the situation of gypsies in Szabolcs-Szatmár counties because researchers had discovered that the gypsy population offset the live-birth statistics in this part of the country. Bodnár explained that the rate of gypsies to the majority population was 6.9 percent but in Szabolcs-Szatmár 18 percent of every 5th born (and above) children died. This was explained by the low-income, low-education, low-level of healthcare conduct, and poor living conditions of gypsies – although their housing conditions started to change in the 1960s, their reproductive health results did not follow rapidly.

Researchers compared large families (with four or more children) of gypsy and non-gypsy backgrounds and found that those who were educated used some form of contraception while this was less true of those with a limited education. They found in their comparative study that most gypsy families (62 percent) used some form of contraception (pills and IUE[23]). In 1960 there were 11041 large families and this number decreased to 4919 by 1977 which was interpreted as good progress. However, regarding these results, Bodnár also placed emphasis on the fact that the practices of people who belonged to the lowest economic strata did not change, thus it prompted healthcare professionals to seek ways that would help their reproductive decisions making[24]. One of the examples that Bodnár gave was the regulation of IUEs (officially regulated by the

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[22] Lóránt Bodnár, "Az Elmaradott Néprétegek Családtervezésével Kapcsolatos Tapasztalataink Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében," *Népegészségügy* 61, no. 3 (1980): 175–78.

[23] Intrauterine loop.

[24] Bodnár, "Az Elmaradott Néprétegek Családtervezésével Kapcsolatos Tapasztalataink Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében," 177.

6/1977 Health Ministry decree): the placement of IUEs is the right and responsibility of healthcare institutions. He argued that perhaps it would have been more efficient to allow the placement of IUEs in other locations, because of those gypsy and non-gypsy women who had large families and lived in remote settlements or villages. These women perhaps would opt for this contraceptive method if they could have access to it in their villages – but they would not travel 30 to 50 kilometers to have it fitted[25]. Thus, it was underscored that helping large families and the gypsy population should be one of society's priorities.

Similar results were found in succeeding studies. When Bodnár and his colleagues discussed newborn rates in Szabolcs-Szatmár county they concluded in their analysis that the gypsy population – although they were 7.3 percent of the population – accounted for 14 percent of live births and 25 percent of stillbirths[26]. They emphasized that "the unfavorable characteristics of gypsy pregnant women and newborns aggravating the difficulties of the healthcare system to function effectively, they need special tasks and special provisions," in addition they pointed towards constant health education, and the need for cooperation among authorities (social, economic, cultural) in order to execute care work. In my view, it is an important historical fact that healthcare workers have tracked mortality rates of gypsy newborns since 1962[27]. Bodnár and his colleagues explained that it was possible to understand that gypsy newborn mortality rates were always higher than non-gypsy newborn mortality rates. From these records they inferred that the trend was downwards – in the early 60s it was 7-8 percent above the non-gypsy results while by the 80s this became only 1.5 percent – but it remained one of the key problems that the county had to face. Ethnic categorization from a medical perspective was an important tool that enabled researchers to understand health related differences between gypsy and non-gypsy communities, which was an important step towards overcoming health inequality.

It was noted that with these statistics they could understand how gypsies and other "undeveloped" strata held back healthcare institutions from delivering good results. And they also emphasized that their reproductive rates were higher than the average, thus healthcare workers would have to face further issues; it was not only the question of infant mortality, but the frequently sick and underdeveloped children who represented

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[25] Bodnár, "Az Elmaradott Néprétegek Családtervezésével Kapcsolatos Tapasztalataink Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében," 177–178.

[26] Lóránt Bodnár et al., "A Cigány Nők Terhességeinek Társadalmi, Demográfiai Jellemzői Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében. I. Anyag És Módszer," *Népegészségügy* 62, no. 1 (1981): 30–34.

[27] Bodnár et al., "A Cigány Nők Terhességeinek Társadalmi, Demográfiai Jellemzői Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében. I. Anyag És Módszer," 32.

further problems[28]. They suggested that not only biological causes were important in understanding mental backwardness but social-environmental factors as well – in other words, that many of these children were raised in environments where they scarcely had enough stimuli to help in their development. This in turn would make their education and social integration very difficult. They essentially concluded that the cultural level of gypsies determined their social opportunities; their cultural habits, their large families, their lack of education, their environmental factors – all contributed to reproducing their present detrimental situation. Thus they argued that medical professionals by exploring the field of infant health could contribute to the much-needed change that would help gypsy communities to better healthcare.

Comparing the Biological Characteristics of Gypsy and Non-gypsy Mothers and Infants

It can be claimed that one of the significant starting points in the comparative work of gypsy and non-gypsy biological characteristics is the articulation of racial difference: "undoubtedly, within the country's population gypsies belong to a sub-racial category" [29] Bodnár further explained that newborn data proved that there was material ground for differences that were understood to be the consequences of their racial difference, and to their socio-economic situation. The idea that gypsy women have different biological determinants in comparison to non-gypsy women and thus these biological factors would decisively influence their birth results was compatible with the view on racial difference. Although in their study, Bodnár and his colleagues rejected the idea that there are essential biological differences, they maintained that the biological condition of gypsy mothers influenced their births results. This biological condition however, was determined by their socio-environmental conditions and thus the unfavorable birth results (premature birth, low-birth weight, early and late infant mortality rates) could be explained by their socially and economically marginalized situation in society[30]. In addition to these issues, they stressed the problem of short rest periods between pregnancies and number of miscarriages as factors that also influenced the increase in infant mortalities. Infant mortality

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[28] Bodnár et al., "A Cigány Nők Terhességeinek Társadalmi, Demográfiai Jellemzői Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében. I. Anyag És Módszer," 32–33.

[29] Lóránt Bodnár, "A Cigány Nők Terhességeinek Társadalmi, Demográfiai Jellemzői Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében. IV. A Szociális-Gazdasági Tényezők Szerepe," *Népegészségügy* 62, no. 4–5 (1981): 308.

[30] Lóránt Bodnár et al., "A Cigány Nők Terhességeinek Társadalmi, Demográfiai Jellemzői Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében. III. Biológiai Tényezők; Az Anya Kondíciója," *Népegészségügy* 62, no. 1 (1981): 40–43.

rates are considered to be important markers for determining the economic standards of a society[31].

Bodnár highlighted that after the analysis of the comparative data, he discovered that those gypsy mothers who were living in good socio-economic conditions gave birth to infants whose biological characteristics came close to the average non-gypsy birth results[32]. He came to the conclusion after a brief theoretical experiment, in which he presupposed better conditions for gypsy parents, and found that if they were living in better conditions (both parents would be in employment, for example) their infant mortality rate could drop by 20 percent. But at the same time he maintained that there are genetic factors – understood as racial differences – that could play a role in determining birth weight, or their more frequent premature birth rates. However, Bodnár maintained that unless all of the socio-economic factors were levelled it was pointless to presuppose that birth results are solely genetically determined. Bodnár shared the position of the WHO – published in 1965 – that questioned the idea that the birth weight of newborns is solely racially/ethnically determined. He summarized the WHO statement that sided with the idea that there are differences in birth statistics within one ethnic/racial group. Socio-economic status has a considerable influence on these results thus it can be inferred from their results that there are ethnic/racial differences observed, but that these were observed in disparate circumstances and if socio-economic differences are not eliminated biological differences cannot be linked to race. Hence, I think Bodnár implied, it is important to track birth results more sensitively: not only race/ethnicity, but SES, environmental factors, stress factors, lifestyle factors, and even epigenetic factors are important in categorization.

Other researchers contributed to this strand of comparative health research on gypsy populations located in other geographical areas. Raffael Szabó and his colleagues for example studied the population of Ráckeve in Pest county[33]. They noted that most studies centered on the gypsy populations of Szabolcs-Szatmár counties and Baranya counties; this is why they researched gypsies in the area of Pest. They recorded gypsy birth statistics after 1966; and from this data they analyzed live birth rates, still-birth rates, perinatal and infant mortality rates, birth weight, and sex ratio. They observed that gypsy women gave birth to 2 to 3 times more children in comparison to non-gypsies. In addition to this, they noticed that the average birth weight of gypsy newborns was 300 grams less than non-gyp-

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[31] Bodnár, "A Cigány Nők Terhességeinek Társadalmi, Demográfiai Jellemzői Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében. IV. A Szociális-Gazdasági Tényezők Szerepe," 308.

[32] Bodnár, "A Cigány Nők Terhességeinek Társadalmi, Demográfiai Jellemzői Szabolcs-Szatmár Megyében. IV. A Szociális-Gazdasági Tényezők Szerepe," 310–312.

[33] Raffael Szabó, Béla Raffay, and Béla Rex Kiss, "A Ráckevei Járás Cigány Lakosságának Születési És Csecsemőhalálozási Adatai 1966-1982," *Népegészségügy* 65, no. 1 (1984): 23–28.

sy infants. Based on these data, the dominant understanding was – for a long time – that a large percentage of gypsy newborns were born with low-birth weight. The average birth weight of non-gypsy newborns was used as the standard comparative point. It was only later recognized that biological differences between gypsy and non-gypsy mothers played a defining role in the birthweight of their children. Szabó and his colleagues recalled that studies were compared in which results underscored the fact that those mothers whose weight was lower gave birth to children with lower birthweight. They found it important to highlight that the average weight and height of gypsy mothers in comparison to non-gypsy mothers is lower thus it was a mistake to consider gypsy newborns less mature than non-gypsies. It was argued that mothers decisively influence the weight of newborns – the weight of fathers was not considered important at this point – and also exogenic factors such as environment, workplace, lifestyle amongst others, play a crucial role. Thus their standpoint was that the maturity of gypsy newborns must be defined from the perspective of *their* average height and weight ratio. This could help healthcare professionals (gynecologists, obstetricians, pediatricians) to identify a more precise dividing line (than the arbitrarily identified 2500 grams) between low-risk and high-risk newborns [34]. Their suggestion to identify the threshold for gypsy newborns at 2300 grams was based on the WHO directive that advised a lower threshold for Indian and Chinese newborns because of their racial difference in comparison to Caucasians. In line with the above standpoint, Szabó and Rex Kiss compared mother-infant weight data of 3473 non-gypsies and 300 gypsies and concluded that there is a relationship between the weight of the mothers and the weight of the newborns[35]. According to them ethnic characteristics (general biological difference of gypsies from non-gypsies) are the primary reason why gypsy mothers give birth to lower weight newborns.

Other researchers in contribution to this discussion, added another aspect influencing the average weight of gypsy women in comparison to non-gypsy women, namely the importance of environmental factors. By comparing gypsy mothers and their newborns according to their housing conditions, Lóránt Bodnár and Gabriella Bodnárné Pálosi concluded that those gypsy mothers who lived in slums had a lower weight on average than those living in normal conditions. Thus mothers from the slums gave birth to lower weight newborns. What they also found was that weight gain during pregnancy favorably influenced the birth rates of newborns – however this was rarely the case (it simply did

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[34] Szabó et al., "A Ráckevei Járás Cigány Lakosságának Születési És Csecsemőhalálozási Adatai 1966-1982," 27.

[35] Raffael Szabó and Béla Rex Kiss, "Vizsgálatok Az Anyai Testsúly Szerepéről a Születési Súly Alakulásában," *Népegészségügy* 65, no. 5 (1984): 303–8.

not occur that often) in the situation of slum dwellers[36]. This information is medically significant since it was understood that these factors influence the birth weight of gypsies and thus put them at risk. They also called attention to the fact that the rate of mental retardation is four times higher in those populations where the weight of the mother and the weight gain of the mother during pregnancy is inadequate. Thus their conclusion was that to change these statistics it was crucial to understand and also to influence lifestyle habits in a positive direction that could favorably influence the general health of gypsies.

Conclusion

Public health measures that had been taken by the state were initiated by the racial fear that gypsy settlements encourage diseases that will affect non-gypsy citizens. This fear was articulated primarily along the lines of class and ethnic identity. It was understood by healthcare professionals and officials that gypsies represented a health risk for those working-class citizens who were in contact with them by nature of their living environments or workplaces. Thus it was suggested that their living environment be changed; so the state started to forcefully relocate gypsy communities into cities during the 1960s. Another important, albeit racially discriminatory action that continued throughout the socialist period was the forced bathings of gypsies living in settlements. These had long lasting psychological and health impacts on gypsy citizens because they had to endure these communal bathings in which they were not only humiliated but exposed to carcinogenic detergents that potentially could have caused long lasting healthcare problems. The state has not compensated the members of gypsy communities since that time.

The other central public health question, after handling the issue of contagious diseases, was the problem of birth rates. It was discovered that birth rates were negatively affected by the low health standards of gypsies (substandard living environment, inadequate diet, unemployment), and thus structural changes were necessary to attain better birth rates in the country. Research that focused on gypsy birth rates and birth results indicated that the initial comparative standards (comparing birth weights of newborns to the average of non-gypsy newborns for example) were not effective, thereby producing imprecise data. Many factors contributed to birth weight differences, and thus the introduction of an ethnic variable was interpreted as a useful category that could help healthcare workers in establishing precise databases on newborns. Thus this knowledge was not only useful for the medical staff, but important also to gypsy parents, in order

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[36] Lóránt Bodnár and Gabriella Bodnárné Pálosi, "A Cigány Terhesek Testsúlya És Terhesség Alatti Növekedése," *Népegészségügy* 66, no. 1 (1985): 26–27.

to influence their children's development. Hence, it was suggested that ways be found to distribute information to the members of these communities so that they would be able to ensure the health of their newborns. It can be argued that the ideas of eugenics were evident within the state supported healthcare work of the time. While in the case of the management of contagious diseases, with forced bathings and forced relocation, the state aimed at controlling members of the majority non-gypsy population. The goal was to ensure safe public spaces from a public health perspective that would contribute to better living standards and thus would help reproduction. In the discussion centered on reproduction the main focus was on healthy newborns and ensuring that fewer children would be born with disabilities. I understand this also to be a eugenic discussion, as the primary motivation to control these processes was coming from a utilitarian economic perspective, a perspective at the heart of early eugenic discussions.

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Ayham Abu Orouq

Crossing the Borders of the East

Review on Petya Tsoneva Ivanova, *Negotiating Borderlines in Four Contemporary Migrant Writers from the Middle East.* **Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018. 257 pages. ISBN (10): 1-5275-1606-7; ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1606-9. £61.99.**

Pro&Contra 3

No. 1 (2019) 67–71.

In the last two centuries, the geopolitical conflicts especially in the Middle East have contributed to the production of discourses about boundaries. Petya Tsoneva Ivanova, Reader at the Department of English Studies at St Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, published her book in 2018 to explore the experience of crossing boundaries, which entails the transition between places, times and identities, by analyzing selected novels written by Anglophone migrant writers from the Middle East. The book examines aspects of self-location, belonging, displacement, and the negotiation of identity as represented in four novels: Rabih Alameddine's *I, The Divine* (2001), Diana Abu Jaber's *Crescent* (2003), Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) and Elif Shafak's *Honour* (2011). These narratives tackle stories of forced and voluntary migration in which the main characters go figuratively beyond the borders of their original identities, and physically beyond the borders of their Middle Eastern regions. According to Ivanova, the Middle East is "a space that flows into other places and is constantly reshaped by a variety of personal stories, migrant trajectories, departures, and returns" (VIII). The work is a seminal critical contribution to the Middle Eastern cultural and geopolitical studies in general, and the literatures of the Anglophone writers in the diaspora in particular.

The introductory chapter of the monograph provides an account of the history of the geopolitical development of boundaries in the Middle East. A critical reading of the selected novels follows in four chapters with a short conclusion. The argument of the introduction opens by pinpointing the historical significance of the Euphrates and its ambiguous location, which signifies migration, nomadism, and border crossing. As argued in this chapter, the river is like storytelling in the sense that they both play a role in map-reading and map-making. While stories are like rivers, the literary pathways of migrant routes in fiction are like waterways: they all produce imaginative maps of the world (3). This chapter then follows various stages in the construction of the Middle East as an area divided into enclosed regions from the biblical narratives of Abraham, in which the borders coincide with the river, to the Western colonization of the East. Moreover, the introduction relates fact to fiction, drawing attention to the importance of the *Arabian Nights* and other Arabian tales as narratives that crossed and negotiated the borders between the East and the West. The introductory chapter concludes by characterizing the selected writers' works as "literatures-without-fixed-abode" (58), which means that they merge between the traditional Arabic storytelling and the Western means and techniques of narration and representation to address questions of migration, assimilation, racism, marginalization and gender stereotyping.

In the critical reading of the novels, the analysis focuses on the relationship between migration and writing by underscoring how such border-crossing migrant authors locate themselves in their fictional texts. Alameddine's novel, Ivanova argues, embodies

the personal and collective identities of those who experienced trauma in the post-war (Lebanese Civil War) time. As suggested by the title of the chapter, this period has multiple beginnings with unclear ends, which hints at the social and religious life in Lebanon. The war leaves it in persistent ruptures, etched into the personal and collective memory of Lebanon's multi-ethnic population (70). In her narrative, Sarah, the protagonist of the novel, disperses her traumatic experience of the violence of war as well as the violence of rape she witnessed on the Green Line through the remembrance of border crossings between past and present, Lebanon and the US, herself and her Druze family. According to Ivanova, rape represents a violent line in Sarah's reminiscences. It also coincides with the Green Line, which is a historic and symbolic line that separates Muslims in the West from Christians in the East in Lebanon (74). To sum up, this chapter discusses how Alameddine depicts manifestations of the multi-cultural diversity in the Lebanese community through Sarah's narrative in which she moves between times and places, seeking to come to terms with her real identity.

The critical analysis shifts to Jaber's *Crescent*, stressing the incompleteness of identity reflected by the title of the novel. It refers to the relocation of Iraqi migrants, who have limited access to their Arabness, reclaiming the missing home from the U.S. Ivanova regards Sirine, a second-generation migrant, as a migrant with a double displacement. She was raised in her uncle's library of imagined books after the loss of her parents. She also works as a cook in a café, which serves as a remembrance of her mother, cooking Iraqi food. "[S]he does partake of the exilic condition of forbidden return by virtue of her mediated access to the Iraqi part of her origins through her uncle's fantastic stories and her cooking" (98). Thus, both the café/kitchen and the library are places of connectivity and relocation of the past in the present.

The chapter on Halaby's novel deals with the depiction of the Arab-American self-location during and right after the 9/11 period. Having an uncertain sense of belonging, Salwa and Jassim, attempt to relocate themselves in the multi-ethnic space of the US based on their version of the American dream. With their self-relocation, however, an opposite tendency starts working in their psyches, making them long for their home in the Middle East especially after the hardships they experience in the post-9/11 times. This period witnessed a notable change of attitudes towards the diasporic Arab communities, characterized by the outburst of ethnic discrimination and a great sense of fear and panic in the whole country. In this way, Halaby's main characters, Salwa and Jassim, do not only undergo the loss of their homeland, but also the loss of the imagined American dream.

Shafak's novel negotiates geographical, cultural, and generational distances through the migration experience of the Toprak family from a Kurdish village on the banks of the Euphrates through Istanbul to London. The analysis implies that "Shafak locates the

Middle East within the overflowing multiculturalism of diasporic communities and inter-personal relationships" (168). It then turns to one of the deeply entrenched traditional practices of family defense in the East, the honor killing, which is exported beyond the Middle East and represented in a Western context. The analysis makes it clear that Es-ma's role as the narrator is a means of border crossing. The second-generation migrant is both an insider who was raised among the family in the Kurdish village, and an outsider who adopts the cultural norms of self-location in the diaspora as she relocates herself as a member of the Muslim diaspora in London. Furthermore, this chapter suggests that female twinning is a strategy of border crossing as well. It reproduces the figure of the two-legged compass: one is rooted like Jamila who remains in the village whereas the other is constantly moving like Pembe who joins the family in their continuous mobility.

Ivanova's book has points of strengths as well as points of weaknesses. On the one hand, it is valuable for addressing contemporary issues in the East such as migration and border crossing. In my view, what made Ivanova succeed in the articulation of her main arguments is not only her profound understanding of the selected novels, but also the notable awareness of historical, cultural, political, geographical and even artistic aspects of the Middle East. Moreover, the thesis of the book is clear and is developed effectively. Ivanova presents the ideas in a convincing manner, supporting her arguments by utilizing efficient theoretical methods such as Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical inquiry into how we imagine and experience space, Syed Islam's ethical approach to sameness and otherness, sedentary and nomadic self-location, as well as Tim Ingold's anthropological monograph entitled as *Lines: A Brief History* (2007). On the other hand, one of the draw-backs of the book is the relative redundancy in certain parts alongside the use of few un-clear terms, particularly but not exclusively, in the reading of Shafak's novel. Furthermore, the conclusion also lacks objectivity as it reflects personal opinions, and does not draw precisely on the findings of the discussion. Overall, however, one can claim that Ivano-va's text offers a thorough critical reading of the selected novels in terms of negotiating borderlines, and provides key references about the geopolitical and artistic history of the Middle East. For this reason, the possible target audience of the book might be those who are interested in the Middle Eastern cultural, political and literary studies.

BLESSING DATIRI

An Insight into the Dynamics of Digital Media Research

Review on Lewis Levenberg, Tai Neilson and David Rheams, *Research Methods for the Digital Humanities*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 325 pages. ISBN978-3-319-96712-7. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-967134

Pro&Contra 3

No. 1 (2019) 73–78.

Digital Humanities are transforming our understanding of various aspects of human society and culture by utilizing modern computing tools to investigate old and new questions across the humanities. In the 21st century, scholars in this relatively new field of study operate within the context of ever-changing technological trends, resources and constraints. This volume helps to navigate this evolving challenge by filling in the gap of inadequate research guides in the field, particularly for upcoming scholars. Hence, students and interdisciplinary intellectuals are provided with relevant research methodology to apply in their research amidst technological disruption and the advancements in Digital Humanities studies.

The volume is designed as a guide for new researchers on new dimensions of 'studying', 'interpreting' and 'presenting' findings on a wide range of cultural material, artefacts and practices shared on the digital public space (2). In their introduction, the editors, Lewis Levenberg, Tai Nelson and David Rheams, who are all affiliates of George Mason University, indicate that the inspiration and ideas for publishing the volume emerged after a panel discussion on Digital Research Methods at a Cultural Studies Association Conference. The editors succeeded in selecting the right range and quality of papers covering different aspects of Digital Humanities. The 17 chapters are grouped into four categories for ease of navigation. They are titled Analytical, Ethnography, Representational and Archival. Academics, programmers, ethnographers, graphic designers and digital archivists will find this volume as useful as I did.

The "Analytical" section sets out guidelines for computational methods of researching a wide range of textual data. These five chapters provide a range of methodologies to utilize archival methods for analysis in the Digital Humanities. Lewis Levenberg proffers useful suggestions exploring physical and technical elements of telecommunications based on how information is transmitted. Drawing from telecommunication networks in West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia) Levenberg asserts that practices and techniques from computer science, sociology, literary studies, history or policy analysis can be used to examine 'physical infrastructure' or 'public policy' by drawing conclusions from textual data and or computational analysis. Levenberg suggests that the most important outcome of interdisciplinary research in Digital Humanities is the ability of setting and solving original research questions by combining modes of inquiry and using adequate analytical techniques.

Robert Gehl in the next chapter, "Archives of the Web: A field Guide for Study", explains the relevance of engaging the systems of technical infrastructure to study the users and the dynamics of the cultures of the Dark Web. The chapter expatiates on the politics of the Dark Web ranging from access to search engines, social networking sites and markets which form the totality of its existence and use. These concepts, Gehl asserts, draw

on the achievements of the findings presented in his book *Weaving the Dark Web Legitimacy on Freenet, Tor and I2P*. Gehl dives deep into the questions of the existence and legitimacy of the Dark Web as a network of other networking sites that are not easily accessible to the general public. His guidelines on the use of Tor, Freenet and I2P highlight the benefits from using such tools, even if the research focus is on ethics, end users, or Dark Web cultures and not just on technical functions.

In the fourth chapter, "Music and Detour: Building a Digital Humanities Archive", David Arditi outlines ways to create a hypothesis for conducting research on digital music archives taking into consideration possible copyright issues, using the Dallas-Fort Worth local music archives as a case study. His exposé indicates lessons on ways to make other forms of cultural material, beyond music, available to the public. In the next chapter, "Creating on Influence-Relationship Model: To Locate Actors in Environmental Communications", David Rhemas offers a guide to 'disconnected' textual data analysis by creating an archive of Newspaper articles. The stages for creating an influence-relationship model can be achieved by knowing the key 'actors' and influencers, following this order of inquiry: conceptualize and assemble the model, group the actors and then evaluate the results. In the last chapter on 'archival' research methods Mark Alfano in "Digital Humanities for History of Philosophy; A Case study of Nietzsche" explores the synoptic Digital Humanities approach to the study of Friedrich Nietzsche by explaining the importance of text processing techniques of research. Alfano, offers six key steps to conduct a historical research: select core concepts, operationalize concepts, conduct searches, analyze and visualize data and lastly closely read relevant passages.

The chapters in the "Ethnography" section attempt to scientifically describe the use of digital communications to facilitate digital research of human cultures and societies. In the seventh chapter, "Researching Online Museums: Digital Methods to Study Virtual Visitors", Natalia Grincheva examines museums and cultures that have incorporated digital media into their cultural programming and social activities by adapting the visitor study methodology. She gives insight into audience or visitors assessment, behavioral analysis, quantitative and qualitative methods of research. In "Smart Phones and Photovoice: Explaining Participant Lives with Photos of the Everyday", Erin Carlson and Trinity Overmyer conduct a photovoice focus group analysis. Using this method, the authors gathered samples from participatory observation (ethnography and auto-ethnography) of participants who documented their everyday lives with their mobile phones. Tai Nelson, in the last chapter of this section in "Digital Media, Conventional Methods: Using Video Interviews to Study the Labor of Digital Journalism", studied digital journalism in the United States and New Zealand. He offers a methodological guide to conducting online interviews using digital tools by pointing out its benefits and limitations. The methods

presented in these chapters can be modified to suit any digital ethnographical research. These ethnographic chapters offer an empirical guide on the use of digital media in studying socio-cultural behaviors of respondents.

The three chapters in the "Representational" section give insight into research case studies. Elizabeth Hunter's study on "Building Video Game Adaptations of Dramatic Literary Texts" offers a critical method of adapting literary text into video games by complementing traditional humanities research of the documentation and preservation of texts. Hunter conducts an interdisciplinary examination on "Something Wicked" adapted from *Macbeth* and shows key steps to creating video game adaptations. In "Virtual Bethel: Preservation of Indianapolis Oldest Church", Andrea Copeland, Ayoung Yoon, Albert Williams and Zebulun Wood, following the creation of the digital 3D model of the oldest Black church in the city of Indianapolis, offer a tutorial to three dimensions imaging, modeling and representation of spaces. J.J. Sylvia's "Code/ Art Approaches to Data Visualization" introduces a Code/Art approach of data visualization by using P5.JS as the markup language with the aim of showing how narrative data visualization can be used to answer provocative questions by designing and developing a framework.

Finally, the last chapters in "Archival" provide insights into historical data research in the Digital Humanities. Nick Thieber, in "Research Methods in Recording Oral Tradition: Choosing Between the Evanescence of the Digital or the Senescence of the Analog", studies small languages in Australia. The analysis presented in this chapter demonstrates how linguistic textual research benefits from the creation of primary records that can be archived and used for analysis over the course of time. In the next chapter titled "A Philological Approach to Sound Preservation", Federica Bressen provides an overview of the challenges posed by audio media preservation from a cultural, intellectual, historical and technical point of view. Bressan also provides a guide to support systemization in the field of preservation of sound and audio.

Tarrin Wills, in "User Interfaces for Creating Digital Research", focuses on applications and technologies that connect a User Interface (UI) through which scholars who create data interact with the data itself. Exploring the Skaldic poetry project (https:// skaldic.org) readers learn how to evaluate UI systems. Comparably, Henriette Roued-Cunliffe in "Developing Sustainable Open Heritage Datasets" provides a guide on how data can be extracted from data sets of Application Programing Interfaces (API's). She analyses a collection of Danish photos and shows how data sets can be combined for the purpose of visualization analysis to develop sustainable open heritage datasets. Discussions on mass digitization, crowd sourcing, openness and copyright are covered in the chapter. Lastly, in "Telling Untold Stories: Digital Textual Recovery Methods", Roopika Risam demonstrates how digital media can strengthen and diversify cultural records. By using

structural markup languages to recover Claude Mickey's poetry, Risam opines that Digital environments are gradually becoming spaces that create, keep and disseminate the cultural memory of humanity.

This volume will be beneficial to intellectuals, scholars and anyone who is interested in understanding the dynamics of digital content applied to the humanities. The editors have attempted to select chapters that cover all major aspects of Digital Humanities research. However, the volume is hardly comprehensive. For example, none of the chapters addresses other possible methods of internet ethnography such as online questionnaire surveys. The convenience and cost efficiency of online surveys have made this method appealing to many scholars. Considering the growing importance of online surveys, this volume would have been more complete by including a chapter exploring the dynamics of online surveys, the ethical concerns they portend and the best ways to address these concerns. In addition, this volume does not discuss the utility of social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) in humanities research, despite their dominance in new media space. With these deficiencies notwithstanding, readers will appreciate the important research methodologies contained in this volume as they are presented in a 'how to do it style'. Academics from any background will find this volume functional as it gives different perspectives to new research trends and widens the list of the tools and frontiers of inquiry across Digital Humanities.