CROSSROADS

A Journal of English Studies

ISSUE 39
4/2022

An electronic journal published
by The University of Bialystok

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Publisher:
The University of Białystok
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e-ISSN 2300-6250
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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.01

"A Stranger in a Strange Land": Nadine Gordimer and Her Journey Through Egypt

Abstract. The aim of the article is to describe Nadine Gordimer's political development in the late 1950s by analysing her travel essay "Egypt Revisited" (1959) and her short story "A Thing of the Past" (1959). In the first part of the article, Gordimer's political stance is explained in reference to her non-fictional texts. It is argued that in the late 1950s Gordimer was torn between her liberal humanist belief in multiracialism and the awareness that this stance was becoming increasingly untenable in the changing historical circumstances. Her journey to Egypt in 1959 gave her a valuable opportunity to consider her political convictions in the wider context of the decolonization processes happening on the African continent. What is clear both in "Egypt Revisited" and "A Thing of the Past"—a short story inspired by her visit to Egypt—is her desire to transcend the colonial perspective by distancing herself from her racial and social origins. These texts also convey her belief that the decolonization processes in African countries force the white inhabitants of the continent to redefine themselves so that they can remain politically relevant in the new reality. This belief would become the basis of the political and artistic theories that she developed in the decades to follow.

Keywords: Nadine Gordimer, travel writing, Egypt, South African literature

Gordimer's politics in the 1950s

In 1959, one year before the Sharpeville Massacre, Nadine Gordimer published an article in which she admitted that—in common with many other white South Africans—she was considering leaving her country. While she never took this radical step and went on to become one of South Africa's leading writers and public intellectuals, her article "Where Do Whites Fit In" (1959) gives an important insight into her state of mind at the time. Gordimer was clearly torn between her hope for social and political changes in her country (the end of white supremacy and the beginning of a democratic system under black majority rule) and her rising sense of insecurity connected with her place—and the place of other white liberals—in South Africa. Her reflections go beyond the issue of legal rights and get to the heart of the matter, namely the question of belonging. To belong, she argues, is to be accepted by the wider community—a task that may take generations to bring to fruition, and may not happen in her lifetime. Faced with this realisation, Gordimer confesses that she is torn between "the desire to be gone . . . and a terrible, obstinate and fearful desire to stay" (Gordimer 1989: 34).

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Considering Gordimer's convictions in the socio-political context of her country, it can be argued that throughout the 1950s her political stance was essentially that of liberalism,[2] but Gordimer also referred to it as "the humanist approach, the individualistic approach" (Bazin & Seymour 1990: 135), adding that its essence lay in ignoring and defying the racial divisions imposed by the apartheid regime. As she commented at the end of the 1970s, back in the 1950s the intellectuals of South Africa believed in the value of personal relationships—the Forsterian principle of "only connect"[3] (Bazin & Seymour 1990: 102)—and were convinced that such relationships had the potential to bring about social and political changes. This belief was shared across the racial and political divide and became the foundation of the Congress Alliance,[4] whose members were guided by "the belief that a rampantly segregationist apartheid could be countered only and most effectively by a cross-racial or multi-racial front" (Clingman 1993: 45-46).

Gordimer's belief in multiracialism is evident not only in her novels and short stories but also in her political writings, including her article about Albert Luthuli, the president of the African National Congress in the years 1952-1960, and undoubtedly the most influential African politician of the 1950s. Published in *Atlantic Monthly* in April 1959, "Chief Luthuli" is an expression of Gordimer's deep admiration for Luthuli's courage and determination, but it is also a statement of belief in the liberal humanist values that guided his actions (she describes his personality as "a symbol of human dignity" (Gordimer 1989: 38) and quotes from his 1952 statement "Our Chief Speaks," in which he emphasized the importance of “harmonious relations with other sections of our multi-racial society” (Gordimer 1989: 46)). Published in the same year as “Where Do Whites Fit In,” “Chief Luthuli” offers a counterbalance to Gordimer’s scepticism as to the future of white South Africans, but it should not be viewed unambiguously as an anticipation of a future multi-racial society. The two essays, when read together, paint a portrait of a writer who is torn between her abiding belief in liberalism and multi-racialism, and the sense that this stance may not suffice to ensure her (and other white South Africans) a place in the new, post-apartheid South Africa.

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[2] In the 1950s Gordimer's political stance was deeply influenced by Alan Paton, who described liberalism in the following way: "By liberalism I don't mean the creed of any party or any century. I mean a generosity of spirit, a tolerance of others, an attempt to comprehend otherness, a commitment to the rule of law, a high ideal of the worth and dignity of man, a repugnance for authoritarianism and a love of freedom" (Blair 2012: 475).

[3] Gordimer is referring to Chapter XXII of E. M. Forster's novel Howards End (1910).

[4] The Congress Alliance was an organization that included South Africa's major anti-apartheid parties: the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

The late 1950s: anticipating change

It is at the point when Gordimer began to have doubts about the political currency of liberalism (she would abandon this stance altogether in the 1960s) that she looked beyond her immediate surroundings and considered her position (and that of other whites) in the wider context of the African continent. This opportunity was offered by her travels across Africa that began in the mid-1950s and lasted throughout her life. In the years 1954-1977, Gordimer visited five countries: Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (with a brief visit to the Republic of the Congo), Madagascar, Botswana, Ghana, and the Republic of Transkei, one of the Bantustans[5]. The Africa she saw fascinated her; as she wrote about the political transformations on the continent in the 1960s, “Africa, however troubled it may be, has never been more interesting than it is in this decade” (Gordimer 1989: 171). In her seminal study *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt argues “that important historical transitions alter the way people write, because they alter people’s experiences and the way people imagine, feel and think about the world they live in” (Pratt 2008: 4). This general assumption is also true in Gordimer’s case: the processes of decolonization that she observed in the aforementioned countries not only fascinated her but also profoundly influenced her perception of the continent, including her own country.

While the impact of Gordimer’s African travels on her political and artistic development is significant, if it is mentioned at all, it is usually discussed in the most general of terms. Stephen Clingman, in his classic study *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: Histories from the Inside*, rightly argues that by the end of the 1950s Gordimer began to see clearly that “the ultimate current of history in South Africa—past, present and future—is black, and not white: that the latter is a subset of the former” (Clingman 1993: 78). Clingman adds that Gordimer’s travels in Africa, “may well have had an influence on her perception of the direction in which the continent was heading” (Clingman 1993: 78). That the continent was heading towards change was clear to Gordimer, who by the late 1950s had the growing realisation that the processes of decolonization would bring power back to the African people.

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[5] The Bantustants (also referred to as homelands) were self-governing territories where much of the black population of South Africa was relocated. Ten in total, they existed from the mid- to late 20th century.

The socio-political changes taking place in countries like Egypt and the Belgian Congo were, no doubt, evident to many observers at the time; Gordimer, however, took this truth both as a lens through which to look upon the African continent and a foundation on which to build her role as a writer and public intellectual. In short, Gordimer's belief was that the dynamically evolving political circumstances necessitated rapid change on behalf of the white inhabitants of the continent and especially those who decided to stay and contribute to the democratic transformations. Gordimer herself had her part in this process of change when, by the late 1950s, she began to question her race—and race in general—as a determining factor in the shaping of her identity. Indeed, in the early 1960s, she described her political development in the following words: "First, you know, you leave your mother's house, and later you leave the house of the white race" (Bazin & Seymour 1990: 9). For Gordimer, who left her parents' house at the age of twenty-two,[6] the decision to distance herself from her conservative, middle-class background was the first step to her political emancipation.

Gordimer's attempt to view herself at a distance from her racial and social origins is visible in her works, including her modest but significant contribution to travel writing.[7] Gordimer's travel essays not only give us insight into the state of the countries that she visited but also reveal her own state of mind, the "culture-specific and individual patterns of perception and knowledge" (Korte 2000: 6), which as Barbara Korte writes, can be traced in all examples of travel writing. The image of Gordimer that emerges from these essays is that of a traveler who takes "the fact of departure, initial severance from a home culture" (Clark 1999: 14) as an opportunity to reflect upon her political position as a white inhabitant of the African continent. In these essays, Gordimer takes the stance of an observer—"a stranger in a strange land" (Gordimer 1989: 152)—who is witness to the post-colonial processes unfolding in the countries described and, more widely, on the African continent. Observing the end of white rule and the consequent political marginalisation of white expatriate communities is chiefly an act of anticipating her country's future—Gordimer no doubt shared the hope that South Africa would follow in the footsteps of the countries she visited—but it is also an exercise in humility, as Gordimer predicted a future that would be politically uncertain for the white minority.

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[6] This decision is mentioned in her autobiographical essay "A Bolter and the Invincible Summer" (1963). Describing her life before her early twenties, she writes about the state of intellectual torpor that she experienced in her youth: "My existential self was breathing but inert, like one of those unfortunate people who has had a brain injury in a motor accident and lies unhearing and unseeing" (Gordimer 1989: 24). She adds, "I cannot understand why I did not free myself in the most obvious way, leave home and small town and get myself a job somewhere" (Gordimer 1989: 24). She made this decision at the age of 22, when she enrolled at the University of Witwatersrand.

[7] I adopt the definition of travel writing as "first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author-narrator" (Youngs 2013: 3).

In the years 1959-1977, Gordimer published six travel essays: "Egypt Revisited" (1959), "The Congo River" (1960-1961), "Madagascar" (1969), "Pula!" (1970), "Merci Dieu, It Changes" (1971), and "A Vision of Two Blood-Red Suns" (1977). These essays should be read not only in the wider context of Gordimer's essays and articles but also her fictional works, which further reflect her stance regarding the processes of decolonization in Africa. Discussing every essay in detail is impossible in the scope of one article; what is possible and worthwhile is to concentrate on Gordimer's first contribution to travel writing—"Egypt Revisited" (1959)—and, on this basis, to explore what Casey Blanton called the "relationship between self and world" (29); in Gordimer's case, the interplay between her political convictions and the reality that she observed during her two journeys to Egypt. In the late 1950s, those views were on the cusp of an important change, as Gordimer was beginning to question her belief in liberal humanism and was redefining her role as a writer and public intellectual. Gordimer's artistic and political development will be explored first in the context of "Egypt Revisited" (1959) and then the story "A Thing of the Past," published the same year as the essay.

"Suez hangs in the air": Gordimer's two visits to Egypt

Egypt was the first foreign country that Gordimer visited—doing so in 1954, with her husband Reinhold Cassirer. The second visit to Egypt took place five years later, and it is this trip that she describes in her essay "Egypt Revisited," first published in the London magazine *National and English Review* in January 1959. Gordimer, then, is writing primarily for a British audience, who, by the late 1950s, were no doubt curious to learn about Egypt following the Suez Crisis. Gordimer was well-qualified to give them such insight—she had visited Cairo in the March of 1954, in the wake of the 1952 coup organised by The Free Officers and during the domestic power struggle between Gamal Abdul Nasser and Mohammed Naguib (a conflict that would end in 1956 with Nasser's victory and the imprisonment of Naguib). Revisiting Cairo in 1958, Gordimer recalls the tense atmosphere of 1954 and describes the atmosphere of confidence, palpable after Egypt's moral and diplomatic victory in the Suez Crisis in November 1956; as she writes, "Suez hangs in the air, a confidence that inflates even the meanest street-urchin chest" (Gordimer 1989: 148).

While Gordimer does offer some insight into the political situation of the country, she takes the readers' knowledge of postcolonial Egypt for granted, choosing instead to focus on the impact of Suez on the moods and attitudes of the country's inhabitants, both the colonials and the Egyptian people. It is this joint interest in these two increasingly separate social groups that yields a bifurcated vision of Egypt: one which is, no doubt, closer to Gordimer's readers and one which remains foreign, and ultimately unknowable. The beginning of the essay suggests that Gordimer is writing from the perspective of a colonial in a postcolonial country; in the first paragraph, she describes her arrival in Egypt and the quizzical welcome that she received from a friend (a foreigner who had spent thirty years in the country): "It's worse than ever here, it's lovely" (Gordimer 1989: 148). This ironic formulation, Gordimer goes on to say, is expressive of a wider attitude felt among the narrow group of white colonials whose love for their adopted country (and "love" is precisely the word used by Gordimer) still enables them to identify closely with that country, despite the social and political changes. Anticipating her readers' failure to grasp the intricacies of this standpoint, Gordimer declares herself to be an insider—a white African writing about other white Africans. Later in the essay, she makes this point even clearer, when she mentions "my emphatic identification with the dispossessed foreign community" (Gordimer 1989: 152), clearly suggesting that her understanding of the moods prevalent in the foreign community is based on knowledge, experience, and shared emotion.

Despite declaring her empathy with the white expatriates in Egypt, Gordimer chooses not to follow this thread; instead, she makes it clear that her main interest is in the more elusive position of the Egyptians: "[T]he hopes, fears and prides of the people of the streets" (Gordimer 1989: 149), or, as she puts it more succinctly, "[T]he voice of the people" (Gordimer 1989: 149). This standpoint is, as Gordimer explains, considerably more difficult to grasp because of the linguistic and cultural barrier, but it can be intuited by what she describes as careful observation and "the shiver of receptivity on my skin" (Gordimer 1989: 149). What is expressed here is Gordimer's belief in the power of the writer to reach a deeper understanding of reality by means of empathy and imagination. Taking into account the central importance of careful observation in the creative process, it should not come as a surprise that Gordimer not only succeeds in describing in detail the bustling life of Cairo but also stages the act of observing; in one passage, she describes standing on the balcony of her apartment and watching the comings and goings of the people below:

> At sunset . . . I had stood on the balcony of the flat where I was staying, and had watched the people below, never ant-like as in big cities of the West, but leisured, in full cry, pushing carts, selling peanuts and roasted maize cobs, balancing coffee cups, zigzagging the hazard across hooting cars and the little red petrol tanks . . . drawn by jingling, brass-cluttered donkeys. (Gordimer 1989: 152)

While Gordimer privileges vision[8] in her descriptions of Cairo, the passage nonetheless evokes the sounds and smells of a bustling street. The vivid description, full of evocative detail, is reminiscent of Gordimer's early writing – the "sensuous sensibility" (Bazin & Seymour 1990: 195) that she identified as a hallmark of her first stories. More important in the context of travel writing, this scene is firmly rooted in the tradition of postcolonial writing. In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt famously argues that the landscapes drawn from the balconies of third-world cities are a continuation of the monarch-of-all-I-survey scenes in colonial writing: "Here, like their explorer forebears, postcolonial adventurers perch themselves to paint the significance and value of what they see" (Pratt 2008: 212). To illustrate this tendency, she quotes from Alberto Moravia's *Which Tribe Do You Belong To?* (1972) and Paul Theroux's *The Old Patagonian Express* (1978). In contrast to Moravia's and Theroux's descriptions of "joyless cityscapes" (Pratt 2008: 213) (and, for that matter, entirely empty of people), Gordimer's description of a street in Cairo is highly dynamic, expressive of the city's vibrancy. Unlike the "ant-like," hurried human traffic of Western cities, the Egyptians are described as confident and assertive in their day-to-day activities. It is this confidence, assertion and determination that she sees as Egypt's most valuable political currency.

The most significant political gesture that Gordimer makes in "Egypt Revisited" is to adopt the colonial perspective only to reach beyond it to a subject position that she calls "a stranger in a strange land" (Gordimer 1989: 152). This latter identity is described by Gordimer as the one that she adopts by default when travelling; indeed, it was only her visit to Cairo, where she was hosted by white colonials, that evoked her short-lived "emphatic identification". Leaving Cairo for Upper Egypt, Gordimer hints at the sense of liberation, as if it was only at the point of leaving the expatriate community that she was able to direct her attention to the true purpose of her visit: observing and noting the changes in the country. She describes the culturally uneventful and uninspiring life of Cairo—the result of Egypt's turning away from European political and cultural influences—and the formation of a new elite in the country, composed of senior army officers and their families. The main change that she detects on her second visit to the country is the mood of "national confidence" (Gordimer 1989: 153), which she sees on the streets, in the museums—however dilapidated they may be (she describes visiting the Cairo Museum and observing schoolchildren being taught about the rich history of their country)—and, most importantly, on the building site of the Aswan High Dam.

Looking at the structure of "Egypt Revisited," it is readily apparent that Gordimer's arrival in Aswan marks both the culmination and the conclusion of her essay: it begins with her brief visit to Cairo and continues with her journey up the Nile and arrival in Aswan, which, as she is quick to point out, is not only the site of the dam (in the first stages of its construction) but "also a lively Arab town" (Gordimer 1989: 155) (it was a city of 55,000 people when Gordimer visited it in 1958). It is the people—the Egyptian workers—who are the centre of Gordimer's description of the Aswan High Dam; while foreign investment is mentioned in passing, the focus is on the Egyptian workmen who are charged with the construction of the hydroelectric power plant. Standing atop the dam and observing the workers toiling below, Gordimer describes her admiration for this communal effort, which, in her eyes, expresses the country's atmosphere of hopefulness for the future. The hope, for Gordimer, lies in the fact that the work is done by Egyptians for Egyptians: "When the power station is completed, it will be theirs to use; it does not merely feed them now, but will change their lives" (Gordimer 1989: 156). In a gesture that seems oddly patronising, Gordimer adds that the Egyptians need not only food and better living conditions but also a sense of achievement, which is brought by the construction of the dam.

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[8] In this tendency she is not unlike many other travel writers; as Margaret Topping writes, "[T]he privileging of vision as the most reliable . . . sense by which to mediate the encounter between the traveller and the world is a familiar trope of travel writing" (Topping 2020: 194).

The conclusion of "Egypt Revisited" may be the weakest point of her essay but is also worth discussing insofar as it conveys Gordimer's political position as it was in the late 1950s. In the article "Where do Whites Fit In" (1959), published the same year as "Egypt Revisited," Gordimer anticipated the inevitable end of white supremacist rule in her country, arguing that in this new socio-political order, the white South Africans who decide to stay in South Africa will have to reconcile themselves to an auxiliary role in society: to use her words, they will become "foreign experts" (Gordimer 1989: 36) (a phrase that she inserts in inverted commas), that is, intellectuals whose role is solely to impart technical, scientific, and cultural knowledge to black South Africans, without claiming any kind of entitlement to their own role in the future of the country. The word "foreign" is crucial here, insofar as it points to the gesture that the white South Africans must make, namely the ceding of power and authority in favour of their black compatriots. It is this drastically altered balance of power that Gordimer addresses when—at the end of "Egypt Revisited"—she describes the construction of the Aswan High Dam. She goes so far as to erase any signs of "foreign experts" on the construction site: the investors from Switzerland, Germany, and Austria are present as machines ("the clumsy steel giants of Europe" (Gordimer 1989: 155)), not as people. Gordimer's positive, if idealised, vision of Egypt clearly deemphasizes the dangers of neo-colonialism (a topic that received ample attention in the other five of Gordimer's travel essays) and capitalizes on the communal effort of Egypt's inhabitants in the building of their country.

Exploring the moods of the colonials: “A Thing of the Past”

The unmistakable tone of hopefulness in “Egypt Revisited” has the effect of marginalising any of the fears and apprehensions of the white colonials who have decided to stay in Egypt. The people Gordimer meets in Cairo are curiously (and stoically) detached from the political reality, as if they did not expect to be affected—not personally, at least —by the changes in their country. While Gordimer is clearly uninterested in exploring the mindset of the colonials in her essay, she attempts this task in her story “A Thing of the Past.” “A Thing of the Past,” originally published in the British magazine *Encounter* in 1959 and reprinted in Gordimer’s fourth short story collection, *Friday’s Footprint* (1960), explores the mindset of white colonials, especially their growing sense of alienation from socio-political reality. Set in Egypt in the years following the Suez Crisis, the story concentrates on the lives of colonials who find themselves in a hostile political climate and are, in effect, torn between their desire to emigrate and the sense of attachment to the country in which they were raised. For Irene Achilet, the daughter of the wealthy Achilet Pasha, life in Egypt consists mainly in socializing with other colonials in the cosmopolitan cities, in isolation from the socio-political reality of the country. As we learn, Irene “did not belong to Egypt,” although

> she seemed to have been conditioned by the lives of the people, of whom she had never been in the least aware, to something of their acceptance of the passing of kings and palaces and the successive waves of conquering hordes. (Gordimer 1960: 164)

Irene’s ignorance of the country’s history results from her contention that she does not belong with “the other people” and does not identify with their historical and cultural heritage. This should not be seen as a refutation; it is, rather, a passive acknowledgment of difference between herself and the other white colonials on the one hand and the rest of the population on the other. What underlies her self-imposed ignorance is the contention that it is possible to live on the margins of history simply because this is precisely what her ancestors succeeded in doing. Irene’s husband, Max Leonard, a South African by birth, shares none of her optimism, but he is similar to Irene in his search for a place unaffected by the recent historical changes. When the political climate becomes more nationalistic, Max is reminded of a fact that he had known long before the crisis: “They had floated like oil on the thin, poor life of the country—Irene, himself, all of them. Lately he had begun to struggle with a guilt like nausea at the surfeit of the life that he had lived” (Gordimer 1960: 165). There is the sense that history has at long last caught up with him, in that he is once again reminded of what he had felt when living in South Africa: the hostility or, as Gordimer phrased it in “Where do Whites Fit In?”, the “unwelcomeness” of Africans. It seems that Max’s growing sense of discomfiture is not so much resultant from his feeling of guilt, but rather from the awareness that it is no longer possible to lead the same kind of life. There is the sense that if it had not been for the political changes, the feeling of guilt would not have emerged, or it would have been suppressed in an attempt to maintain a comfortable and sequestered existence.

In "A Thing of the Past," Gordimer shows not only the ethical dubiousness of the stance represented by Irene and Max Leonard but—more importantly—the historical untenability of such an attitude. In the background of the story is the awareness of the inevitability of change, as well as the contention that any attempt to avoid or obscure this knowledge will lead to the kind of rootlessness experienced by the Leonards, who are torn between their desire to leave their country and start anew (they plan to build a villa in Italy) and their attachment to the past. This conflict is clear at the end of the story, when, having made the decision to emigrate to Italy, Irene looks back upon her life in Egypt: "I was born here, everything's happened to me here. My whole life. This house—it's the house my father built for me" (Gordimer 1960: 177). Ultimately, it is not at all clear whether the Leonards will leave the country: it is equally possible that the fear of dispossession—both in the material and in the cultural sense—will make them stay. In a sense, they are caught between their desire to flee the country and an unproductive attachment to the past—unproductive in the sense that it does not give them a solid sense of identity and does not constitute the basis for the kind of constructive action that is required to eliminate the stasis of their present life. The title of the story points to this tension, introducing an ironical note to the story: the Leonards' peaceful life may indeed be a thing of the past, but their attachment to this life is certainly not. Whether they will ultimately be able to free themselves of these sentiments and respond to the demands of the present—in their case, either to face up to the socio-political changes in Egypt or quit the country—remains unclear.

While "A Thing of the Past" has an element of historical inevitability, there is also the sense that the rootlessness and alienation experienced by its protagonists are, to some extent, self-inflicted. This interpretation is tenable in the context of the article "Where Do Whites Fit In?", especially Gordimer's comment (quoted at the beginning of this article) about the sense of national belonging being shaped by one's personal and political commitments. Perhaps if the white protagonists of "A Thing of the Past" had taken the time to create social and political attachments outside of their immediate circle, they would feel a stronger sense of connection with the country, despite the political changes. As it is, they live in the ruins of the illusion that they can find a place left untouched by historical changes, where they can lead an undisturbed and peaceful existence. The gradual breakdown of this illusion comes with a strong sense of inevitability—there is the implication that historical events will sweep through colonial society, finding its members helpless and unprepared.

Conclusion: embracing change

In the 1960s, Gordimer continued her task of exploring the attitudes of colonials in African countries, often emphasizing their sense of rootlessness and dislocation. In 1972, she collected these stories together in her sixth volume *Livingstone's Companions*. Explaining the choice of title to her British publisher, Gordimer noted that the characters in this collection have in common the fact of being "Livingstone's companions"—and the same can be said of all the white people who live on the continent. In Gordimer's view, Livingstone sowed the seeds of the current conflicts, which the inhabitants of the continent are still forced to confront.[9] In the 1970s, those conflicts were acutely felt not only by Gordimer but also by other politically-involved white South Africans. In the wake of the Soweto Revolt, the Black Consciousness Movement flatly rejected the liberal humanist ideal of multiculturalism and challenged white South Africans to redefine their role in the country. Gordimer undertook this task in "Relevance and Commitment," an address that she delivered at the University of Cape Town in 1979. In her view, the only way that the white writer can discover that eponymous relevance and commitment is by acknowledging the position in which he has found himself: "[H]e has to admit openly the order of his experience as a white as differing completely from the order of black experience" (Gordimer 1989: 139). Acknowledging this difference is the starting point in the search for a new form of self-expression—one which would make it possible "to reconnect his art through his life to the total reality of the disintegrating present" (Gordimer 1989: 139). Anticipating the time after the end of apartheid, Gordimer goes on to argue that if the white artist succeeds in changing his life and art—and is accepted in this attempt—he can claim his place in the culture of his country by doing so "in the implicit nature of the artist as an agent of change, always moving towards truth, true consciousness, because art itself is fixed on the attainment of that essence of things" (Gordimer 1989: 142). In Gordimer's conception of art, which she developed in the 1970s, change and truth come across as two key principles that are inextricably connected. To show the truth about people living in her times is to explore how their thoughts and emotions are shaped by the changing political circumstances. While discussing this view in more detail is outside of the scope of the present article, one important thing should be noted: Gordimer's belief in change as a historical necessity and an artistic principle has its roots in the late 1950s, specifically in her early travels in Africa. Observing the processes of decolonization in Egypt and other countries, Gordimer grew convinced that it is only by embracing change that she could remain relevant as a writer and public intellectual. This awareness laid the grounds for her political and artistic development, leading to the creation of her finest literary works.

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[9] Gordimer expressed this view in a letter to Alan D. Williams (12 March 1971). The letter is part of the Gordimer archive in Lilly Library in Bloomington (Indiana).

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CROSSROADS. A JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES 39 (2022) (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.02

How to Disembark Completely: Annemarie Schwarzenbach's and Ella Maillart's Afghan Journey (1939)

Abstract. In 1939, when the world was but a step away from the irreversible, Ella Maillart and Annemarie Schwarzenbach set out from Engadine, an Alpine valley region in the eastern Swiss Alps, heading for Kabul, Afghanistan. The journey was far from safe; the greatest dangers, though, lurked not so much in the curves and bends of the road as in the recesses of Schwarzenbach's boyishly coiffed head. Through a close reading of Maillart's and Schwarzenbach's memoirs of the trip (*The Cruel Way* and *All the Roads Are Open*, respectively), endeavour to determine whether the journey was a means of escape from the impending doom of the war, especially given that they were both anti-fascists, or whether it was instead an attempt to cure Schwarzenbach of her addictions and help her recuperate after yet another stay at a mental hospital following a suicide attempt. Relying on Joseph Campbell's mythologically-informed concepts of the hero quest and Maureen Murdock's feminist rewriting of Campbell's theory, the article's analysis of the two women's accounts of the journey also aims to probe the question of how they performed themselves and staged their travelling bodies in writing on the shaky scene offered by, on the one hand, the limited space of the speeding car and, on the other, by the seemingly boundless expanses of the route they followed.

Keywords: Joseph Campbell, Ella Maillart, Maureen Murdock, Annemarie Schwarzenbach, hero quest, journey, memoir, travelogue, travel writing, women on the road

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I.

When gathering material for *The Heroine's Journey*, which later became her seminal work, Maureen Murdock asked Joseph Campbell how the woman's journey related to the quest of the hero, but the answer she heard was "deeply unsatisfying":

> In the whole mythological tradition the woman *is there*. All she has to do is realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to. When a woman realizes what her wonderful character is, she's not going to get messed up with the notion of being pseudo-male. (Murdock 2020: 2; original emphasis)

What shocked Murdock was not so much the narrow-mindedness of Campbell's response as his obliviousness to the mere possibility of there being any other options available to women. On top of that, Murdock also found alarming the ease with which Campbell consigned women to the role of sessile Penelopes, waiting—and weaving, and weeping—for the return of their heroes. Baffled and disappointed, Murdock set about mapping the female quest, placing the woman right at the forefront of the journey—as the traveller, not travellee, the subject, never object, and the fighter, not the one fought-over or fought for. That was the year 1981, only six years before Campbell's passing and over thirty after the first publication of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*; Campbell was already an esteemed and influential scholar and Murdoch an ambitious novice and his former student. Curiously enough, Murdock's 1981 exchange with Campbell bears some resemblance to a conversation between Ella Maillart (1903-1997), a Swiss-Danish traveller, reporter, and writer, and Carl Gustav Jung, whom Maillart had paid quite a casual visit before she set off in 1939 on a trip to Afghanistan with Annemarie Schwarzenbach (1909-1942), a Swiss writer, journalist and photographer:

> I called on C. G. Jung, hoping (very foolishly) that he could give me a key to the mentality of the so-called primitives. I offered him one of my books. He looked at it and asked: "Why do you travel?" "To meet those who know how to live peacefully" was the first answer that came to my lips. But the great man looked at me with suspicion; did I look like a restless lunatic who wants to be cured? (2013: 10)

It is somewhat unsettling to read these two passages which, though separated by some forty years of turbulent history, seem to strike quite similar chords. The question of women's travels and generally of women-as-travellers continues to be a cause for alarm or at least for the furrowing of the brows (spare a thought for Freud's notorious frown); luckily enough, the stories of women like Maillart, Schwarzenbach, and, in fact, staggering numbers of others annul much of the stinging capital of such attitudes. None of them stopped to take heed or wavered in her resolution to travel, be it outwards or inwards, brought down by instances of advice-giving and gaslighting. In fact, Schwarzenbach and Maillart loom as discordant figures, defying limitations and conventions, appropriating instead the terrains traditionally designated as male-only. What is more, their movements and transitions transcend the superficial divisions and categories—and it is predominantly these traversals that I wish to focus on in the course of the present article. While Maillart seems to be embracing life and adventure, and in this sense embarks on the journey with jouissance and enthusiasm, for Schwarzenbach, the trip appears to promise numerous chances to disembark completely in pursuit of self-annihilation, inviting risk, and offering her opportunities to gradually give up on her will to live.

In an attempt to follow up on these threads, I wish to shed light on modes of departure as deliverance which Schwarzenbach and Maillart negotiated and which marked them as, at once, representatives of the “leisure classes” of old, and harbingers of the tragic heroes of today’s grey zones. Both women kept journals during the trip and published their accounts; for Schwarzenbach, it was actually a way of acquiring extra funds for the journey—she regularly sent out her texts in the form of feuilletons and reports to various magazines and journals, which were collected in one volume and published as a complete travelogue under the title *All the Roads Are Open* only as recently as 2000 (in German; first English translation appeared in 2011). Maillart’s *The Cruel Way: Switzerland to Afghanistan in a Ford, 1939* appeared in 1947, and its most recent edition was published in 2013 with a foreword by Jessa Crispin. It feels justified to look more closely at the titles of the respective works. While both are direct quotes from the texts, they refer specifically to only one of the travellers—Annemarie, yielding significant insights into her general disposition throughout the trip. When crossing the Khyber Pass, Schwarzenbach was asked by British customs officers for her passport and car documents. She relates how befuddled they were upon finding out that she had never been there before, given how extensive her travels had been. Annemarie does not feel fit to explain herself to them; rather, she seems to withdraw from the entire scene and give in to her wistfulness, noting mournfully that “certainly, all the roads are open, and lead nowhere, nowhere” (Schwarzenbach 2013: 108). This is just one of the many bursts of despair and regrets she committed along the way—very symptomatic, though. Contrary to what the phrase on its own might appear to mean, this was not an enthusiastic exclamation about the journey and the sense of joy an empty road at one of the world’s great crossroads might give a driver; it was a pronouncement of resignation and sorrow which plagued Schwarzenbach not only during this particular trip but throughout her whole life, tormenting her and frequently sending her over the edge. In this sense, it does actually correlate with Maillart’s choice of title for her work. Maillart, a pragmatic optimist, was experiencing quite profound emotions caused by the circumstances and mused about explaining them to Annemarie in an attempt to prove to her that one can "bring forth from my being pure and unconditioned joy . . ." (Maillart 2013:72). By then she did, however, know that these thoughts would be lost on Annemarie, and moved by Schwarzenbach's struggle, she wondered "why again and again she chose the complicated, cruel way of hell. Could it be that she preferred it to an easier mode of living? Did she believe it was a quick way of exceeding the limitations of her individuality?" (Maillart 2013: 72). Thus, "the cruel way" becomes a definition of how Schwarzenbach proceeded in the world, how she went about her life; at the same time, it rings very true with regards to the trip itself and to its larger, mythological even, implications. Bodily movement, while not capable of saving Annemarie from herself entirely, still provided a shield against emotional stasis in that it occupied the senses and busied the muscles as well as the mind, not allowing the traveller to slide into despair and immobilizing self-pity while on the move. In fact, the "crueller" the way, the better it proved for keeping Schwarzenbach in check, which is exactly what Maillart's work is about. Curiously enough, it tells us next to nothing about Maillart, the author and the traveller, placing the focus quitedefinitively on her travel companion, who emerges as the main protagonist and the sole subject of both of these accounts. The practice, though rather unpremeditated on the part of Maillart, might distantly echo the devices applied by James Boswell in *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1785)—the work's unquestioned hero is Johnson, and the entire text might be read as a "prolegomenon" of sorts to Boswell's later biography of Johnson. Undoubtedly, the decision to write a travel journal/memoir where the focus is on a protagonist other than the writer is unusual and curious, one that seems to go against the old adage of making a travel account a boastful record of one's own adventures and triumphs or mishaps and sufferings (think of T. E. Lawrence and the multifarious torments that he so prides himself on actively pursuing).

II.

Lately, the two women travel writers, Schwarzenbach in particular, have been enjoying a renewed interest, and the rediscovery has been fuelled also by fashion and popular culture. Schwarzenbach surely makes for a fitting heroine—her gender ambiguity and striking androgynous appearance, along with a penchant for cross-dressing single her out as a belated icon. In fact, her photographic appeal had already been eagerly explored by many of her peers and companions, Maillart included. In 2018, the house of Givenchy presented a collection inspired by Schwarzenbach, with models sporting high-waisted trousers and shorts, and silk shirts, complemented by hairstyles reminiscent of Schwarzenbach's hairdo. The 2018 fashion show turned out to be a celebration of inclusivity and difference and a peculiar tribute to Schwarzenbach, though most of the "ugly" parts of her story had been painted over, perhaps quite understandably. Of these there was indeed a-plenty—Schwarzenbach did not in the least bit feel like an "icon" or a role model of any sort; throughout her whole life, she battled depression, drug addiction, anxiety, and neurosis, which led her to several suicide attempts and multiple stays in recovery clinics. Her hypersensitivity meant that she could never turn a blind eye to any instance of oppression, which in turn thrust her into a deep conflict with her family and did not earn her too many supporters among the social circles within which the Schwarzenbachs moved. In a way, though, these circumstances make her a figure that many young people today can actually relate to and identify with, which perhaps explains the popular attention she has garnered. On top of that, Schwarzenbach was a highly educated and extremely well-read person (with a doctorate in history from Zurich and Paris) whose talents included first and foremost writing, both creative and journalistic, photography, and driving, the latter being one of the passions which brought her close to Maillart, also an avid driver.

More widespread scholarly attention came with English translations—in 2011 Isabel Fargo Cole translated *All the Roads Are Open* (Seagull Books), and in the same year Lucy Renner Jones's translation of *Lyric Novella* appeared, also with Seagull Books; shortly thereafter, in 2012, Renner Jones translated *Death in Persia,* which was published in 2013 again by the same publishing house. All the while, numerous blogs, websites, as well as many Pinterest and Instagram profiles emerged devoted to Schwarzenbach, some of which are still up and running, e.g., *Strange Flowers,* run by James J. Conway, or *The Ravaged Angel*. Importantly, there have also been some substantial academic publications on Annemarie Schwarzenbach, most notable of which are Sofie Decock's and Uta Schaffers's 2011-2012 series of articles (in German) about Schwarzenbach's Asian and African travel journalsOne of Decock's articles appeared in English in the 2011 issue of *Women in German Yearbook,* published by the University of Nebraska Press. Uta Schaffers has continued her research into travel writing, and as of summer 2022 has been working on an edited collection of essays (in English), together with Sarah Schäfer-Althaus and Nicole Maruo-Schröder, with some of the confirmed contributions being Sofie Decock's new article on Schwarzenbach. The 2016 *Routledge Companion to Travel Writing,* edited by Carl Thompson, includes a shorter and more survey-like entry about Schwarzenbach by David Farley, who interrogates her works translated into English from the vantage of modernist travel writing, along with authors such as Aime Cesare and Blaise Cendrars. To date, there is no complete English biography of Schwarzenbach. The lack is quite painful because not only are there no original biographical works in English, but translations of German, Swiss or French ones are also hard to find. A curious case is that of the immensely popular Italian author Melania Mazzucco, whose immersive fictionalized biography of Schwarzenbach (*Lei cosi amata,* 2000) has been translated into at least ten languages, including Polish (*Tak ukochana,* translated by Monika Woźniak, 2006), but never into English, and, in fact, her only work to have so far appeared in English is the 2002 novel *Vita* (translated by Virginia Jewiss, 2006). In other media, in 2001

Schwarzenbach's Afghan trip with Maillart was turned into an arthouse film, *Journey to Kafiristan,* directed by Fosco and Donatello Dubini, with Jeanette Hain as Schwarzenbach and Nina Petri as Maillart, which, however, only a lukewarm critical and audience reception. Yet another popular culture reference to Schwarzenbach, one perhaps not quite obvious, is Suzanne Vega's 2011 one-woman show *Carson McCullers Talks about Love,* in which Vega uses the writer's own words to sing about McCullers' life and experiences, the author's feelings for Schwarzenbach making up one track in the collection—" Song of Annemarie".

III.

There still remains a lot to explore with regards to Schwarzenbach's life and *oeuvre,* but the primary sources are probably already exhausted—it is unlikely that there should be any new publications by Schwarzenbach because sadly all her letters, journals, and other unfinished projects which may have been prime examples of writing on the move were destroyed by her mother Renee shortly after Schwarzenbach's untimely death. Renee felt they shed unfavourable light on the family, and they probably did because Schwarzenbach was a staunch opponent and merciless critic of Hitler and Nazism, whereas her family, her mother in particular, openly supported the Führer. This might also explain why Schwarzenbach felt the urge to flee her family home and its atmosphere—she could not accept her parents' political sympathies, especially given that the circle of her closest friends included, among many prominent others, the family of Thomas Mann, and a German photojournalist Marianne Breslauer.

However, the strange and somewhat incongruent aspect of that is the fact that her mother was actually openly bisexual, involved in an affair with the opera singer Emily Krueger and others; what is more, Renee raised Annemarie as a boy, styling her hair boyishly and dressing her in boys' clothes, and her daughter's queerness was no secret to Renee but she still tended to use it against Annemarie. Theirs was by all means a toxic and troubled relationship, and as Annemarie admits, part of her drive to constantly depart had to with attempts to flee her mother's stifling and damaging influence. The lack of positive female role models led her to look for female/motherly affection elsewhere, and this was what partly drew her to Maillart. She may too have had a bit of a crush on Maillart, but perhaps more than any physical intimacy she sought out her warmth and empathy.

Schwarzenbach's life was short, full of drama, not infrequently self-induced, ridden by personal struggles, and marked by family trauma. Despite all that—or perhaps because of that, at least to a degree—she never surrendered in her intellectual, mental, and physical efforts to be a vocal witness to injustice, evil, oppression, and beauty, which sometimes triumphed against the odds. Aware of her own limitations and vices, she persevered in her attempts to see good and hope in the world that she traversed so tirelessly across all kinds of division lines—geographical, political, religious, and cultural alike. In her struggles, she more often than not failed, at times spectacularly, succumbing to her demons—drugs, unrequited affection, family feuds, physical and mental ailments, the most tragic and ironic being the biking accident near her home in Switzerland, which sent her into a coma she did not recover from. When she died at the age of thirty-four, Schwarzenbach was a half-reformed addict, a published author, an acclaimed journalist and social reformer, a married woman, a seasoned traveller, an experienced driver, and, to quote her friend, Breslauer, "this strange mixture of man and woman . . . not at all like a living being but like a work of art . . . the Archangel Gabriel standing before Heaven" (2012: 132). Breslauer's comment captures the conflicted nature of Schwarzenbach and the ambiguity she exuded, eluding easy categorizations and definitions, which surfaces acutely in the countless pictures that Breslauer took of her. Breslauer was, in fact, not the only person to compare Schwarzenbach to an angel—so did Thomas Mann and Roger Martin du Gard; Carson McCullers recalled that her face "would haunt [her] for the rest of her life" (Shepland 2021: 36). In the photographs Breslauer took of her, Schwarzenbach rarely smiles; rather, her usual expression seems to be defiance mixed with vulnerability, underrun by a passion for whatever it is that the picture catches her doing. Her energy vibrates but the tremors sometimes send her over the edge.

Such was her condition in 1939, when she and Maillart started planning the Afghan trip. Schwarzenbach, after a prolonged stay at a rehabilitation centre in Yverdon, appeared to have recovered just enough to embark on a new escapade. She knew she had nothing to lose—she had already lost nearly everything, several times at least—and she realized that there was actually quite a lot at stake for her, including the hope of learning to take control of her life, which for long she had felt slipping away from her. Understanding that being on her own she would most probably give in to morphine addiction again, she found the level-headed and compassionate Maillart a perfect companion. Maillart, however, was not immediately convinced, especially given that some of her friends had warned her about Schwarzenbach. Though she tried not to let gossip get to her, she recalls towards the beginning of *The Cruel Way* that she "was not quite easy about our enterprise" (Maillart 2013: 9). Schwarzenbach had her misgivings, too, but they were more about her general malaise and the sense of impending doom she felt encroaching upon her:

> I am thirty. It is the last chance to mend my ways, to take myself in hand. This journey is not going to be a sky-larking escapade as if we were twenty—and that is impossible, with the fear of Hitler increasing day by day around us. The journey must be a means towards our end. We can help each other to become conscious, responsible persons. My blind way of life has grown unbearable. What is the reason, the meaning of the chaos that

> undermines people and nations? And there must be something that I am to do with my life, there must be some purpose for which I could gladly die or live. (Maillart 2013: 4)

Maillart could not help but be moved by such an ardent plea, to which she responded with a no less passionate "prayer" for Annemarie (whom in her text Maillart calls "Christina" in order to avoid raising objections from Schwarzenbach's family):

> May it be in my power to help you, impatient Christina so irked by the limitations of the human condition, so oppressed by the falsity of life, by the parody of love around us. If we travel together, may it be given me not to fail you, may my shoulder be firm enough for you to lean on. Along the surface of the earth I shall find our way where I have journeyed before; and inwardly, where I have long ago begun to ask myself questions so like yours, may the little that I have found help you to find what each of us has to find by himself. (Maillart 2013: 4)

For Jessa Crispin (also a travel writer and a journalist; author of the memoir-travelogue *Dead Ladies Project*), who wrote the introduction to Maillart's *The Cruel Way*, it is the bond between the two women that occupies center-stage in Maillart's account. Indeed, as one gets deeper into the narrative, one cannot help noticing that the entire text—and actually the entire endeavour—was completely about Schwarzenbach. Maillart does not hide it; quite the opposite, she states point blank that her main goals "were to acquire self-mastery and to save my friend from herself" (Maillart 2013: 26). Reading the two accounts side by side, the striking way in which they function might seem dubious at first because whereas Schwarzenbach's *All the Roads Are Open* offers full-on, painstaking vivisection of herself, *The Cruel Way* provides very little in terms of a similar insight into Maillart's sensibilities and mindscapes. Rather, what is being revealed are the "bumps" along the road that Schwarzenbach tended to conceal or at least downplay, and which Maillart supplied with background and context, laying bare the true emotional and physical cost of their journey. They are indeed travellers of the "stereoscopic" order as defined by Charles Forsdick, speaking of, interestingly, a different pair of travel companions in which Maillart again was one of the counterparts (Forsdick 2009: 293). In an exploration of the textualisations of Maillart's and Peter Fleming's accounts of their 1935 journey to China, Forsdick draws attention to several issues which prove significant also in the case of Maillart's and Schwarzenbach's parallel travel narratives—the self-performativity of the travel writer, the narrative representation (or lack thereof) of the co-traveller, and the "anxiety of influence" (Forsdick 2009: 295) that each of the travellers/authors may be subject to.

Focusing on a journey undertaken by the "odd couple", as Maillart and Fleming had been dubbed by Maureen Mulligan (Mulligan 2008: 141), he also looks at the gendered aspects of the travelling experience and the gender rivalry which also plays a part in how the authors' travelogues were textualized, noting that indeed each seemed to feel compelled to challenge the other, in particular with regards to the "ownership" of the journey (Forsdick 2009: 293) along the lines of the gender divide. The gender rivalry argument does not really hold for Schwarzenbach and Maillart—even if Annemarie's sexual and gender identification was not normative, they were, in essence, "two women alone in Afghanistan" (Schwarzenbach 2018: 89) and had to fight the same battle, at least on this ground. However, questions of their authorial self-performativity, the presence of the co-traveller in each other's travelogues, and the anxiety of influence may have been valid points. Still, perhaps owing to the status of their relationship and their individual predispositions, the case is not so clear-cut. Schwarzenbach surely takes great care of what she puts into her writing, diligently avoiding mentioning any of the crises caused by her recklessness, which may be read as an attempt at preserving the image and impression of a sturdy traveller and a rational and responsible person, but then again she does not hide her depressive moods, ennui, fear, and insecurity, at times allowing herself to wallow in self-pity and painstakingly record her anxieties.

Reading *All the Roads Are Open* leaves one in the dark with regards to what went on "behind the scenes"; Schwarzenbach's mood swings are recorded but she is rather cryptic when it comes to revealing the full picture. This seems to suggest that although she was publishing her journey reports regularly while on the road, she was very careful about how much she actually let on, signalling a very conscious and self-aware authorial persona. Perhaps she kept a more intimate diary or shared the many dramas of the journey in letters to friends; sadly, these would not have survived her mother's censorial hand. Surely the travel experience was shaping her travelogue to a great extent, which had to do with the physical aspect of her engagement in the entire endeavour. What is quite striking, though, is that indeed Schwarzenbach erases nearly all traces of the presence of Maillart, going so far to as to refer to her rather impersonally as "my companion" or "my fellow driver" in the rare instances when she mentions her at all (Schwarzenbach 2018: *passim*). Forsdick suggests that similar practices in Maillart's and Fleming's respective Chinese travelogues exemplified a Romanticist apotheosis of solitary travel (Forsdick 2009: 295) and the cult of the solo traveler who, consequently, becomes a true master of all he surveys. Regarding the Afghan journey, this does not seem to be the case, and the grounds for Schwarzenbach's textual decisions might actually lie elsewhere, in a realm altogether much more personal and symptomatic of her condition. To put it perhaps a bit too bluntly, she might not have been particularly interested in such implications of the journey because she was far too engrossed in her own universe, to the point of sometimes seeming not to be of this world. Focused inwardly, she appears to be devoted to self-vivisection, which does not require her to always consider the bigger picture. Interestingly, while she erased the travel/travail parallel in her account, Maillart embraced and highlighted it. Thus, it might be argued that Schwarzenbach's *All the Roads Are Open* constitutes a selective, first-person, first-hand account of a heroine's journey, while Maillart's *The Cruel Way* becomes a companion piece to the record of her companion's quest.

Indeed, their Afghan trip possesses many features typical of the hero's quest, both with regards to the reasons why they set off in the first place, and in terms of the particular stages that their journey is made up of. Here, Maureen Murdock's work comes in handy—it is she who built, or expanded, the heroine's journey, extricating it from Campbell's heroic quest. As Murdock puts it:

> The journey begins with our heroine's search for identity. This "call" is heard at no specific age but occurs when the "old self" no longer fits. . .. It may simply happen when a woman realizes that she has no sense of self that she can call her own. (Murdock 2020: 5)

Usually, the sense of lack, confusion, stasis, and pointlessness goes as far back as the archetype of the mother and the heroine's urge to separate from it to find a truer self that would be fuller and individual. This entails the separation of a woman from her actual mother and the deeper, more complex split required of her to perform at the level of the unconscious, involving body and mind. According to Murdock, "geographical separation may be the only way at first to resolve the tension between a daughter's need to grow up and her desire to please her mother" (2020:20). Having managed to acquire some safe distance, the heroine may brace herself for tackling the archetypal mother and her dual expressions—that of the good Great Mother, and the Terrible Mother, who embodies stasis, stagnation, and whose hold on the daughter petrifies her, ultimately threatening her with death. Renee's actions are frequently hostile, but Annemarie, at least half aware of their detrimental effect on her health, self-esteem, and well-being finds herself helpless and all-too-exposed to their impact. She confides in Maillart that she thought "it was very foolish of me to be always acting against my mother—the person who knows me better than anyone else. I had no hope of freeing myself from her, no hope of ever being simply myself" (Maillart 2013:15). Maillart, while sensing Schwarzenbach's fear of her mother, noticed as well that her companion might just have been as ready as one can get to break the circle and split herself from Renee, in an act of defiance akin to taking the sword of her truth and using it to protect herself along the path of her own destiny. The first step has been made—Schwarzenbach takes to the wheel of their Ford, but does she have enough stamina and courage to keep at it? Alone with her baggage—probably not; with an ally at her side, the chances of success grow.

Thus, in an attempt to—as noted earlier—"save Christina[2] from herself", Maillart accepts the role of the guardian and nourisher, providing Schwarzenbach with models of femininity that are powerful but not threatening, unfurling before her a path which, while still full of traps, allows her to learn to use her inner strength to manoeuvre the pitfalls.

IV.

It remains a road of trials, with calamities and losses on the way. The second most dangerous "ogre", after the fear of the mother, has always been Schwarzenbach's fragile sobriety and the temptations offered by places they pass by, especially cities such as Sofia, Budapest, and Constantinople, or their final destination, Kabul. In Sofia, Maillart was at first totally at a loss with regard to what might have happened; when she discovered a broken ampule in the bathroom, she quickly understood what was going on:

> She had succumbed once more . . .. She had done what she pretended to abhor. My presence, my confidence in her, the fear of displeasing me had no effect. What did it mean? What were we to do? (2013: 24)

The transgression leaves Schwarzenbach seriously incapacitated—a fact we learn, however, from Maillart because Annemmarie's account includes only a couple of cursory remarks on Bulgaria, quite evasive in tone and devoted to landscapes, roads and, the availability of amenities such as fresh bread (Schwarzenbach 2018: 4-7). It is Maillart who reveals the gravity of the situation, but fortunately, she was not one to break down and lose her head in a crisis; even though at this particular moment she felt betrayed and dismayed, her fear over Annemarie's health and life prevailed, and she set about making sure this would not happen again. To this end, they made a pact, an unwritten but binding contract, according to which Schwarzenbach gave herself over to Maillart: "'I give you complete power day and night. Don't leave me alone. If it happens again, I leave the car with you and go back'" (Maillart 2013: 34). Profound though these pronouncements were, at the end of the day they were only words, and unfortunately, Schwarzenbach lost to temptation yet again, but that time her condition was even graver. The second crisis hit towards the end of their journey when they were already in Kabul. At first, Schwarzenbach seemed to be coming down with bad flu, but despite a high fever and severe cough, she refused to see a doctor. As her state worsened, Maillart found herself feeling more and more suspicious of the whole thing, especially given that her travel companion did not want to talk to her, either. Maillart noted with alarm that "she was ill but would not admit it; she would not relax or submit herself to the laws of nature" (Maillart 2013: 197); what she found yet more unsettling was the gnawing anxiety that she had let Schwarzenbach down:

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[2] This is the way she refers to Schwarzenbach in her narrative.

> I failed Christina. According to our pact I was not to leave her alone whatever she might say or do. But the intensity of my desire to help her had spoilt my intention. That intensity had brought with it a kind of effort that had tired me. (Maillart 2013: 198)

When Annemarie finally speaks, it is "a confession of her total wretchedness" (Maillart 2013: 199). She admitted to having been lying all the time, going out of her wicked way to procure morphine ampules whenever they were in the vicinity of any bigger town. Maillart lost it, though somehow it does not feel entirely convincing that she really had no inkling whatsoever of what Annemarie had been up to, especially seeing that she forgives again, even though this was such a blatant breach of their contract which jeopardized not just the journey but their friendship and Annemarie's life, too.

Despite Maillart's disappointment, they trudged on, though Schwarzenbach was fragile and mentally and physically weak. Neither was she the easiest of convalescents—she vehemently refused to see a doctor and at times seemed to take a peculiar tormented pleasure in wallowing in her afflictions. Maillart, who saw through all this, began to lose patience, only to backtrack on any nascent criticism of her friend, starting instead to look for explanations and reasons why Annemarie was that way. The level of her compassion is astounding; it is also at this moment, after Annemarie wore out nearly all of Maillart's goodwill and care, that Maillart utters what may very well be one of the most moving and saddest remarks on Annemarie: "She was a sober violin whose cords had been made of her own heart-strings: while she played she was wearing herself out" (2013: 73).

No reflection of these crises finds expression in Schwarzenbach's account, but one may detect her fear and internal turmoil in the violent mood swings she succumbs to. Describing one of the villages they stop by, she resorts to a language of loss, defeat, and death; the settlement comes across to her as "gripped by the inexorable destruction like a contagious disease" (2018: 65); all around she sees ghosts and ruins of things that had once been and are no more:

> And I look about, and nothing remains, the bells are buried, the cisterns caved in, the altars cold. In this merciless land, one is tempted to believe the earth is on the verge of extinction. (2018: 66)

A moment later, though, she lets herself be gripped by the nearly all-consuming beauty of their surroundings, the kindness of the people they encounter, and their humility and respect for the timeless rites of their land:

> And when you see a white or a light blue turban, a women's red veil by day in the fields, or at noon the men who have gathered to pray outside the little mosque, or in the evening, at the entrance to the bazaar, the first warm glow of a samovar, you believe the course of a well-ordered day is assured, a well-ordered life according to laws devised for our protection, for our needs, and you feel almost sheltered. (2018: 70)

Another day on the road brings a new storm, unease, and listlessness from which she "wanted to break away, not knowing exactly from which fate, seeming to grasp only that I had been struck by calamity" (2018: 100-1). Not only does she feel drained mentally; she ponders withdrawing from professional activity, too—writing becomes "a perpetual mirror of our drenched existence, which I was so loath to accept and endure" (2018: 101). The torments of travelling and writing, draining the author of the *élan vital* necessary to keep going, both text- and distance-wise, were perhaps best expounded upon by T. E. Lawrence, although despite the masochistic urges he so often succumbed to, he managed to write *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* before giving in to the death drive. Elaborating on Lawrence and his opus magnum, Zbigniew Białas raises a crucial issue in his *Body Wall*. Lawrence, when describing his writing method, says: "I tie myself into knots trying to re-enact everything, as I write it out. It's like writing in front of the looking-glass" (Lawrence, qtd. in Białas 2006: 73). The condition of being "tied into knots" surely is an uncomfortable one; when applied to the process of textualizing one's narrative account of the trials and tribulations of travel, it becomes even more symptomatic of how the author's inclinations might exhaust him. Of course, Lawrence makes it yet more problematic because he relishes in all prospects of even a hint of victimization and suffering, which to an extent might be said of Schwarzenbach, too, who after all also sought pain and frequently gave in to self-destructive impulses. The resemblance, however, seems to end here—Lawrence pursued sexual gratification and was masochistically attracted to degradation of the body and spirit, which brought him release and satiation; Schwarzenbach's masochistic tendencies were always about the annihilation of the ego, which she saw as her greatest nemesis.

From a different angle, Lawrence's accounts of travels in the Middle East during the Great War do share some affinity with Schwarzenbach's narrative, fraught with the undercurrent tensions of the encroaching Second World War. Both of them moved and wrote under liminal circumstances, painfully aware of the potential consequences of the war in a global, as well as personal dimension. Perhaps, however, the causes of Schwarzenbach's spleen in this instance had to do with having stayed in Afghanistan too long, allowing herself to soak in the place and its circumstances—an occasion which always got to her because it seemed to foreshadow growing some roots, committing to a place and to a people, and in effect becoming "immobile" and giving in to the stasis that she so feared. Maillart, now already an expert at diagnosing Schwarzenbach's states, noted the mood swings with alarm:

> One day working hard, announcing joyfully that she was rid of her obsessive fear; the next confessing that she could not live much longer in such dismal unhappiness—it was obvious that she was not nearing a well-balanced state.

Further on, Maillart confirms what Schwarzenbach revealed in her outbursts, namely that "she could not bear the thought of remaining inactive, for then she felt like dying. She was afraid of immobility" (Maillart 2013: 197).

V.

That Maillart endured all the disappointments and betrayals speaks volumes about her as a person of deep compassion and empathy; however, given that *The Cruel Way*, in contrast to *All the Roads Are Open*, was published in 1947—nearly eight years after the trip and five after Schwarzenbach's death—Maillart's pensive mood might also signify her wistfulness at the course of events. Schwarzenbach was publishing her travel impressions and reports all the time during the trip, submitting them to various magazines and journals without allowing herself much time to revise and edit; Maillart worked on her travelogue on and off until its publication and surely benefited from hindsight, at least with regards to how she viewed her companion's struggle. Schwarzenbach's biking accident in Sils in 1942, coma, and ensuing death shook Maillart deeply, which may have had an impact on how she looked at her friend and what she actually put into her work. Certainly, she did arrive at an empathetic understanding of Schwarzenbach, the kind that neither her smokescreen homosexual husband Claude Clarac, nor her mother achieved. She saw Annemarie's death drive, her pursuit of suffering and drug abuse for what they were worth, i.e., tragic attempts at what Schwarzenbach called "lessening the small ego" (Maillart 2013: 205)—overcoming suffering through confronting it head-on, seeking it out so as to defeat it, or at least numb it so as to make it bearable. Perhaps Schwarzenbach found deliverance in this; if not, then surely not damnation, either.

If escape—total 'disembarkation'—was what Schwarzenbach was after, travel (and travel writing) proves to be a fitting practice to become engaged in. According to Karen Lawrence, "travel writing reveals a set of alternative myths or models for women's space in society—against the myths of dependency, women's inferiority, and romantic love", which is achieved—and achievable—only when women shirk off the preassigned roles of "beloveds" or "homemakers" (1994: xi). That, however, does not have to mean the straightforward 'either/or' because in their performance of the parts of travellers and storytellers, women can embody this seemingly exclusive duality. Through what Jacques Derrida calls "breaking the law of boundaries", a woman in transit—on the go—in passage is at once “a weaver [and an] unweaver, a constructor [and a] deconstructor” (1982: 10). This new realm has been cleared for women specifically by the options that travel writing opens up through providing “discursive space for women who sometimes left home in order to write home, discovering new aesthetic as well as social possibilities” (Lawrence 1994: 18). Lawrence does have a point here, one which Schwarzenbach and Maillart prove in their respective works: both women have managed, in their unique ways, to appropriate and shape the genre so as to make it fit their own experience and answer to their own goals, in the process creating what Lawrence defines as a “permeable membrane of possibilities” granted by the unknown (1994: 18), be it a concrete geographical territory or a more ‘ephemeral’ realm or inner landscape (or, in fact, all of these at once). Each of them seized on the chance to approach that which had been repressed—in Schwarzenbach’s case, the archetypal mother and her physical emanation in the figure of Renee; for Maillart, the long-unvoiced but yearned-for taming of the monstrous, constantly craving ego. Naturally, success in acquiring equilibrium cannot be guaranteed and thus should not be taken for granted; many traps lurk along the way and threaten to send the seeker—the traveller—back to square one, as it were, or worse – to have her choke on the desired object and give in to melancholia, neurosis or irreconcilable grief. Still, the risk is (probably) worth taking.

Schwarzenbach was never one to avoid risk; quite the contrary, she recklessly pursued it and invited it to lead her down many a shadow-cast valley. In all honesty, she hardly ever celebrated an all-round success in her endeavours, more often than not falling prey to the perils with which the paths she chose had been strewn. Yet, again and again, she rose, no matter how deep the bottom she had hit. Having come precariously close to death on the Afghan trip with Maillart, she rebounded and came to a new reckoning with herself which she eagerly shared with Maillart, proclaiming with confidence: “I know now, smoke or dope are useless . . . the drug . . . was the fatal desire to kill life, to wipe out pain and joy, the tension-source of human activity” (Maillart 2013: 206). Maillart cheered for her, albeit cautiously, but appeared to dare to believe this was it, the sought-for boon of success, saving Annemarie from herself:

> Her eye was once more filled with light, her body poised, the past not weighing on her. She was thinner than ever but healthy. . .. The past had lost its bitterness. (Maillart 2013: 202)

Maillart closes her account here, leaving Schwarzenbach with her new-found balance and peace of mind.However, writing in 1947, she carried the full burden of hindsight over the later vicissitudes of Annemarie’s fate. The irony could not be bitterer. In a song she dedicated to Schwarzenbach, Suzanne Vega aptly remarks: “Annemarie . . . terror, pity, love” (Vega 2011), and the order needs no reconfiguring—pity, yes; terror—constantly; love—hopelessly, recklessly, always.

And Schwarzenbach? She concludes *All the Roads Are Open* with a poignant observation that "what staggers us, over and over again, is the morning splendour of departure" (2018: 120). Touché.

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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.03

A Scientist's and Tourist's Touch – The Haptic in Travelogues about the Island of Java (M. Siedlecki and E.R. Scidmore)

Abstract. The article explores the haptic aesthetic of selected Polish and Anglophone travelogues about the island of Java: *Jawa – przyroda i sztuka* (1913) by a Polish biologist named Michał Siedlecki, and *Java, the Garden of the East* (1897) by the American writer Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore. A comparison of texts coming from different literary traditions should yield a deeper insight into the various aspects of conceptualising the haptic in travel writing. Java's tropical environment provided travellers with new sensory experiences, consequently scrutinising how writers represented what they touched and felt, along with how descriptions of haptic sensations were associated with the ideological and aesthetic dimension of travel writing, can shed new light on how travel writing works and how multi-layered it is.

Keywords: Anglophone travellers, haptic, Java, Polish travellers, sensuous geographies, touch, travel writing.

Introduction

According to Sarah Jackson (2020: 222), "accounts of the tactile remain largely overlooked by both authors and critics of travel writing," a statement that seems to be confirmed by two travellers who are the focus of this article, a Polish biologist named Michał Siedlecki (1873-1940) and the American journalist and writer Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore (1856-1928). Their travelogues are dominated by descriptions of visual sensations; furthermore, they summarize their stays on Java using expressions based on seeing. At the end of her travelogue, the American writer remarks that Java is “the ideal tropical island, the greenest, the most beautiful, and the most picturesque and satisfactory bit of the tropics” (Scidmore 1922: 334), which “is certain soon to loom larger in the world’s view” (336). The Polish traveller explains his travel goals in the following way: “To get to know directly this world of disparate colours, life and concepts, to see as much as possible and to learn a lot from it” (‘Poznać bezpośrednio ten świat barw, życia i pojęć odmiennych, widzieć jak najwięcej i nauczyć się dużo.’[2]) (Siedlecki 1913: IV). Even in his autobiography Siedlecki referred to travelling to Java in visual terms: “it is almost indispensable for a biologist to have a glance at the tropical world” (‘jest biologowi niemal niezbędnie potrzebne rzucenie okiem na świat tropikalny’) (Siedlecki 1966: 68).

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Siedlecki’s and Scidmore’s focus on sight is not surprising, despite the fact that it is difficult to imagine experiencing the world without touch and haptic sensations in general (more on relations between those terms in the section 3); nevertheless, they are often neglected. “Touch lies at the heart of our experience of ourselves and the world yet it often remains unspoken and, even more so, unhistoricized” (Classen 2012: xi). Why is it so? One of the reasons has been pointed out by Paul Rodaway (1994: 48): “In the everyday experience of the able-bodied adult, the haptic dimension to geographical perception is often overlaid by visual and auditory information and thus tends to be overlooked”. Another issue is that while sounds and images can be recorded, tactile sensations are elusive: “most immediate and evanescent of human senses, touch could only be preserved in memory and through language” (Das 2005: 114). Following this line of reasoning, it can be claimed that travellers focus on what they see and hear because visual and auditory sensations are more attention-grabbing and provide more concrete information about the visited environment. Yet this immediacy and evanescence of tactile sensations – which are impossible to record directly and can be only suggested with words – makes the haptic in travel writing an interesting research topic. Travel experience is of course much richer than just visual consumption (Podemski 2005: 9–10), and analysing literary representations of haptic phenomena makes it possible to overcome the ocularcentric paradigm (Jay 1993; Urry & Larsen 2011; Wieczorkiewicz 2012: 133–138).

The tropics provided travellers with an abundance of new sensory experience, such that scrutinising how different writers described what they touched and felt while staying on the island of Java, along with how descriptions of haptic sensations were associated with the ideological and aesthetic aspects of travel writing, can shed new light on how travel writing works and how multi-layered it is. I will focus on Michał Siedlecki’s book *Jawa – przyroda i sztuka* (‘Java – nature and art,’ 1913) and on Eliza

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[2] All translations into English are my own, unless stated otherwise.

Ruhamah Scidmore's *Java, the Garden of the East* (1897). Both authors came from different literary traditions and dissimilar backgrounds: Siedlecki was a male scientist and university professor; Scidmore was a female journalist and world traveller. However, both visited the Dutch colony in the same period, i.e., around the turn of the 20th century, which provides an opportunity for an analysis of similarities and differences in their accounts and should yield a deeper insight into the various aspects of conceptualising the haptic in travel writing.

I will approach this topic in four steps. Firstly, I will briefly present Siedlecki's and Scidmore's works and biography in the context of scholarly reflection on travelogues about Southeast Asia. Secondly, various methodological concepts and definitions regarding touch, tactile sensations and the haptic will be introduced. That will be followed by a detailed analysis of travelogues, using concepts presented in the previous sections. Finally, in the concluding section I will show the main contrasts and analogies between both travel accounts: a scientist's (Siedlecki) and tourist's (Scidmore) touch.

Scidmore and Siedlecki and the travel writings about Southeast Asia

Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore was an American traveller, journalist, writer and photographer, the first female member of the Board of Trustees of the National Geographic Society.[3] Born to an upper-class family, already as a teenager she came into contact with political and diplomatic circles and attended the prestigious Oberlin College in Ohio. She journeyed widely in America, Europe, and Asia, which was partially facilitated by the fact that her brother, a career diplomat, served on various posts in Asia during the years 1881-1922, mostly in Japan. She published travelogues in *The National Geographic* and *The Century Magazine*, later turning her accounts into book-length literary travel accounts and guidebooks.[4] Her travel can be delineated as leisure trips undertaken to fulfil curiosity, while her writing represents the sensibilities of a well-informed and intellectual tourist who used opportunities created by Western expansion into colonial Asia.

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[3] Biographical information about Scidmore is based on Parsell (2023) and Mayumi (2017). Mayumi's book was criticized by Diana Parsell (see comment on `https://www.amazon.com/Eliza-Ruhamah-Scidmore-Japan-Washington/dp/1973413736`, accessed 18.09.2022), the author of Scidmore's new biography.

[4] Scidmore's books include: *Alaska, Its Southern Coast and the Sitkan Archipelago (1885)*; *Westward to the Far East: A Guide to the Principal Cities of China and Japan (1891)*; *Jinrikisha Days in Japan (1891)*; *Appleton's Guide-Book to Alaska and the Northwest Coast: Including the Shores of Washington, British Columbia, Southeastern Alaska, the Aleutians and Seal Islands, the Bering and the Arctic Coasts (1893)*; *Java, the Garden of the East (1897)*; *China, the Long-Lived Empire (1900)*; *Winter India (1903)*; *As The Hague Ordains: Journal of a Russian Prisoner's Wife in Japan (1907)*.

Michał Siedlecki was a biologist, a graduate of Jagiellonian University, who also conducted research and additional studies in Berlin, Paris and Naples[5]. He represents a rare synthesis of a natural scientist, a literary writer, and an activist-organizer. On the one hand he published numerous research studies on protozoology, adaptations to tropical life and marine biology, on the other he also had friendly relationships with the most important figures of the Polish modernist movement (*Młoda Polska*, 'Young Poland'). Later in life, he became a professor at Jagiellonian University and served as president of the newly re-established Stefan Batory University in Vilnius, and was also a member of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in Copenhagen. His writings include not only scientific papers, but also several works which can be branded as popular science, including the Verne-inspired science-fiction story *Głębiny* ('The Depths'). Among them, the most prominent is his book on Java. Brilliantly written, it is a personal travel narrative that also contains plentiful remarks on natural science as well as on culture. This work is supplemented by a book of fiction *Opowieści malajskie* ('Malay Stories') (Siedlecki 1927), in which motifs and themes present in *Jawa. Przyroda i sztuka* serve as a basis for short stories. To sum up, Siedlecki travelled as a researcher and in his travelogue scientific topics play a primary role, although it also reveals his deep artistic sensibility.

According to the biographical data, the two travellers never met and their trips to Java were separated by more than 10 years (Scidmore visited the island in the 1890s, the first edition of her book was published in 1897, while Siedlecki stayed there during the years 1907-1908). There are, however, several connections between them; for example Siedlecki includes Scidmore's book in his bibliography. Even more significant is that both often refer to earlier works; the names of Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826), Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn (1809-1864), Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) are recurrent in the analysed travelogues. Both Scidmore and Siedlecki were intellectuals and skilful writers; however, there is one crucial difference between them: the American traveller wrote as a tourist, the Pole as a scientist. Of course, this divergence is not absolute, for instance Scidmore quotes scholarly literature and her book has an index and, while Siedlecki was travelling not only for research, but also for the personal pleasure. Nonetheless a scientist/tourist dichotomy helps to characterize different ways of experiencing the world and writing about it.

How can their accounts about Java be localized in the wider context of scholarly reflection on 19th- and early 20th-century travel writings about Southeast Asia? Due to the comparative dimension of this article, it is worth mentioning an inspiring study about three (British, German, and Chinese) travellers (Ng 2002), which uses the concept of habitus to explain differences in the portrayals of Southeast Asia. There are also works devoted specifically to travel writings about Java, examining the position of the island within colonial tourism in the mid-19th century (Toivanen 2019a) and the role of travelogues in the transnational politics of imperial knowledge management (Toivanen 2019b). In two books, Victor R. Savage discusses the image of Singapore in Western narratives, including travel accounts (2021); and representations of the natural world of the region (1984), analysing, among many other Western authors, also Scidmore's travelogue. One section of the latter book is devoted to the senses, even though it scrutinizes only sounds, smells and tastes (203-217). Susan Morgan (1996) examines writings about Southeast Asia by female travellers of the Victorian period, but Scidmore is referred to only twice, and is wrongly called a missionary (34, 44-45). Scidmore's book on Java is also summoned incidentally as a historical source, including in articles written by Indonesian scholars (Cribb 1995; Sunjayadi 2008; Goss 2011; Bender 2017; Nurwulandari & Kurniawan 2020). The American traveller features prominently in the articles by Julia Kuehn (2007, 2008); however, these are devoted to China, not Southeast Asia.

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[5] Biographical information about Siedlecki is based on Fedorowicz (1966); Siedlecki (1966).

The aforementioned works focus on sources written in Western European languages from the perspective of colonising nations. Because the main goal of this article is to compare one American and one Polish travelogue, it is important to introduce the point of view of non-imperial nations. Central European visitors to Southeast Asia in colonial period were a subject of an international workshop *Escaping Kakania* held in Singapore in 2021 (publication upcoming). Jan Mrázek (2013, 2017, 2022) discussed Czech accounts about colonial Southeast Asia, including their sensuous aspects. Polish narratives about that region, including Siedlecki's work, have been an object of a comparative analysis that focused on representations of nature (Ewertowski 2022b) and images of the island of Java (Ewertowski 2022a). Due to the importance of Siedlecki's *Jawa*, which was the first Polish book devoted to the tropical island, it keeps attracting scholarly attention even now (Wacławek 2014; Wiatrowski 2014). Siedlecki is also seen as a pioneer in the reception of Javanese music, art and theatre in Poland (Tenorowicz 2014; Martin 2016).

As this short survey shows, travel writings about Southeast Asia have been analysed using a wide range of concepts. Of utmost importance are topics connected with colonialism, since most of travellers visited the area because of conditions created by the European expansion (like Siedlecki and Scidmore); some were even participating in imperial activities. Colonialism is also an important context for the analysis of sensory perceptions. Ideas derived from postcolonial theory feature prominently, but issues such as representations of the natural world, a traveller's habitus, gender studies, bodily experiences and even linguistic analysis are present, too. Themes associated with the senses have also been investigated, for example, sensory perceptions of natural phenomena (Savage 1984), descriptions of fruits (Bender 2017), the body in relation to experiencing and knowing (Kuehn 2008), and linguistic representations of sensory impressions (Wiatrowski 2014). However, such forays into the realm of sensuous scholarship were rather sideline activities, hence touch was not analysed in detail. Therefore, in the next section I would like to introduce the main concepts that will form the basis for the analysis of haptic aesthetics.

The haptic in the humanities

In European culture, touch is indicated as one of the five senses, although this classification was criticized from an intercultural perspective, which claims that various cultures have dissimilar approaches to sensory impressions (Low 2019: 621–625). Furthermore, contemporary anthropology suggests that Greco-Roman tradition is far too reductive and arbitrary (Rodaway 1994: 28). While customarily seeing with the eyes is characterized as the sense of sight and contact with the hands is associated with the sense of touch, that approach is obviously too simplistic. Touch is not limited to the hand, as humans receive sensations through the whole skin and include the feeling of pressure, pain, cold and warmth. What is traditionally recognized as the sense of touch is also labelled as part of the haptic system, which includes more than cutaneous (skin) impressions. Mark Paterson, referring, among others, to James Gibson (1966), distinguishes between tactile – "Pertaining to the cutaneous sense, but more specifically the sensation of pressure (from mechanoreceptors) rather than temperature (thermoceptors) or pain (nociceptors)" – and the haptic that includes not only tactile but all cutaneous sensations (including pressure, temperature and pain) as well as kinaesthesia (the sense of movement), proprioception (the sense of bodily position), and the vestibular system (the sense of balance) (Paterson 2007: ix, 2009: 768–771).

The difference between the tactile and the haptic was also emphasized by Marta Smolińska (2022: 21–23) from the perspective of art history, the former refers to art works which are experienced via touch while the latter describes various ways of activating the haptic system, not necessarily by touch itself. Moreover, Smolińska distinguishes the "classical haptic" from the "extended haptic." The former was discussed by the art historian Alois Reigl (1858-1905) as triggering memories of touch via looking (20). The latter is defined as the somaesthetic modality of many senses which activates the haptic system (62). Smolińska's emphasis on multisensory perception of art is also very useful for the analysis of travel writing. Sensuous experience is processual, corporeal, based on activating many senses simultaneously (Rodaway 1994: 11–12). In writing, a singular perception may be isolated and deliberated on, still it is important to read travelogues with a multisensory character of human experience in mind, because "all of the senses can be, and have been, thought of as having tactile dimensions—even sight involves eye movement" (Classen 2012: xiv). Even though writers paid more attention to the visual, the extended haptic still managed to enter their narratives. Referring to Vladimir Gvozden's (2011: 171) concept of aestheticization in travelogues – that is, literary and cultural codes used to transform the material experience into a literary work – we can talk about the haptic aesthetics denoting the way in which haptic sensations are described in travel accounts.

In literature studies, such a detailed description of the haptic system has been adapted to topics ranging from the First World War literature (Das 2005: 20–21) to the political dimension of Michael Ondaatje's writings (Marinkova 2011: 6) or an interpretation of modernist writers (Garrington 2013: 17). When looking at travel writings from a linguistic perspective, representations of sensory perceptions have a few functions: they emphasize the individual experience of the writer, stress his or her position as a reliable witness, help engage readers in a story (Temmerman 2021). Such an explanation corresponds with the remark that Siedlecki's detailed descriptions and rich sensuous vocabulary were crucial for a suggestive image of Java (Wiatrowski 2014). Among other important concepts, "the haptic sublime" (McNee 2014) can be singled out. It refers to the way in which 19th-century mountaineers experienced the sublime through bodily contact with the mountains and indicates that visual appraisal and haptic sensations were interconnected. Discussions on pedestrianism in travel writing are also significant (Dziok-Łazarecka 2021), for the reason that the haptic includes kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, and vestibular sensations, experienced while walking. Finally, because both Scidmore and Siedlecki travelled to Java during the colonial period, the studies over sensuous dimensions of the imperial presence of Europeans and Americans in Asia provide a number of valuable insights (Rotter 2011; Low 2019: 627–631).

The array of concepts forms a conceptual framework for the interpretation of Siedlecki's and Scidmore's works in the next section.

Dimensions of the haptic

Touching with hands

The most obvious dimension of the haptic in Siedlecki's and Scidmore's travelogues is references to touching with the hands. Garrington (2013: 18) stresses that the "human hand plays a central role in touch experiences," while Connor (2006: 106) calls the hand "the active power of the skin," which suggestively shows the importance of grasping and manipulating objects with the hands. For example, the Polish traveller described how he was touching stones while exploring volcanic areas: "I want to pick up one of them, and it crumbles and breaks into pieces like moist loam and shows in the point of break veins of small shiny crystals of iron sulphide or pyrite" ('chcę podnieść jeden z nich, on zaś rozkrusza się i rozpada jak ił wilgotny i okazuje na miejscu przełomu żyłki z małych błyszczących kryształków siarczku żelaza czyli pirytu') (Siedlecki 1913: 63). Grasping objects with a hand is a way of exploring the world. He reports also that the ground was so hot that "it was almost impossible to touch it with the hand" ('dotknąć go ręką prawie niepodobna') (64). In another place he writes how with a stick he investigated holes in a botanical garden, looking for animals: "if you put a stick there, you can feel it being grabbed and pulled by the claws of a scorpion" ('a jeśli tam zapuścić patyczek, to czuje się, jak chwytają go i ciągną szczypce ogromnego niedźwiadka, czyli skorpiona (Heteromefrus javanicits') (128). In Scidmore's travelogue, the most attention-grabbing are remarks about touch sensations associated with opening tropical fruits, for instance: "The spiny shell [of rambutans] pulls apart easily, and discloses a juicy, half-transparent mass of white pulp around a central core of smooth stones" (Scidmore 1922: 83). On the market in Solo she looked for traditional blades, *kris,* and made a comment on the way they can be handled: "the boatshaped wooden hilts having only enough carving on the under part to give the hand a firm grasp" (259). Another example of touch exploration is turning pages of rare books from the collection of a Javanese aristocrat: "we had only time to turn its leaves, see the more remarkable pages, and obtain a general dazzling idea of its quality" (299).

Descriptions of touching have a diverse character, for they use subject-oriented verbs ("I want to pick up") as well as object-oriented verbs ("shell pulls apart easily"). Sometimes actions and feelings of the author are emphasized ("we had only time to turn its leaves"), sometimes the subject's experience is generalized ("it was almost impossible to touch it"); in other cases the qualities of objects are at the forefront ("to give the hand a firm grasp") (Temmerman 2021: 86-89). Handling objects provides extensive information: "we get to know through touch alone – or at times in close conjunction with vision or sound – size, texture, temperature, weight, hardness/softness, viscosity, depth, flatness, movement, composition and space" (Das 2005: 21). The multisensory character of human perception is emphasized by the fact that often in one sentence there are references to several senses (Scidmore's description of rambutans). Furthermore, while analysing representations of clutching or grabbing, a crucial difference between Siedlecki and Scidmore emerges: the Polish traveller describes touching as a way of acquiring information, his is a scientist's touch; the American writer enjoys tactile sensations and the experience of novelty they bring, hers is a tourist's touch. In such a way, the importance of a travel type and habitus manifests itself in travel writing. This distinction will be revisited in my later analysis.

Being touched

It is often remarked that touch is the most reciprocal among the senses: "For touch is unlike the other senses in this, that it acts upon the world as well as registering the action of the world on you" (Connor 2006: 263). However, it is not always reflected in written representations of bodily sensations. The abovementioned descriptions of grasping emphasize the activity of the subject who is using his/her hands to manipulate passive objects. Generally, the tropical world is presented as being explored by travellers, and only in some situations are the roles reversed. Siedlecki was researching animals, but sometimes he might become an object of their touch: "the beetle closes or opens its claws by moving its head, and can severely clench with them if you carelessly let it grab your finger" ('Ruszając głową chrząszcz zamyka albo otwiera szczypce i może niemi tęgo ścisnąć, jeśli nieostrożnie dać mu się schwycić za palec') (Siedlecki 1913: 152). But the most repulsive aspect of "being touched" by the tropics is an encounter with leeches:

> it enters the sleeves or behind the collar and finally reaches the skin and settles around the waist. Now, with its thin and sharp jaws it saws through the skin and draws blood so gently that it cannot even be felt. Having worn itself out, it falls off and leaves a small but bleeding wound. (133)

> wchodzi do rękawów lub za kołnierz, dostaje się wreszcie niepostrzeżenie aż do skóry i osadza się przy pasie. Teraz cienkiemi i ostremi szczękami przepiłowuje skórę i ciągnie krew tak delikatnie, że nawet uczuć się to nie da. Nassawszy się, odpada i pozostawia małą, ale długo krwawiącą rankę.

Temperature and sultriness

As noted in section 3, cutaneous sensations associated with the sun and generally from experiencing the temperature are an important aspect of the haptic. Das writes metaphorically about "the sun's touch" (2005: 159-62), Obrador-Pons (2007) comments on the pleasant sensations of being exposed to the sun and breeze on the beach, while Paterson (2009: 780), in commenting on Obrador-Pons's article, remarks how the beach experience could include also unpleasant sunburn. Travellers in the equatorial environment of Java were obviously exposed to the sun, high temperatures and extraordinary humidity. In some areas, even the sunset was not a relief from the stifling humidity: "After the sun fell the air grew heavier and hotter, a stifling, sodden, steaming, reeking atmosphere of evil that one could hardly force in and out of the lungs" (Scidmore 1922: 304–305). Siedlecki, as a scientist, put haptic sensations into the context of general information about the climate: "This constant warmth, combined with the humidity, creates this sultry, hothouse atmosphere that can be tiring, exhausting and annoying, and for many people is simply unbearable" ('Ta stała ciepłota, w połączeniu z wilgocią powietrza daje właśnie tę duszną, cieplarnianą atmosferę, która może męczyć, wyczerpywać i denerwować, a dla wielu ludzi jest wprost nieznośna') (Siedlecki 1913: 77). "The sun's touch" in the tropics can be deadly, so the head must be covered with a helmet, even on rainy days. It can be noted how via haptic aesthetics Siedlecki and Scidmore introduce the theme of deadly tropics (Arnold 2006: 42–73); however, in the American's travelogue the "blessed tropics" is also present: "Life is so simple and primitive, too, in the sunshine and warmth of the tropics" (Scidmore 1922: 42). Considering the frequent portrayals of fruits and lush vegetation, it can be concluded that the image of tropical richness is prevalent. Similarly, Siedlecki (1913: 80–81) stated that not only is it possible to adapt to the tropical heat, but later it even helps with enduring the European winters.

Above I referred to remarks from articles by Obrador-Pons and Paterson; to sum up the issue of temperature and sultriness, it is important to recall their conclusions as well. According to Obrador-Pons (2007: 138), haptic sensations can be a source of embodied pleasure that overcomes visual and political orders. Touch confers a sense of authenticity and it also has ethical potential, because the haptic brings a feeling of enchantment by the natural world, not mediated by political power, symbolic inscriptions or objectification. Paterson (2009: 780) criticizes Obrador-Pons not only for too optimistic a comment on beach experience, but also for methodological issues, namely, for capturing partially unconscious "somatosensory imagination" through a traditional interview method. For the analysis of travel writing, three important conclusions can be drawn from this discussion. Firstly, in literature studies all meanings are encoded in language, so we encounter only written representations of sensations, not the full richness of Paterson's "somatosensory imagination." Even if subjects experience the liberating sensations indicated by Obrador-Pons, in literature such feelings are expressed through literary conventions. Secondly, despite limitations of literary representations, Siedlecki and Scidmore, thanks to such rhetoric devices as comparisons, metaphors and rich epithets, can evoke an embodied experience of the tropics. Thirdly, Obrador-Pons's remarks about the haptic being beyond political and symbolic order, although exaggerated, suggest that by analysing representations of such sensations in a literary work it is possible to find "cracks" in a seemingly uniform discourse (see Conclusion).

Walking

Walking involves kinaesthetic, proprioceptive and vestibular sensations, while its relative slowness exposes the body to the environment. In this way senses "ground the sentient body in material reality" (Dziok-Łazarecka 2021: 129). This, however, has also an unpleasant side, especially in a dense tropical forest. Scidmore's willingness to climb the summit of Mount Papandyang (Papandayan, Papandjang) vanished quickly: "after pushing and tearing our way through bamboo-grass and bushes to the first ridge, we saw only other and farther ridges to be surmounted" (Scidmore 1922: 320). Siedlecki (1913: 99) makes an analogous comment: "to force one's way through the rattan thicket is almost impossible, its thorns are so horrible and sharp" ('Przedrzeć się przez zarośla rotanu prawie niepodobna, tak straszne i ostre są ich kolce'). One more natural threat to which one is potentially exposed on strolls in the tropics is snakes, mentioned by Siedlecki and Scidmore, although they play down this danger. The volcanic nature of Java was responsible for another extraordinary pedestrian experiences: "The sulphur coolies stepped warily along the paths between the pools; our shoesoles were not proof against the steam and scorch of the heaving ground beneath us" (Scidmore 1922: 319). "The ground on which I walk is soft and elastic; when struck, it responds like a vault over an empty cellar; in one place I poke a stick deeply into the soft ground; as soon as I pull it out, steam begins to gush from the hole" ('Grunt, po którym chodzę, miękki i elastyczny, uderzony, odpowiada jak sklepienie nad pustą piwnicą; w jednem miejscu wtykam głęboko kij do miękkiej ziemi; natychmiast po jego wyciągnięciu zaczyna z otworku buchać para') (Siedlecki 1913: 64). The dangerous potential posed by volcanic activity seems much more acute when experienced while walking.

However, moving around Java on foot means not just unpleasant sensations. It provides a deeper involvement with the material environment, creating opportunities for a special experience. Scidmore (1922: 187) describes how walking on sculptured terraces of the Borobudur temple was like experiencing a picture-Bible of Buddhism. A stroll from the train station to the Prambanan temples was a challenge because of the "deadly, direct rays of the midday sun, - at the time when, as the Hindus say, only Englishmen and dogs are abroad" (219-220); however, on the way Scidmore got a chance to witness an enchanting leisurely life in one village:

> There was such an easy, enviable tropical calm of abundant living and leisure in that Lilliput village under Brobdingnag trees that I longed to fling away my "Fergusson," let slip life's one golden, glowing, scorching opportunity to be informed on ninth-century Brahmanic temples, and, putting off all starched and unnecessary garments of white civilization, join that lifelong, happy-go-lucky, care-free picnic party under the kanari-trees of Brambanam. (220)

Likewise, Siedlecki emphasized that only through walking can one really experience the tropical rainforest: "But whoever wants to really benefit from the forest, whoever wants to thoroughly experience its lushness and beauty, he or she has to get off the paths and fight one's way through the thick brushwood" ('Ale kto chce naprawdę skorzystać z lasu, kto chce jego bujność i piękność poznać w całej pełni, ten musi zejść z ścieżek i przebić się przez gąszcz zarośli') (Siedlecki 1913: 113). Referring to McNee's haptic sublime, achieved through bodily contact with the mountains, we can talk about the haptic sublime of a tropical forest:

> Through a path cut into its vegetation wall, I entered the forest for the first time. I was overwhelmed by a green gloom and swallowed by such a dense thicket of vegetation that at first I felt lost, stunned, in the midst of this veritable temple of luxuriant life.
> (Siedlecki 1913: 114)

> Zapuściłem się po raz pierwszy do lasu przez wejście na ścieżkę, wyciętą w roślinnej jego ścianie. Ogarnął mię mrok zielony i pochłonęła tak zbita gęstwa roślinności, że w pierwszej chwili oszołomiony, wśród tej prawdziwej świątyni bujnego życia, nawet zoryentować się nie mogłem.

Kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, and vestibular sensations

Haptic sensations are caused not only by walking. This is how Scidmore recounts a horse carriage ride from Yogyakarta to Borobudur: "We rocked and rolled through beautiful arched avenues, with this bare-legged boy in gay petticoat 'gr-r-ree-ing' us along like mad, people scattering aside like frightened chickens, and kneeling as we passed by" (Scidmore 1922: 175). It is worth noticing how the passenger's experience is different from that of people passing along the way. Unlike walking, this means of transport isolates travellers from the immediate material environment, even if the carriage provides uncomfortable haptic sensations of rocking and rolling.

Railways on Java are favourably compared with the Indian railways due to a greater comfort, including more pleasant haptic sensations: "The railway service of Netherlands India is a vast improvement on, and its cars are in striking contrast to, the loose-windowed, springless, dusty, hard-benched carriages in which first-class passengers are jolted across British India" (Scidmore 1922: 50-51). While travelling by carriage, Scidmore enjoyed sightseeing, but reported also rocking and rolling; riding the train is not only more comfortable, but also provides a great opportunity for enjoyable views: "The hour-and-a-half's ride from Batavia to Buitenzorg gave us an epitome of tropical landscapes as the train ran between a double panorama of beauty" (52). Among those observations, the following excerpt is of special importance: "Men and women were wading knee-deep in paddy-field muck, transplanting the green rice-shoots from the seed-beds, and picturesque harvest groups posed in tableaux, as the train shrieked by" (55). On the train, Scidmore of course experienced jolting and vibrations, but those sensations are not mentioned, having been overwhelmed by the visual input of seeing people working in the rice field. It leads to an interesting contrast: readers know much more about the haptic sensations of observed farmers than about the direct experience of the traveller, who seems to be reduced to a bodiless eye. The primacy of the visual goes hand in hand with characteristic features of the industrial transport technology. Scidmore's writing can serve as an example of the "panoramic perception" analysed in the context of railway journeys (Schivelbusch 2014: 64).

For Scidmore, the train was a perfect environment to enjoy the views, but vibrations and jolts caused by modern machinery could be a nuisance (Schivelbusch 2014: 113-23; Smith 2018: 7, 147). Furthermore, the higher speed created a greater possibility for an accident. Siedlecki's account on the trip to islands north of Java is full of admiration for the colourful beauty of coral reefs, but "suddenly the boat hit the underwater reef at full speed; we were thrown like balls – some into the water, others to the bottom of the boat" ('Nagle łódź w pełnym pędzie uderzyła o rafę podwodną; rzuciło nami jak piłkami – jednych do wody innych na dno łodzi') (Siedlecki 1913: 273). The haptic put an end to the appreciation of visual sensations.

The extended haptic – touching with eyes and ears

"Sense perception is often a product of the interplay between cognition, knowledge, memory and language" (Das 2005: 35). Received sensations may remind of other experiences, so seeing, hearing, or smelling may help recall tactile and other sensations even in the absence of actual touch. Smolińska, in her work on the extended haptic, examines how contemporary artworks stimulate more than one sense, presenting a detailed analysis of how various senses have haptic potential.

For instance, haptic vision was already elaborated on by A. Riegel at the beginning of the 20th century, because sight could activate the memory of touching (Smolińska 2022: 34-49). The metaphor of "touch of the eye" (Garrington 2013: 7, 9, 20, 89) is often used in this context. The term "haptic visuality" allows one to distinguish a way of looking that is focused on textures and surfaces (Jackson 2020: 229). Many examples of such "touching looks" can be found in Siedlecki's account. His descriptions evoke qualities of the surface like hardness/softness: "rocks, composed of grey and hard stones" ('skały, złożone z głazów szarych i twardych') (Siedlecki 1913: 52) or recall sensations of pain: after shooting down an ant nest, the traveller observes swarms of large ants and then reminds himself and his readers that such ants bite painfully (278). Scidmore, who visited Java as a tourist and not as a researcher with a shorter stay there than Siedlecki, seems to have been less grounded in the materiality of natural life of the island, so there are less examples of "haptic visuality" in her accounts, but her comments about ladies wearing "heavy silks and velvets of an Amsterdam winter" (Scidmore 1922: 34) convey such sensibility. There is also one example of an observed object arousing haptic sensations because of anxiety: "The rising mists and the solid blue vapors [sic] massing in the distances were so much actual, visible evil malaria almost in tangible form" (303). Finally, commenting on a boy climbing a palm tree, Scidmore writes: "[it] makes one rub his eyes doubtingly at the unprepared sight" (205), which is an example of how looking may cause a haptic reaction.

Another example is haptic hearing. From the perspective of contemporary neurobiology, sound can be treated as a specialized form of a haptic perception, since it depends on received sound waves, transforming them into vibrations within the ear and then converting them into nerve impulses. Smolińska (2022: 185–189), following Gilles Deleuze, writes about "haptic resonance," emphasizing that sounds can transform the space, haptically impacting listeners. Additionally, sound can remind of specific body states associated with touch. In his book, Siedlecki devotes a whole chapter to "voices of nature" and another to "Javanese music," both of which contain examples of "touching with ears." On Java there is a whole choir of nature: wind, swoosh of trees and voices of cicadas, crickets, bumblebees, birds, frogs, lizards fill the entire atmosphere (Siedlecki 1913: 231). As a biologist, he investigated the function of sounds for animals and commented on their perceptions: "for the cicadas' sounds, even if not distinguished in detail but only perceived as air vibrations, could be a supplement for deficiencies of the olfactory system" ('dla piewików głos, choćby nawet niezbyt dobrze w szczegółach rozróżniany, lecz tylko odczuwany, jako drgania powietrza, byłby uzupełnieniem braków aparatu węchowego') (230-31).

While describing music, Siedlecki uses artistic language to show the multisensory impact of the Javanese gamelan: "Such music amazes at first, then it moves, and then the whole atmosphere becomes permeated with it and it penetrates the soul, so that mind melts in its overflowing sounds and one comes to a state existing beyond earthly feelings" ('Taka muzyka z początku zadziwia, potem przejmuje, a potem zaczyna się nią przepajać cała atmosfera i drąży ona do wnętrza duszy tak, że w przelewnych jej dźwiękach roztapia się myśl i przychodzi się do stanu, już poza ziemskiem czuciem istniejącego') (240). Figures of speech which would fit any sublime, mystical poem suggestively show the haptic impact of sounds. Another important example of linking haptic, audial and visual sensations is the scene of a Javanese dance, which must have been very important for Siedlecki, for he portrayed it twice, once in his travelogue, and then again in a short story from his collection *Opowieści malajskie*:

> These hands wriggled and bent, giving her [the dancer] strange, chimerical forms; once straight and stretched, then bent in such a way that all the joints seemed to have been torn out of their bonds; these hands were writhing like two golden serpents, to the rhythm of the constantly recurring motifs of the music. At first the listeners stood mute, then the melody, growing louder and louder, and the image of the bent dancer began to entrance them; they began to clap their hands at steady pace to the beat of the cymbals, and then, at first quietly, and then louder and louder they were speaking and shouting one word to the beat of the clapping: *lekás - lekás - lekás – lekás*... (lively – lively)...
> The crowd and music and dancer with a golden body melted together into one entity, vibrating with the same rhythm as the whole choirs of nature, rocking on this emerald island. (244-45)

> Wiły się te ręce i gięły, nadając jej postaci dziwne, chimeryczne formy; to proste i wyciągnięte aż do palców, to przewijały się te ręce jakby dwa złote węże, w takt ciągle powracających motywów muzyki. Słuchacze zrazu stali niemi, potem potężniejąca melodya i obraz przegiętej tancerki zaczęły ich porywać; zaczęto równomiernie klaskać w dłonie w takt cymbałom, a potem, zrazu pocichu, a wnet coraz to głośniej mówić i

> pokrzykiwać jeden wyraz do taktu z klaskaniem: *lekás — lekás — lekás — lekás*... (żwawo — żwawo)... Tłum i muzyka i tancerka o złotem ciele stopili się razem w jedną całość, drgającą rytmem tak, jak rytmem drgają całe chóry przyrody, bujającej na tej wyspie szmaragdowej

This exceptional passage displays how the rhythm of sound and dance awakens not only the audial and visual systems but the whole body. Kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, and vestibular aspects are stimulated, leading to a particular feeling of communion with the audience. Multisensory perceptions unite the crowd, turning it into an embodiment of the whole island, however, the narrator seems to stand apart.

Although large parts of Siedlecki's travelogue are composed from the vantage point of a scientist, he was much more sensitive to the haptic dimension of music than Scidmore and expressed his impressions in a more artistic way. The American traveller writes about Javanese melodies and instruments without Siedlecki's exhilaration, although she does so in positive terms, for instance: "all the singers and musicians of the full topeng troupe, lifted up their voices to the tinkling, softly booming, sonorous airs of the gamelan and delighted us with a succession of chants "(Scidmore 1922: 297) "tinkling, mild, and plaintive melodies reached us through the trees long before we were in sight of them" (322-23). Here, the spatial qualities of music are emphasized, but the haptic dimension is less evident than in Siedlecki's. The most noteworthy representation of the "touch of sound" is given by Scidmore in her account on the event she did not experience herself, but only heard about from others: the disastrous eruption of Krakatau in 1883. Scidmore admits she "had an insatiable appetite" for stories about it and recapitulates what she heard: "crashes and roars beyond those of the most terrific thunderstorms, the bang and boom of the heaviest artillery's bombardment, and the sound of frightful explosions filled the air, shook and rocked the ground, and rattled houses" (327). The haptic dimension of sound makes it possible to convey the horrifying impression of volcanic disaster.

The haptic in fauna and flora: lushness, struggles, and ruins

As noted by Wiatrowski (2014: 43), Siedlecki wrote very suggestively thanks to detailed descriptions that employed a rich sensuous vocabulary. It may be added that they include not only references to the Polish traveller's sensory experiences, but also to the sensorium of animals and even plants researched by him. In Siedlecki's travelogue, there are numerous excerpts which can be termed as "the haptic in fauna and flora," for instance:

> the thin and limp vines embrace the support with such a strong grip that they crush its tissue and penetrate its living flesh; the support and the vines then overgrow each other. Some lianas hook their twisted shoots [to the support], others have long whiskers or hooked paws as grasping apparatus; once hooked to the base, the liana, growing unevenly, sometimes twists like a spring and draws itself to the base. (Siedlecki 1913: 103–104)

> cienkie i wiotkie pnącza tak silnym uściskiem obejmują podporę, że zgniatają jej tkankę i wżerają się w jej żywe ciało; podpora i pnącza przerastają się wtedy nawzajem. Jedne liany czepiają się okręconymi pędami, inne mają długie wąsy lub łapy hakowate jako aparaty chwytne; raz zaczepiona o podstawę liana, rosnąc nierównomiernie, nieraz skręca się jak sprężyna i przyciąga się do podstawy

Using such stylistic means as personification, combined with ample references to the senses, makes it possible to create an image of dynamic reality and overcome subject-centered narrative conventions. It is not just the traveller, who is experiencing passive natural world, here plants are described by Siedlecki as active agents, touching, grasping, embracing and hurting each other. It brings Javanese reality to life for a reader.

Siedlecki was a biologist and devoted large parts of his book to elucidations of the natural world, while Scidmore's focus is different; that said, we can still find analogous passages. The most interesting example is a depiction of the damage inflicted on ruins by plants:

> With the conversion of the people to Mohammedanism the shrines were deserted, soon overgrown, and became hillocks of vegetation. The waringen-tree's fibrous roots, penetrating the crevices of stones that were only fitted together, and not cemented, have done most damage, and the shrines of Loro Jonggran went fast to utter ruin. (Scidmore 1922: 227)

Via observations of the haptic in nature, both writers introduce the main topics associated with the perception of the tropics around the 1900s: lushness and plenitude but also cruelty of the Darwinian-Spencerian "survival of the fittest," as well as melancholy of ancient monuments reclaimed by nature (Savage 1984: 309-319; Tiffin 2016: 112-149).

The haptic in society: imperialism and hierarchy

As noted in section 3, colonialism also had its sensuous aesthetics (Rotter 2011; Low 2019: 627-31). Travellers' comments on the haptic in society reveal a lot not only about their position, but about colonial Java in general. As with Scidmore's observations on Javanese "wading knee-deep in paddy-field muck" quoted above, another one is a description of a tea plantation:

> The tea-pickers, mostly women, gather the leaves only when the plants are free from dew or rain. They pick with the lightest touch of thumb and finger, heaping the leaves on a square cloth spread on the ground (...) There is great fascination in watching these bobbing figures among the bushes. (Scidmore 1922: 138)

The contrast between visual sensations of the traveller-observer and haptic sensations of the workers is very telling in that the colonial hierarchy is vividly manifested through it. The hard work of the Javanese is a source of profit for European planters and a colourful spectacle for the American tourist. A similar order of things is conveyed by the scene in which a Malay[6] is climbing a tree in order to fetch Scidmore a coconut.

> It had been my particular haunting dream of the tropics to have a small black boy climb a tree and throw cocoanuts [sic] down to me (...), one afternoon, the expression of the wish caused a full-grown Malay to saunter across the grass, and, cigarette in mouth, walk up the straight palm-stem as easily as a fly. The Malay toes are as distinct members as the fingers, and almost as long; and clasping the trunk with the sole of the foot at each leaf-scar, that Malay climber gripped the rough palm-stem as firmly with his toes as with claws or extra fingers. (91)

Again, we see a contrast between a tourist-spectator and the manual work of an inhabitant of Java. Remarks about “the Malay toes” have a racial overtone, suggesting biological difference between Malays and Americans. Furthermore, the formulation “my dream of the tropics” can be treated as an example of “the rhetoric of insubstantialization” (Spurr 1993: 142) that reduces foreign lands to a background of travel phantasies. Scidmore’s remark that the climber was rewarded well further contributes to the image of the world in which locals are paid to pander to rich Westerners’ dream; however, it can also be suggested that the whole scene is a depiction of a smart local taking advantage of rich tourists.

In Siedlecki’s case, we also observe a hierarchical relation between locals and Westerners, but in the field of science. This is how he characterizes his servant, paying attention to his haptic skills:

> He had excellent knowledge of plants, he knew how to prepare skins from birds and mammals, he helped in the anatomical preparation, he had a sharp eye and knew how to follow animals – and above all he knew how to pack collections in jars and packs. From

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[6] Travellers often used the word “Malay” to characterize all the peoples of the Indonesian archipelago and Malay peninsula.

> then on, he was my inseparable companion and an excellent helper in the laboratory and on trips. (Siedlecki 1913: 90)

> Znał rośliny wybornie, umiał preparować skóry z ptaków i zwierząt ssących, pomagał sprytnie przy preparowaniu anatomicznem, miał wzrok bystry i umiał śledzić zwierzęta — nadewszystko zaś wybornie umiał pakować zbiory w słojach i pakach. Był on odtąd moim nieodstępnym towarzyszem a wybornym pomocnikiem w pracowni i na wycieczkach

Siedlecki is probably more respectful than the majority of scientists of this period, because he calls his servant by name (Nong-nong) and showers him with praises (although some comments are full of paternalism); still it was he who advanced his career with publications, not his servant, who supported the Polish scientist with valuable local knowledge. In colonial realities it was Siedlecki who profited much more from such interactions. Moreover, he remarks that Nong-nong's services were very cheap, because on Java foodstuffs for Malays were not expensive, thus reflecting his privileged position as a European.

The connection between race and the haptic, implicated in Scidmore's remark about "the Malay toes," is made openly by Siedlecki in his description of the Javanese dance. The version from *Jawa: przyroda i sztuka* was analysed above, here I will focus on the account presented in a short story from *Opowieści malajskie*. In Siedlecki's case, the divide between the different narrative genres is obscured, in his collection of short stories not only we find the same themes, but even analogical situations and phrases as in his travel book. The narrator, which can be identified with the Polish traveller, met the son of a German man and Javanese woman. In both books, Siedlecki (1913: 217, 1927: 64) remarks with some irony that although this person's skin had the colour of "well-baked bread", still there were hints of his German identity. But when they joined the crowd observing a Javanese dancer (depicted in the short story in a very similar way to the excerpt analysed above), there was a change in "the German":

> The same twinkle of the eyes as all listeners had, the same gaze, staring at the dancer, and his lips (...) were moving to the rhythm, whispering quietly, shyly: *lekas, lekas, lekas*... His own true blood, his own race came to the fore! (Siedlecki 1927: 66-67)

> Ten sam błysk oczu, jaki miał każdy ze słuchaczy, to samo zapatrzenie się w tancerkę, a usta jego (...) poruszają się w takt i szepczą cicho, nieśmiało: lekas, lekas, lekas... Zagrała własna, prawdziwa krew, własna rasa!

Conclusion: A scientist's and tourist's touch

In the previous section, haptic aesthetics in the travel writings of two travellers have been analysed. Firstly, I scrutinized sensations associated with touching, e.g., Siedlecki examining objects with his scientific hands and Scidmore enjoying opening fruits. The second subsection was devoted to reciprocity of tactile sensations, e.g., being "touched" by leeches. It was followed by remarks about bodily perceptions of tropical heat and humidity. Kinaesthetic, proprioceptive and vestibular sensations caused by walking and other activities were also explored. In this context the most important was the fact that they grounded the body in material reality. Besides touching with hands and other direct haptic sensations, examples of the extended haptic were examined, including "touching with eyes" and "teaching with ears," for instance a synesthetic experience of music. Last but not least, in the final two subsections I paid attention to the wildlife and society. Accounts of observing haptic sensations among plants and animals demonstrate lushness, struggle for survival and the melancholy of ruins. Analysing travellers' comments on the haptic in society revealed how class and racial differences were encoded in descriptions of sensory experiences. As this short summary shows, different dimensions of the haptic in works of both travellers have been explored above. To conclude my analysis, I will now present the differences and similarities between Siedlecki's and Scidmore's experiences.

The most significant contrast is a result of the type of travel, length of stay, and the habitus. The Polish traveller was a researcher who stayed a lot longer in Java than the American, so haptic aesthetics in his account is dominated by a scientist's touch, while in the case of Scidmore the formula of a tourist's touch can be used. To demonstrate various aspects of this difference, I will elaborate using a few more examples.

It was shown already how the Polish traveller's scientific expertise manifested itself: he was exploring the tropical rainforest and volcanic areas on foot; he was able to give detailed information about the texture of rocks, and made precise observations of plants and animals. Siedlecki's account contains numerous other passages demonstrating how his research was inextricably connected with haptic experiences, for example: "Having knocked down several of these animals, I found out easily what kind of defence they had; they were spiders of the genus Gasteracantha, with a body equipped with short, sharp and hard spines" ('Strąciwszy kilka tych zwierząt, łatwo się przekonałem, jaką miały obronę; były to pająki z rodzaju Gasteracantha, o ciele opatrzonem krótkimi, ostrymi a twardymi kolcami') (Siedlecki 1913: 102). The professional, scientific character of Siedlecki's touch is also manifested by the fact that he often uses some instruments to manipulate his specimens: "touched or grasped with pincers, it [a phyllium] falls immediately" ('Dotknięty lub schwycony szczypczykami za brzeg ciała, natychmiast upada') (169). The touch of the scientist is thus mediated. Finally, worthy of note is how Siedlecki tells the story of his first stroll in the botanical garden in Bogor. He felt slightly ashamed because he had hardly noticed any animals, while Javanese boys had collected many specimens for him (128–129). It shows again that in some situations Westerners were not involved in touching, as this time tactile contact was a domain of the Javanese. But it also exemplifies the importance of local knowledge, as recognized by Siedlecki. Not only Nong-nong, but also many other unnamed people helped him.

Scidmore's tourist touch is present especially in passages concerning the joys of travels, like her multisensory descriptions of tropical fruits. She pays attention to their appearance, taste and aroma, but also to tactile sensations accompanying the opening and eating: "we made up for all previous denials and lost pineapple opportunities as we tore off the ripe diamonds of pulp in streaming sections that melted on the tongue" (Scidmore 1922: 309). Sharon Halevi (2021: 324) remarked that in some American travelogues "the ingestion of the strawberries became yet another mode to incorporate the national landscape"; in the case of Scidmore the whole process of sighting, grabbing, opening and finally tasting is yet another mode of enjoying the treasures of tropical Java, for as she puts it: "Our veranda was a testing- and proving-ground, and there seemed to be no end to the delights and surprises the tropics provided" (Scidmore 1922: 80). She even writes about "a tourist's whole duty to specialties of strange places" (309). However, there is an interesting remark that shows how tourists were at the mercy of local guides, also in terms of touching fruits. It was a local servant who "gave us the name of each particular strange fruit, taught us the odd tricks and sleight-of-hand methods of opening these novelties of the market-place" (80). Enjoying exotic fruits requires haptic expertise, and here tourists became pupils of the colonised people.

Another example of Scidmore's tourist touch is her account about hotels, in which haptic sensations play a key role:

> The bedding, as at Singapore, consists of a hard mattress with a sheet drawn over it, a pair of hard pillows, and a long bolster laid down the middle as a cooling or dividing line. (…) Pillows are not stuffed with feathers, but with the cooler, dry, elastic down of the straight-armed cotton-tree (…) The floors are made of a smooth, hard cement, which harbors no insects, and can be kept clean and cool. Pieces of coarse ratan matting are the only floor-coverings used, and give an agreeable contrast to the dirty felts, dhurries, and carpets, the patches of wool and cotton and matting, spread over the earth or wooden floors of the unspeakable hotels of British India. (58-59)

Tourism is often associated with comfortable, leisurely travel for pleasure, and comfort (or lack of it) is largely an effect of the haptic. The touristic aspect is reinforced by a comparison with Singapore and British India (see also her comment on railways, quoted above). Scidmore the globetrotter, who was also the author of tourist guides, compares conditions of means of transport and hotels, providing information to potential visitors.

Despite differences between a scientist's touch and that of a tourist, several similarities can be pointed out. First, the haptic aesthetics is part of a general discourse on the tropics. In the analysed travelogues, the dominant aspect is tropical fecundity and lushness, embodied by tropical fruits enjoyed by Scidmore and the verdant wildlife explored by Siedlecki. Nonetheless, both travellers also touched the dark side of the tropics, for they recounted the extreme temperature and sultriness, possibility of a sun stroke, volcanos; for Scidmore, malaria was almost palpable in one place. It shows how the discourse on Java, the garden of the east, was streaked with an undertone of anxiety.

Another similarity relates to comments on colonial hierarchy and race connected to haptic sensations, for often Westerners were observing how the Javanese worked for them. In some situations, local embodied expertise leads to a partial reversal of hierarchy, for Scidmore had to be instructed on how to open fruits, while Siedlecki needed help in collecting plants and animals.

Therefore, the most important conclusion drawn from the comparison of two travelogues is that on general level both travellers were privileged foreigners and it determined their sensory impressions and consequently their writings. Apparently in colonial tropics a traveller's social class and origin – not occupation, gender, or the writing convention – were the most important factors shaping travel writing. Scidmore was peeling fruits, Siedlecki was catching specimens with pincers, but both were experiencing tropical abundance thanks to advantages given to European visitors by the colonial system; nonetheless they were also "in touch" with "deadly tropics," exemplified by leeches, sultriness, volcanoes. Regardless of the expected divergence between a scientist and a tourist, both travelogues can be seen as examples of the haptic aesthetic of colonial tropics, constructed in accordance with dominant discourses at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, even though in some situations there were demonstrable cracks in them such as anxiety and unstable hierarchies.

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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.04

Cycle Touring and the Middle-Class Consumption of Nature. Anti-urbanism in H. G. Wells' *The Wheels of Chance* and Cycling Press Reports of the Late Nineteenth Century

Abstract. The article aims to discuss the cultural significance of cycle touring for the Victorian urban middle class in the context of the growing significance of leisure and recreation to England's working population and the burgeoning mass tourist industry. Cycle tourism in the countryside is presented as a leisure activity reinstating an organic link between man and nature that was severed by the progress of industrial capitalism in Victorian cities. The remarkable popularity of bicycle tourism in the last decade of the nineteenth century was induced mainly by its perception as an essentially rural recreation, allowing cyclists to immerse themselves in the unspoilt nature of England's pastoral countryside. As such, the activity corresponded with Victorian attitudes to nature, their idealisation of the country, nostalgia for the wholesomeness of rural existence and denunciation of the city. The discussion of the phenomenon is illustrated with references to numerous press publications promoting cycle touring in the countryside and extolling its benefits, and Herbert George Wells' bicycling novel *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll* (1896).

Keywords: bicycle, touring, cyclist, nature, country, tourism, landscape, Herbert George Wells.

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Introduction

The article discusses cycle touring in the countryside in the cultural context of anti-urban feelings in late Victorian Britain, cherishing rural beauty, and acknowledging its beneficial influence on urban residents. The onset of industrial capitalism brought about profound economic, technological and social transformations in Victorian Britain, and engendered the cultural climate of the period perceptibly characterised by polar attitudes to the consequences of industrial progress for human beings. On the one hand, it produced a fascination with scientific and technological advances, which transformed the nature of work and penetrated every sphere of human existence; on the other, it evoked concern about the detrimental effects of industrialisation on urban populations. The latter view was expressed by the growth of anti-urban attitudes and appreciation of rurality and unspoilt nature. Noticeable changes in people's mindset resulting from these conflicting tendencies revealed themselves in their attitudes to work and leisure, and the growing realisation of the importance of recreation for the well-being of human beings. These changes, combined with the arrival of the railway and working hours legal regulations, proved conducive to the development of mass domestic and overseas tourism. One of the inventions of the period which played a pivotal role in Britain's burgeoning tourist industry was the bicycle. As "one of the technological marvels of the Victorian era" (Rubenstein 1977: 48), the bicycle in a unique way fused both of the above-mentioned opposite attitudes, simultaneously satisfying the Victorians' thirst for technological progress and becoming an instrument of physical and psychological liberation from the relentless effects of industrialisation in the city. This means of personal transport offered possibilities for unrestrained movement and enabled its users to vent pent-up longing for the wholesome pastoral atmosphere of the country and natural scenery.

The present paper has been informed mainly by scholarly works on social history and leisure studies of the Victorian period, particularly those examining the role of cycling and tourism, as well as Victorian attitudes to the country and nature. References to numerous press cycling reports and Herbert George Wells' bicycling novel of 1896, *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll,* demonstrate the indubitable popularity of cycle tourism in Britain in the last decade of the century. They support the argument that this mode of tourism fitted into the anti-urban mood of the period and corresponded with the appreciation of the country as the antithesis of the city.

Pastoral values of the country admired by cycling tourists augmented rural sympathies and helped urban residents rediscover nature. H. G. Wells, himself an enthusiastic cyclist, often ventured on cycling trips in the home counties[2] (James 2008: 41). The author's personal experience and familiarity with the region were translated into insightful and affectionate literary descriptions of pastoral landscapes through which the main protagonist's itinerary led, their impression on him, and the felt psychological and emotional effects of cycling in the country. The implicit nostalgia for unspoilt nature and idyllic rustic scenery perceptible in Wells' novel evinces the novelist's "deep love of rural England" (Hammond 2001: 87). Similar affection for rural England and the beauty of the English countryside can be inferred from the study of press reports of cycling trips in the countryside and articles promoting cycling. The authors of these pieces fervently recommend cycle touring in the country to city residents, regarding it as a hobby which, by subjecting cyclists to the beneficial effects of nature, could bring relief from the frustrations of existence in late-Victorian cities.

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[2] I.e., the counties surrounding London: Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Berkshire. The term is also applied to the counties of Kent, Hertfordshire and Essex.

Perception of nature and anti-urbanism in Victorian England

Historically, ruralism has been a salient factor in English culture, affecting the perception of human-nature relations, moulding the nation's lifestyles and pastimes, and leaving an imprint in the country's literary tradition. The pastoral ideal, having its roots in classical times, found its various manifestations in English literature, which since the sixteenth century frequently utilised the pastoral convention in poetry, drama and the novel. For centuries, the country ethos was also cultivated by the landed elite, whose income was intertwined with land ownership, who took pride in their country mansions and estates, and enthusiastically pursued rural recreations such as horse-riding and hunting. A cultural turn in the perception of what natural rustic beauty and pastoral ideal consisted in occurred in the eighteenth century, when the English aristocracy, under the influence of the popular Grand Tour and landscape painting, were persuaded to adopt a new standard of natural beauty. It resulted from a close relationship between art and nature, and was convincingly translated into a new, more informal and natural gardening style—the English landscape park. Starting in the 1720s, when William Kent introduced an Arcadian ideal of a more naturalistic composition in garden designs, until the early nineteenth century, when Humphry Repton applied ideas of the picturesque and the sublime in his Romantic landscapes, the skills and artistic genius of English landscape architects and gardeners helped transform numerous country estates into seemingly natural representations of perfect rural scenery. English landscape-park style reached its most excellent refinement around the mid-eighteenth century when the most renowned landscape gardener, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, started creating minimalist natural 'gardenless' landscapes surrounding England's finest country houses and estates (von Trotha 2009: 7-9; Jarrett 1978: 10-15). Brown's designs established a lasting model of natural rural scenery that the Victorians and future generations regarded as the essence of English scenic beauty.

In his lecture on the cultural significance of land and landscape, Jonathan Bate argues that the perception of the countryside, the characteristics and values ascribed to it, are a cultural product—the result of certain circumstances, beliefs and ideas (2002: 47). The Victorians largely owed their appreciation and understanding of the natural world to the Romantics, whose perception of nature as a dwelling place of God, a purifying but mysterious force inspiring awe and solace, gave a new dimension to the pastoral ideal long embedded in the English cultural and literary heritage. The Romantic legacy underscored the vitality of retaining an organic human-nature link (Kaur, "God and Religion"; Kiersnowska 2020: 55) and aroused awareness of the positive influence of nature on man. Such beliefs were fundamental to nineteenth-century sensibility and social thought, prompting ameliorationist civic reforms and campaigns for establishing recreational grounds, public parks, and open spaces in industrial cities.

In Victorian times, idealisation of the country, where the beneficial effects of nature on humans were fully manifested in the simple, wholesome life of country folk, and where landscapes retained their pre-industrial unspoilt beauty was at the root of an antagonistic dichotomy between the city and the country. The 'natural' country perceived through the prism of a rural ideal possessing a divine element and offering moral and physical benefits to man was the antithesis of 'man's creation'—the town, with all the social and moral inadequacies resulting from industrial capitalism (Bate 2002: 48). Such ideas engendered a climate of anti-urbanism discernible in social and intellectual thought, which permeated the public discourse (Kiersnowska 2020: 55). Arguably, a significant contributory factor to the growth of rural sympathies was the rapid progress of urbanisation attendant on the advance of industrial capitalism.

The development of manufacturing production in towns combined with economic changes in the countryside induced a massive migration of the impoverished rural population into new urban industrial centres. In consequence, by mid-century, the urban population exceeded the rural one, and England became the first urbanised country in the world (Williams 1973: 2; Thompson 2016: 28-31; Kiersnowska 2020: 54). However, the progress of urbanisation came at a social and environmental cost. Recurring epidemics of cholera and other contagious diseases afflicting urban communities crammed in dirty, narrow and poorly ventilated streets, air pollution, environmental degradation and industrial ugliness resulting from haphazard urban development came in for criticism from the enlightened members of society. While social problems resulting from abject poverty and dire living conditions in industrial cities created widespread concern and apprehension for the future, the wholesomeness and simplicity of the rural lifestyle were increasingly appreciated. The observations of a well-known physician and social reformer, doctor James Philips Kay-Shuttleworth, based on his visits to Manchester slums and published in *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (1832), made a direct link between the poor physical and moral constitution of working-class city dwellers and the deploring living conditions in England's manufacturing cities. They were further corroborated by the publication of an official report, *The Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* (1842), by Sir Edwin Chadwick, an influential secretary to Poor Law commissioners. Both publications reinforced the anti-urban argument and triggered a national debate on improving the quality of life of city residents by promoting urban green areas conducive to healthy outdoor recreation and propagating outdoor leisure activities in out-of-town locations. Although anti-urban attitudes reached their climax in the 1840s, when the deplorable conditions of life in industrial cities were most acutely manifested, the deprecatory stance on towns and town life persisted until the century's end (Machlow 1985: 97-98; MacMaster 1990: 118-119; Burchardt 2002: 47; Kiersnowska 2020: 55).

Cycling revolution and mass tourism

Cycling began in England in the late 1860s when the velocipede, the ancestor of the bicycle, entered England from France. The first machines were produced in 1868 by Josiah Turner and James Starley in their Coventry Sewing Machine Company. Their business decision established Coventry as the cradle of British cycle manufacturing in the nineteenth century and inadvertently prepared the ground for a bicycle mania that swept across the country in the mid-1890s (Reid 2015: 247; Norcliffe 2016: 8). The first bicycle was a heavy contraption with wooden wheels, a solid metal frame, and metal tyres that promised the user a comfortless and bumpy ride; hence, it was rather appropriately nicknamed the 'boneshaker' (Mackintosh & Norcliffe 2007: 157). However, continuous technological advances combined with high market demand fuelled the rapid evolution of the bicycle as manufacturers regularly launched improved, lighter, safer and faster models. It is tenable to argue that the introduction of the 'safety' bicycle fitted with two equal-sized wheels, Dunlop's pneumatic tyres and pedal-and-chain drive in the 1880s was a milestone in cycling progress. It helped transform the machine from a costly fashionable sporting contrivance for risk-loving individuals into a more manoeuvrable and easy-to-use device universally adopted by casual riders, both men and women (Dauncey 2012: 12).

Until the 1890s, the bicycle tended to be perceived as a class-related status symbol because the prohibitive price of both new, and second-hand machines made cycling virtually inaccessible to the lower-middle and working classes. Like many other forms of leisure and recreation at the time, it was characterised by strong social and gender delineations (Norcliffe 2016: 4-5; Kiersnowska 2019: 88-91). Nevertheless, despite the high prices, the number of cyclists on the roads and bicycles sold in Britain proliferated. In 1889 alone, more than 300,000 new bicycles were sold (Reid 2015: 248). In the mid-1890s, when the safety bicycle became the dominant model, a growing market in much cheaper, older second-hand models made cycling available to the less affluent (Flanders 2007: 454).

The cycling mania which erupted in England in the 1890s owes as much to the Victorian Britons' fascination with modern technological achievements as to the increased leisure time and the rise of mass participation in recreation observable in the last quarter of the century. Higher wages, larger disposable income, a shorter working week, holidays—including paid bank holidays from 1871—and an expanded railway network were conducive to the development of the mass tourist industry in the British Isles (Reid 2008: 753-756; McNee 2021: 62). The primary beneficiaries of these developments and social changes were skilled manufacturing workers and the lower middle class. Shop assistants, warehouse workers, domestic servants and bank and office clerks could join the ranks of the well-off tourists and travel, visiting different parts of the country (McNee 2021: 62). The expansion of popular tourism and outdoor recreation was also spurred by the growing awareness of the recuperative powers of rest and healthy outdoor exercise to improve the city population's physical condition. It gave rise to numerous initiatives such as establishing public parks in towns and cities, campaigns and legislative measures to preserve green areas, and public footpaths in the neighbourhood of metropolitan centres. Such policies were intended to provide urban residents access to healthy recreation such as rambling in the open (Flanders 2007: 437; Daunton 2008: 50). Railway companies taking multitudes of manufacturing workers and lower-middle-class employees from industrial cities for inexpensive day trips to the burgeoning seaside resorts also fitted into the atmosphere of promoting open-air recreation and accelerated the expansion of the tourist industry (Poole 1983: 81; Churchill 2016: 43). Package tours to famous sites in the British Isles and overseas, pioneered by Thomas Cook, became the kernel of the flourishing mass tourism. Amidst these changes, in the last decade of the century, the bicycle became a significant instrument of tourism, and cycle touring climbed to a prominent position among these modes of mass recreation and healthy outdoor leisure.

Pleasure and freedom of riding

As cycling became more accessible and affordable in the final decade of the nineteenth century, it began to lose its class-related status and was increasingly popular with a new group of less affluent users—young men from the lower middle class—as a cheap and sociable form of recreation (McNee 2021: 67). In H. G. Wells' cycling novel *The Wheels of Chance: A Bicycling Idyll* (1896), the main character, Mr. Hoopdriver, represents this new and quickly growing group of lower-middle-class bicycle users—office clerks, teachers and shop assistants—who have sufficient funds and leisure to go cycle touring. Hoopdriver works as a draper's assistant in Putney, London, and decides to spend his holidays travelling along the South Coast. To this end, he purchases a second-hand bicycle—"a machine with a past", "an antiquity", "perfectly sound, if a little old fashioned"—and starts practising the skill of riding (Wells 1913: 29-30). On the first day of his holidays, dressed in his fashionable cycling apparel of a brand-new brown woollen Norfolk jacket and thick chequered stockings, and equipped with a change of clothes and "a Road map of the South of England" (Wells 1913: 15), Hoopdriver sets out on his journey.

As cycle mania swept across the country, some novice cyclists joined numerous existing cycling clubs and, as members, participated in organised excursions; others, like Mr. Hoopdriver, undertook longer cycling holidays or just short out-of-town trips on their own. Longing for the respite and pastoral pleasures the country offered, weekend and day-trippers ventured from the cities by their thousands, riding the latest models or much cheaper second-hand machines. The popularity and ubiquity of cycle touring are evidenced in numerous press accounts from that period, such as the weekly cycling reports in the *Manchester Weekly Times,* whose correspondent offers the following observation from one of his bicycle excursions: "Away down the familiar road to Altrincham there were hundreds of cyclists travelling in both directions. Machines of all sorts of types, and riding of many styles, were in evidence" (May 17: 1895).

Like the railway, which transformed the Victorians' geographical experience, the bicycle was also a "geographically liberating" machine (Norcliffe 2001: 23), playing an instrumental role in altering the relationship between the hitherto distant country and the city (Choi 2015: 252). It was unsurpassed in enabling the late Victorians an inexpensive means of escaping from the city and taking refuge in the country. Urban topography, with its network of streets lined with high buildings, dark backyards and narrow alleys, was physically and psychologically confining. The townscape, juxtaposed with the wide-open countryside offering limitless possibilities of moving about, appeared to restrict man's physical mobility and the ability to experience a full range of emotions and achieve spiritual welfare. Thus, the bicycle as a unique means of personal transport harboured the potential of offering much-needed freedom and release from the oppression of urban life—its noxious atmosphere, frantic pace of life and industrial production, human and traffic congestion, demanding work schedules, and coercive class division. Cycling advocates emphasised the wholesome character of riding a bicycle, arguing that it was "a sedative and refreshment to jaded nerves and spirits" (*Cycling* June 12, 1897), and helped offset the adverse physical consequences of sedentary work. Therefore, the activity was particularly recommended to "men who are tied to a desk or confined to a warehouse all day" (*Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* June 28, 1890), and to tired city residents who were looking for a way to relieve the daily stress of urban life: "This is change, this is rest, this is a holiday; and the tired man who hungers for a laze will never find a better means to this end than his cycle" (*Cycling* August 4, 1894).

Unlike railway passengers or package trip tourists, cycle travellers were unencumbered by timetables, itineraries or fixed routes (Withers and Shea 2016: 3-4; Chen 2017: 610). The joy, excitement and pleasure resulting from unrestrained movement across the country on one's two wheels were frequently emphasised in cycling journals and the press of the period to weigh in favour of cycle touring. For instance, readers of the tourist section in *Cycling* could find the following argument highlighting the superiority of individual cycle touring over other forms of tourism, such as a guided package trip: "one of the charms of a cycle tour is that one is not bound to do anything, or be anywhere, at any fixed time, but to scorch, loaf, or change one's route at one's own sweet will or at the command of a stiff head wind" (May 8, 1897). On that account, cyclists were not merely passive consumers of mass tourism but autonomous creators of their touristic experience. They enjoyed complete liberty to roam and explore the countryside and had full command of the choice of their destination and the pace of their movement.

The pleasure that cycling provided was one of the chief incentives for adopting it as a hobby (Horton et al. 2007: 6). The feeling may have stemmed from different aspects of riding a bicycle—satisfaction from mastering the machine, developing cycling prowess, appreciation of the fine scenery, or the sensation of speed and freedom. In the anti-urban discourse of the late Victorian period, these emotions were frequently quoted to promote the beneficial effects of experiencing and exploring rural settings in an unmediated way. The exponents of anti-urban opinions tended to identify cycle touring as the best way of discovering the beauty and merits of the country, providing the urban cyclist not only with much needed physical exercise but also with a positive emotional release and sensory input. Press accounts of bicycle trips and articles praising the joys of cycling highlighted pleasure and freedom as the singular sensations experienced by the cyclist when touring the country on a fine day:

> How sweet a thing it is to turn out in a fair and bright, but breezy, day and turn one's front wheel to the wind already faintly laden with Maytime fragrances. As the long rhythmical sweep and roll of the machine bears the rider onward, he and his wheels cleave the opposing air, and it rushes past him with a swish that is pleasant to his ears. (*Manchester Weekly Times* May 17, 1895)

Similarly, an article in *Cycling* (August 4, 1894) highlights a range of sensations experienced by a cyclist during different stages of their ride: "the exhilaration experienced in rapidly passing through beautiful scenery", the "gaiety" of halting in towns one passes through, and the "quiet and repose" of resting in a country inn. Ultimately, all of these emotions filled one with a sense of excitement and pleasure inextricably connected with the freedom of moving across rural scenery. Thus, the bicycle not only facilitated movement through the country but also enhanced the tourist's delight in perceiving the surrounding scenery.

The sense of pleasure gained from cycling in the country is also evinced in Wells' descriptions of Hoopdriver's movement across southern England in *The Wheels of Chance.* As soon as he leaves London, the young man is filled with relief and captivated by the charming rustic landscapes and rich vegetation, which are entirely new and refreshing to him: "the hedges and trees and the open country were all glorious to his town tired-eyes" (Wells 1913: 38). The superiority of cycling to provide excitement when enjoying rural scenery is attested to further in the novel, for example, when Hoopdriver converses with a fellow cyclist during a chance meeting at Ringwood. The latter, a clergyman on a tricycle, enthusiastically declares: "I can imagine that, with a properly oiled machine, there can be no easier nor pleasanter way of seeing the country" (Wells 1913: 281). All the emotions that cycling in the country and being surrounded by nature provide are in stark contrast to the humdrum of city life, its boredom and confinement. Unsurprisingly, then, riding to the South Coast becomes for Hoopdriver an exhilarating break from his regimented life in London and an exciting adventure engendering the feeling of "*joie de vivre!*" (Wells 1913: 28).

Hoopdriver's cycling trip is a literal and symbolic escape from the city. As soon as he leaves the city behind, he feels liberated from his repressive London existence and his poorly paid, dead-end job in the draper's shop. In London, he has little control over his life and highly supervised work, in which the prospect of ever rising in the professional hierarchy seems elusive. When his cycling trip commences, he feels that: "All the dreary, uninteresting routine drops from you suddenly, your chains drop about your feet. All at once you are Lord of yourself" (Wells 1913: 17). The further away Hoopdriver rides from the city, the more self-confident and independent he becomes, both as a cyclist and a man. He enthuses at the sudden realisation that he can go wherever he pleases and is in complete control of his actions and choices: "call none Sir or Madame, have a lapel free of pins, doff your black morning coat, and wear the colour of your heart, and be a Man" (Wells 1913: 17). Riding through the vast expanse of the open country enables Hoopdriver to be freed from his constricting social and mental framework, as if all the constraints that restrained him in London suddenly disappeared, allowing him to develop a new, more mature identity. A servile draper's boy "bowing you out with fountains of civilities" (Wells 1913: 4) is supplanted by a daring, adventurous cyclist, a countryside explorer, and a chivalric knight errant who goes to great lengths to rescue a fellow cyclist—the young impressionable Jessie Milton (the Young Lady in Grey)—from the predicament she found herself in, and boldly defend her honour. At a deeper level then, the cycling trip becomes for Hoopdriver a symbolic rite of passage into manhood, which might have been much delayed in the urban environment.

The bicycle journey to the South Coast in Wells' novel is also a kind of escapism from the class-ridden urban community, where Hoopdriver's inferior social status moulded by his economic circumstances is evident, into the world of cyclists, where seemingly one's social class is irrelevant. He is acutely aware of how insignificant and "how little he was noticeable" (Wells 1913: 2) in the London draper's shop. By the time Wells' novel was published, bicycling had democratised and almost lost the aura of social exclusivity, yet some of its early associations with a sport for the socially privileged lingered. It is probably this aura of social exclusivity that once surrounded cycling that appealed to Hoopdriver and made him believe that this hobby could be a means to discard his lower-middle-class status, even if momentarily, and become equal to gentlemen cyclists. Thus, dressed in his brand-new fashionable cycling costume and adopting a fake accent, which in his opinion disguises his humble social background, Hoopdriver joins the ranks of the men of leisure: "The draper Hoopdriver, the Hand, had vanished from existence. Instead was a gentleman, a man of pleasure" (Wells 1913: 26).

In the late Victorian period, the availability of reasonably-priced mass-produced daily and recreational clothes—for example, special bicycling outfits—to the lower social classes made class-related dressing codes less readable (James 2008: 40-41). Therefore, Hoopdriver's projection of an elevated social status deludes some people he encounters during the journey—the heath-keeper, Jessie Milton, and a 'scorcher' he meets in Esher. The young man smugly registers that the last one speaks to him "as his equal" (Wells 1913: 47). The fact that they all take Hoopdriver for a gentleman boosts his self-esteem and increases his confidence. The only ill-fitting element of Hoopdriver's gentleman-cyclist image is his old battered bicycle, the most expensive component and the one that may reveal its owner's true social standing. This is what happens during a chance meeting with Bechamel, the proud owner of an expensive, top-of-the-range 'safety' complete with pneumatic tyres. Bechamel rudely responds to Hoopdriver's greeting and projects an aloof and superior attitude throughout the encounter. He instantly sees through Hoopdriver's façade and reads his true identity as a "Greasy proletarian" (Wells 1913: 49). To him, Hoopdriver is an imposter, an encroacher into the realm of what some still regard as a gentlemanly recreation. As mentioned earlier, cycle touring had achieved a degree of egalitarianism by the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, some old class prejudices were still in evidence, as exemplified by the incident mentioned above. However, the social character of this recreation, bringing into direct contact cycling aficionados from different rungs of society, prompted some modern scholars researching Victorian modes of leisure to view cycle touring as a sort of social bridge (Kern 2003: 216; So 2006: 39). Away from the pervasive professional and class divisions affecting all forms of social contact in an urban environment, cycle touring in the country arguably created ample opportunities for informal class interaction. Seemingly, it wiped out class distinctions as all bicycle users were simply fellow cyclists united by a shared passion.

At the peak of bicycling popularity in the 1880s and 1890s, bicycles were so ubiquitous on British roads that a cyclists' recreational subculture developed. Demonstrating a mass-participatory character, the brotherhood of cyclists united cycling devotees over class and gender divisions. Many bicycle users congregated in bicycling clubs to tour the countryside or race. The first clubs appeared as early as 1870 (McCrone 2006: 181), and the rise in their number was so rapid that in the 1890s London alone had 300 active bicycling clubs (Huggins 2004: 38). By that time, many cycling clubs had also relaxed their restrictive admission rules and had discarded their gender and class exclusivity (McCrone 2006: 181; Norcliffe 2016: 12). Like many subcultures whose members are identified by a unique style, jargon and ritualistic behaviour, Victorian cyclists also manifested certain attributes of belonging to a specific cultural group. Their shared passion, experience, clothing style and manners were powerful bonding factors and identity markers, providing a sense of belonging. In conversations with fellow wheelmen or entries in visitors' books in pubs and hotels, cyclists would use a specialised argot characterised by phrases like: "'road scorchers', 'fellow wheelmen' and 'mud-plugging' through 'beastly wet' conditions" (McNee 2021: 67), which to them was perfectly natural and understandable. Maintaining certain rituals when passing a fellow cyclist was expected and conducive to sustaining an invisible bond uniting all cyclists. That is why when Hoopdriver passed Bechamel, throwing a greeting and a due remark on the quality of the road surface, he felt "a pleasing sense of having duly asserted the wide sympathy that binds all cyclists together, of having behaved himself as becomes one of the brotherhood of the wheel" (Wells 1913: 49). In the Victorian period, urban populations—often migrant and lacking cohesion—were believed to be deprived of community spirit; therefore, the bond that united cyclists was unique and appreciated. It was reminiscent of pre-industrial, rural, close-knit communities that used to be united by common goals, needs and experiences.

Picturesque tourism and appreciation of nature

The expansion of mass tourism in Victorian Britain was conjoined with the landscape's cultural importance inherited by the Victorians from Romanticism and its perception as an essential constituent of national identity. Eighteenth-century philosophical treatises on the 'sublime' and the 'picturesque' moulded aesthetic appreciation and sentiment for domestic scenery. Edmund Burke's ideas of landscape's 'curiosity' and 'sublimity', articulated in his essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), were complemented by the third aspect—the 'picturesque'—popularised by William Gilpin, a pioneer of picturesque touring, in his essay *On Picturesque Beauty* (1792) and Uvedale Price in *Essays on the Picturesque* (1794). The beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque formed a famous triad against which scenery was aesthetically and emotionally assessed in the Romantic period and Victorian times (Williams 2008: 21-25). Price enhanced the picturesque mode of perceiving a landscape by identifying 'curiosity' as its vital element. Curiosity was both a chief reason for and the felt effect of surveying picturesque scenery: “the effect of the picturesque is curiosity; an effect, which, though less splendid and powerful, has a more general influence” (1810: 88). Voracity for experiencing at first-hand the spectacular effects of foreign and domestic natural beauty spots and historical sites was a key motive for the eighteenth-century picturesque tourist and the Victorian individual and package traveller to venture to foreign lands or explore domestic scenery.

Traditionally, the beauty of the scenery was associated with harmony, tranquillity and smoothness. However, picturesque tourists expected more from the landscape they viewed than just a brief satisfaction of their aesthetic needs. A picturesque site ought to have the potential to bring about a strong emotional reaction evoked in the observer by the roughness, irregularity and ruggedness of the perceived scenery. They sought landscapes that could stir up a kind of painterly experience. Implementing the technique of looking at the surrounding nature promulgated by Gilpin, the Romantic tourists and their Victorian successors would usually take a stance in a high vantage spot allowing a broad birds-eye vista over the surroundings and enabling them to conceptualise the scenery into a picture. This way of surveying the scene created the feeling of control and mastery over nature, while at the same time having the impression of being its integral element (Morgan 2001: 47, 59; Austin 2007: 633-634; Williams 2008: 26-28).

By the late nineteenth century, there had been a redefinition of what constituted the essence of the picturesque. The category was not solely applied to vacant, rough and rugged landscapes and awe-inspiring irregular monumental castles and ruins described in the gothic novels, but also started to be used for isolated pastoral, rustic areas, winding streets and irregular buildings in small towns and villages. Collective nostalgia and a yearning for the simplicity and peacefulness of rural existence accumulated from century-long intensive industrialisation were fed by the appreciation of such simple picturesque scenery (Austin 2007: 644-645). Raymond Williams argues that it was quite natural that “a feeling for unaltered nature, for wild land” (1973: 128) should develop as a consequential response to the forces of the agrarian and industrial revolutions. This new perception of the picturesque was reflected in the growing body of tourist guide books, newspaper editorials, tourist columns, and literary works where 'green language' was employed to describe rural scenery, the weather, lighting, the sounds of nature and botanical and animal life.

Such a writing mode characterised many press accounts of cycle tours whose authors appealed to the picturesque sensitivity of their bicycling readers. They promoted aesthetic consumption of nature when riding in the countryside by applying Gilpin’s technique of looking at the scenery from an elevated spot. Numerous examples of such a style can be found, among others, in a series of articles promoting cycle touring around Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire. They started to appear in the *Manchester Weekly Times* in 1892, and in the summertime of 1895 became a regular weekly feature of the paper, introduced to satisfy the growing demand of its cycling readership for reliable, professional information on roads and routes suitable for cycling trips. Extensive reports, illustrated with sketches of historic buildings or picturesque spots, written by an experienced cyclist, included not only much needed practical particulars on the difficulty and length of recommended routes, surface quality, and pubs and inns providing service for cyclists, but also detailed descriptions and the historical background of places and landmarks passed on the way. The factual accuracy and historical details that one would typically find in tourist guide books were supposed to provide wheelmen and wheelwomen with some prior knowledge on the historic sites they would pass, stir up their interest, and encourage them to stop for a visit. Thus, an account of a cycling trip to Wharfdale in Yorkshire recommends cyclists to visit Adel Church near Leeds, "which is admitted [...] to be the most perfect miniature specimen of Norman ecclesiastical architecture in England" (July 26, 1895). In a report recommending to Manchester cyclists a long itinerary through several counties down to Somerset, there is a compelling description of the history and the present state of Malmesbury Abbey in Wiltshire, an edifice of “ancient grandeur” and a supposed resting place of King Athelstan (September 20, 1895). Similarly, cyclists who choose to travel in Cheshire from Adlington to Macclesfield are informed that a stretch of marshy wasteland they will pass on their way, known as Danes Moss, was the site of a fierce battle between the Saxons and “their ruthless foes, the Scandinavian hordes” (May 12, 1893).

Detailed references to places of historical significance in the described routes undoubtedly spoke to the antiquarian interest of a sizeable part of the educated Victorian public. However, their inclusion in the cycling reports was likely aimed predominantly at provoking the curiosity of the less cultured cyclists, providing intellectual stimulation, and maximising their experience of an out-of-town wheel journey. Thus, a cycling trip promised a unique blend of athletic exercise in natural scenery and a desirable touristic effect produced by visiting places of historical and cultural significance. Such a conjecture can also be made based on the fact that in *The Wheels of Chance,* Wells included an educative stopover on Hoopdriver’s journey in the “charming old town” of Guildford (1913: 63). An entry in the guidebook informs the young draper’s assistant that the town has a “delightful castle” worth a visit, and a Tudor Guildhall, “very pleasant to see” (Wells 1913: 63). His interest spiked, Hoopdriver ascends the castle tower and, from this elevated spot, like a proper picturesque tourist, looks down and over at the town and the surrounding scenery (1913: 65).

While the touristic attractiveness of cycle touring in the countryside had its relevance, it was the possibility of experiencing nature in its complete form that was crucial to the cyclists. The bicycle provided an incomparably better way of admiring the landscape and an unmediated perception of nature than any other means of transport used by tourists in the nineteenth century. The railway undoubtedly offered unmatched speed of covering long distances but, as Douglas Burgess argues, it detached the passengers from the surroundings they were passing through (2016: 10). Enclosed in the confined space of the carriage, the passengers could only passively gaze at the quickly changing scenery without the possibility of pausing and reflecting upon it or relating to it emotionally. The perception of nature on the part of cyclists was an act of volition, and they adjusted their cycling speed accordingly, slowing down or even stopping to contemplate a beautiful vista. Like Romantic picturesque tourists, the wheelmen and wheelwomen often chose an elevated vantage point that offered a broad birds-eye perspective.

Many press articles recommending particular cycle routes suggested where to stop to take in the vast expanse of the surrounding area and gain the maximum effect of the grandeur and beauty of the landscape. In a piece describing the Macclesfield to Buxton itinerary, *The Chronicle* strongly advises pausing after a strenuous uphill ride at the Cat and Fiddle pub, from where there is a magnificent view over the moorlands, the mountains beyond them and the town of Buxton in the valley (June 9, 1899). Similarly, those cyclists who decide to follow the *Manchester Weekly Times'* recommendation and visit Wharfedale ought to halt at an elevated vantage point, look down, and marvel at the magnificent sight of: “The silver stream of Wharfe [...] winding its way along the centre of the valley for miles” and the “fine configuration of the distant hills towards Ilkley” (July 26, 1895).

H. G. Wells, too, when describing the glories of southern England’s landscape as seen through the eyes of Hoopdriver, appears to frequently utilise William Gilpin’s technique of scanning the landscape as if from above. He allows the reader’s eye to gradually travel from the shrubs and trees lining the road further and further away to distant hills, woods, and other scenery features, creating the impression of a broad panorama. The description of the landscape contemplated by Hoopdriver during the Cobham to Ripley leg of his journey provides an apt illustration of this method. Wells directs the protagonist’s gaze first at the “fine mossy trees and bracken” on either side of the road, and then beyond them at a stretch of “an open country [...] covered with heather and set with pines, and a yellow road running across it” (Wells 1913: 51). Similarly, when riding from Haslemere towards Portsmouth, Hoopdriver observes with delight "the wide blue hill views and pleasant valleys [...] on either hand of the sand-scarred roadway" (Wells 1913: 91). This perspective of looking at the surroundings creates the impression of a vast expanse of open land stretching before Hoopdriver’s eyes. Moreover, the character of landscape descriptions in the novel creates the impression that its bicycling protagonist dynamically perceives the surrounding scenery. He first notices the nearby features, and then, gradually, his gaze travels further to discover the more distant landscape elements. Thus, the cyclist becomes an active and conscious consumer of the scenery and one with the surroundings.

Cycling in the countryside enabled urban residents to rediscover nature, develop a close relationship with it, and experience the animated and non-animated natural world with all their senses, without an intermediary. This widely held belief was confirmed by numerous press accounts of bicycle journeys, offering detailed descriptions of the botanical and animal variety observed by the cyclists, and nature's colours, smells, sounds and beauty. For example, the regular cycling correspondent for the *Manchester Weekly Times* adopts an almost poetic language to render the multi-sensory impression that the road from Adlington to Macclesfield and the surrounding scenery left on him:

> The air is sweet with the odours of the spring blossoms; the birds are twittering in every bush and thicket; from the distant copse the soft dreamy note of the cuckoo tells us the harbinger of summer has arrived [...] and the poet lark rains down his melody from the cloudless blue above. The fragrant hedgerows, on which the hawthorn bloom is shadowing, separate the dusty road from the verdant meadows that stretch away on either hand, their banks are studded with star-like blossoms of the wild hyacinth. The flower-laden chestnuts are in the pride of their summer glory, and the bright green and yellow of the limes and newly foliaged oaks present a marked contrast to the sombre hue of the firs and conifers. (May 12, 1893)

In another press piece on country cycle touring, it is argued that the study of wayside plants and bird and animal life enhances not only the recreational aspect of riding but also develops one's knowledge and the faculty of observing nature and storing "quaint and curious information" about it (*Cycling* June 12, 1897). The reporter maintains that the discovery of the natural world may turn into an enjoyable hobby whose pursuit will give the urban cycling bourgeoisie purpose and a "*raison d'être* to [their] wheel excursions" to the country (*Cycling* June 12, 1897). This argument is corroborated by one of the characters in *The Wheels of Chance,* a middle-aged cyclist at Esher, who declares that he rides not only for exercise, but to observe the scenery and "botanise" (Wells 1913: 42).

Conjoining cycle touring with the consumption of leisure and nature is given proper relevance in Hoopdriver's journey in *The Wheels of Chance.* As the main hero progresses in his trip to the South Coast, Wells' descriptions of the rural scenery become more detailed, accentuating its serenity and picturesqueness. This creates the impression that the further away from London Hoopdriver cycles, the more details of the landscapes passed on the way he notices, and the more aware of nature and receptive to its influence he becomes. The protagonist's riding pace becomes more leisurely, and he becomes more observant of the scenery. He often pauses and loiters, "generally 'mucking about'" (Wells 1913, 93), to appreciate the idyllic pastoral landscape: cornfields "glorious with poppies", "surly dun oxen", "little cottages, and picturesque beer-houses with the vivid brewers' boards of blue and scarlet, [...] a broad green and a church" (Wells 1913: 95). Immersion in the vastness and tranquillity of the rural landscapes exerts a powerful influence on Hoopdriver. He takes more and more pleasure in the leisurely relaxing pace of his journey, enabling him to admire lush vegetation and enjoy the greenery and peace of the country, which is in stark contrast to the constant haste, harassment and nagging he was subjected to in the city. He dismounts his bicycle to paddle in the clear water of a pebbly rivulet, gathers wildflowers, and like a self-discovered botanist admires their different shapes and colours, and wonders at their names "for he had never heard of any" (Wells 1913: 93).

Wells' descriptions of soft, bucolic southern landscapes evoke a nostalgia for the romanticised bliss of 'Old England' rusticity and fit into the climate of idealisation of the country as the antithesis of the city. Such ideas were given prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as homely rurality, particularly associated with the south of England, was viewed as the essential element of English culture and national identity (Tebbutt 2006: 1125). Therefore, the ascendancy of cycle touring over other forms of contemplating the countryside cannot be overestimated. Press accounts and Wells' novel testify that it created unique opportunities for a fusion between the cyclist and the surrounding nature. Press reports from cycle journeys often contained descriptions of country scenery that had impressed their writers. They were detailed, offering a broad perspective of a particular beauty spot. More often than not, they had a literary or even poetic quality—clearly appealing to the readers' sensitivity and nostalgia for pre-industrial unspoilt rural landscapes, and entreating them to pause and experience nature. Attention to the details of natural life in landscape descriptions in these press articles and *The Wheels of Chance* also confirms the ubiquity and dominance of anti-urban discourse in late-Victorian Britain. By aptly suggesting the psychological and physical benefits of cycle touring in rural areas, Wells and the authors of the aforementioned press pieces indicate the country's superiority over the city. Thus, they are the exponents of anti-urban tendencies defining the social and cultural climate of the period.

Conclusion

Cycling in its leisure forms provided not only much-needed athletic exercise to the sedentary urban middle class but was also an aesthetic activity continuing the picturesque tourism tradition. Though essentially a machine of speed, the bicycle also provided Victorian tourists with a valuable means of exploring the country freely and in a manner that enabled the cyclist and nature to come together in a kind of fusion that no other means of transport allowed. Gentle and unhasty riding made one acutely aware of the surrounding scenery, providing continuous stimulation to all senses. Press accounts of cycling tours in the country undertaken by readers and reporters, and H. G. Wells' literary references to the effect rural surroundings exerted on the novel's main character corroborate the above view.

Picturesque expanses of rustic landscapes marked by various topographical features, historic landmarks, and verdant nature were unfamiliar to the city cyclist and filled the cycling tourist with wonder. While beautiful forms and colours of inanimate nature provided visual aesthetic pleasure, the sounds of birds and the tranquillity of the rustic scenery offered pleasing aural stimulus. This multi-sensory exposition to the surroundings engendered a unique experience and evoked an emotional reaction to it on the part of the perceiver. Cycle tourism then induced a composite response to nature, elevating the cyclist from a passive consumer of scenic beauty to a conscious actor involved in a deliberate act of participation in sensual human-nature harmony. Recreational cycling was not merely a way of sightseeing utilising technological advances of the period in the burgeoning individual and organised tourist industry. It was a means of rediscovering the country and restoring the link between man and nature that industrial capitalism and urbanisation had severed.

Cycle touring reinforced the polarity between pastoral values traditionally associated with the country, and the Victorian cultural construct of the city as the representation of modernity and coercive dehumanised industrialism. It evoked nostalgia for the gone-by bliss and serenity that had been wiped out by industrial capitalism in the city but could still be found and felt in the rural environment. Thus, the activity fitted into the anti-urban mood of the epoch as it offered a welcome release from the stifling routine of the urban work-life cycle, and provided one with all the health, physical and mental benefits that direct contact with rurality and immersion in the natural world provided.

The bicycle as a 'vehicle of liberation' enabled a physical and symbolic escape from the urban environment. It opened up the possibilities of almost unrestricted mobility, not subjected to physical or temporal constraints beyond the cyclist’s control but ensuring complete command over the range and speed of one’s movement. The sense of freedom experienced by recreational cyclists in the country was the natural consequence of leaving behind city topography's physical and psychological limitations and stifling urban social circumstances. Societal rigours and constricting conventions resulting from the conspicuous class structure in the city were particularly intensely felt by members of the working lower-middle class, whose professional position often involved servile, restraining conditions and induced a dependency-based relationship with their superiors. At the end of the nineteenth century, the democratisation of cycling created a sense of community uniting all bicycle aficionados, in which class divisions appeared to have lost relevance. This development in bicycle culture was particularly appreciated by the urban middle class, many of whom experienced alienation and anonymity in large human aggregates in Victorian metropolises.

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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.05

The Humanist Discourse in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*

Abstract. This article interrogates the humanist discourse in J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), negotiating the intersections between the novel's narrator, the Magistrate, and Coetzee, the public intellectual. The ethical narrator, through the very act of witnessing and describing imperial violence, objects to the practices of torture perpetrated on captured prisoners yet feels guilty for his complicity with the torturers. The articulation of his difficult position as a humanist serving a declining Empire forms the essence of a humanist discourse that corresponds to the difficulties and ambivalences experienced by the postcolonial writer/intellectual. Using the work of Edward Said on the representations of the intellectual and Coetzee's views on ethical authorship and torture, the present article locates the humanist discourse articulated by the Magistrate in the center of Coetzee's conception of the public intellectual. While Coetzee undertakes the task of representing oppression without reinscribing it, his narrator struggles with distancing himself from the oppressors physically and psychologically, and thus achieving the relative autonomy Said called for. In the process, the Magistrate moves from a position of consent to one of dissent.

Keywords: J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, humanist discourse, ethics, public intellectualism, Edward Said.

Theoretical contexts: Coetzee and public intellectualism

J. M. Coetzee's novels have been problematically received by critics, especially in South Africa during the apartheid years, because, in the words of Benita Parry, they are "self-reflexive novels which stage the impossibility of representation, estrange the norms of reality, and work ... to 'demythologize history'" (1998: 149). Since the mode of his novels was not one of traditional social realism directly evoking historical realities, critics have expressed concerns that many of his works are "only indirectly 'about' the political and social struggles of South Africa" (Martin 1986: 4), dislocating, abstracting, and allegorizing political realities into another time and place. Other critics try to justify Coetzee's position and look for alternative sociopolitical relevance. The present article is a step in this direction, situating Coetzee's relevance within ethical and political debates about the function and status of the intellectual (i.e., the South African writer and critic). *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980; hereafter abbreviated as *WB*) engages the ethics and politics of intellectual practice and the role/function of the intellectual at the heart of many of Coetzee's works. According to Michel Foucault, the "author function" is ideologically important in our conception of literary works because it is "characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society" (1998: 211). South African literature written under apartheid has often been read in terms of a specific "author function", i.e., in light of its engagement with political realities within a specific historical context.

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Broadly speaking, Coetzee's novels published before the 1990s have been seen as complex (yet often inadequate or problematic) engagements with history due to their allegorical nature or psychological and postmodern dimensions. Coetzee has been criticized in South Africa for avoiding full engagement with political history. Mainly using the work of Edward Said on the representations of intellectuals, his 1993 Reith Lectures in particular, the present article explores the problematic position of the South African writer (artist or intellectual) confronted with violence, oppression, and a history of injustice. Torn between ethical commitment and humanist values on the one hand and attempts to publicly render them on the other hand, Coetzee was conscious of his role as an intellectual figure as well as the dangers of exploiting the oppression he sought to criticize. *WB* dramatizes the ironies, contradictions, and struggles involved in the intellectual practice Coetzee has internalized in his lengthy professional career. When he was writing *WB*, Coetzee had already published two novels (*Dusklands* in 1976 and *In the Heart of the Country* in 1977) and numerous scholarly articles in reputable journals. He was gaining international fame as a South African writer and scholar with a solid background in language theories, literary theories, world literature, and Western philosophy. The Ph.D. in English he earned from the University of Texas at Austin in 1969 was only one asset to an accomplished academic. Articulated in the first-person by the unnamed Magistrate, the humanist discourse in *WB* manifests ethical resonances, as well as the ambivalence of resistance and complicity. Coetzee's ethical and political concerns are dramatized and complicated through the Magistrate, who enacts the ethical and humanist voice in the novel and disputably serves as Coetzee's own alter ego.

Antonio Gramsci's argument concerning the formation of intellectuals makes it clear that intellectuals have a social and/or political function and not only a traditional profession or academic career. This social function and/or political responsibility of organic intellectuals entails generating the ideas and hopes of their class. For Gramsci, organic intellectuals adopt the ideology of a particular party or class, and hence the independent, autonomous intellectual is a myth: "Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields" (1971: 5). For Gramsci, all men are intellectuals, even though not all of them have a social function. In this expanded sense, Gramsci argues that the organic intellectual "participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought" (1971: 9). So, intellectuals exist in varying degrees of complicity and commitment. While some intellectuals side with and serve the dominant classes, others side with the less privileged and the disenfranchised. Following this logic, the Magistrate in *WB* questions his role as an imperial intellectual just as Coetzee interrogates the role and function of his standing as a South African intellectual.

Commenting on the politicization of knowledge and the political circumstances governing the ideological production of discourse, Edward Said asserts: "No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of a society" (1979: 10). Here, Said not only contradicts the liberal position of true knowledge being nonpolitical, i.e., objective, but also confirms the intellectual's relative involvement in the production of knowledge in the field of the humanities and social sciences, the knowledge that is political in varying degrees and rooted in one's ideological standpoint, class affiliation, and culture/society. In *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, Said expounds secular criticism and argues that texts cannot be extricated from events and circumstances, i.e., from history and "the existential actualities of human life, politics, societies, and events" (1983: 5). Said goes on to assert that texts are "worldly, to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and, of course, the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted" (1983: 4). Said advocates reading texts in terms of the realities of power and resistance that produce and disseminate them, in terms of affiliations belonging to "culture and society" (1983: 20). Hence, critics are never free from politics or political consciousness, whether related to their personal life and background or institutional politics and party life. It is in this study that Said presents the intellectual's situation as a worldly one, as texts take place in life and critics exist in sociopolitical contexts. Said uses the term "worldliness" to indicate "circumstantial reality" (1983: 34), a specific occasion or situation. Just as texts are worldly, so is criticism. And hence, the critic is a committed intellectual for Said, one concerned with alleviating different sorts of oppression: "More explicitly, the critic is responsible to a degree for articulating those voices dominated, displaced, or silenced by the textuality of texts. Texts are a system of forces institutionalized by the reigning culture at some human cost to its various components" (1983: 53). Said's assertion of discursive, textual politics is an invitation for us to explore ethics and politics in literary and cultural texts, which is what the present article attempts in relation to Coetzee's novel *WB*. If we take for granted the politicization of discourse Said advocates, what remains is to look at Coetzee's take on the intellectual's relationship with power and authority.

In his 1993 Reith Lectures, later published as *Representations of the Intellectual*, Said suggests that the intellectual is not only an "outsider" or "amateur" but also a "disturber of the status quo" (1994: x), trying to speak "truth to power" (1994: xvi) on behalf of the unprivileged or the weak. Said politicizes both discourse and the discourse writer. Therefore, the intellectual has a vital public role and a necessary social mission to "break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communication" (1994: xi). The intellectual has a role to universally uphold standards of truth concerning oppression, regardless of one's background, nationality, or political affiliation. This comment can be taken to mean that the intellectual should not inhabit an ivory tower—he is not a predictable or conformist figure. Rather, the intellectual is the involved figure of dissent and opposition to injustice, war, and destruction: "There is always the personal inflection and the private sensibility, and those give meaning to what is being said or written. Least of all should an intellectual be there to make his/her audience feel good: the whole point is to be embarrassing, contrary, even unpleasant" (1994: 12). Hence, Said contends that the apolitical intellectual is a myth, and adopting an apolitical stance is neither the intellectual's role nor function. Of course, this does not entail a deterioration into simple propaganda or clichéd language. Rather, we are entitled to look into the ways and means of achieving a political stance, which is what the present article seeks to accomplish in the case of Coetzee's *WB*.

Above all, for Said, the intellectual is a universal humanist with a political mission as "standards of truth about human misery and oppression were to be held to despite the individual intellectual's party affiliation, national background, and primeval loyalties" (1994: xii). In the words of Said, "Real intellectuals are never more themselves than when, moved by metaphysical passion and disinterested principles of justice and truth, they denounce corruption, defend the weak, defy imperfect or oppressive authority" (1994: 6). Thus, the intellectual should seek solutions or alternatives to dilemmas, unmask facts, and side with the marginalized or less fortunate who are not well represented by dominant power structures, juxtaposing experiences of oppression and projecting suffering regardless of its location: "For the intellectual the task ... is explicitly to universalize the crisis [of his/her people], to give greater human scope to what a particular race or nation suffered, to associate that experience with the suffering of others" (1994: 44). Accordingly, the intellectual is not objective but rather controversial and risky for mainstream politics and authorities. Intellectuals are secular figures, not allowing authority figures or patrons to direct them. Rather, their main task for Said is to "speak truth to power" (1994: 85), and thus they need to maintain relative independence from being co-opted by institutions or policy makers. To achieve this goal, amateur attitudes are better than professional ones. Freedom should be sought by intellectuals, and relative autonomy is a goal that intellectuals should seek so that they are not absorbed by institutions, governments or organizations against the principles of freedom, justice and truth. In this logic, the intellectual's attempted autonomy from institutional policies is itself a worthy political stance.

Within the South African apartheid context, we can talk about relatively similar historical and cultural concerns to those articulated by Said: injustice, dispossession, dislocation, discrimination, and violence. The ethical and political considerations of writing and intellectualism that Coetzee tackles are, in fact, related and can be better understood in the light of Said's political and cultural pronouncements. For example, Coetzee complains in "The Novel Today" that there is "a tendency, a powerful tendency, perhaps even dominant tendency, to subsume the novel under history" (1988: 2). In other words, the depiction of historical realities like apartheid and violence commonly become criteria for serious or good art. Coetzee, hence, tends to favor a novel that rivals history, even "demythologizing history" (1988: 3), by operating in terms of the novelistic discourse rather than the historical one. This does not mean that Coetzee advocates nonpolitical and unhistorical art; rather, he argues for a particular way of representing historical realities in literature to not reduce literary discourse to a historical one. By analogy, what Said tried to achieve as a cultural critic, Coetzee tried to achieve as a writer of fiction, but not without some complication and universalism. Both intellectuals were concerned with the politics of representation in reaction to socio-political and historical realities.

According to Jane Poyner, Coetzee engages "self-consciously with the ethics of writing in his critical essays and all his works of fiction, often through the portrayal of the conscience-stricken white writer" and thus enters "the long-running and expansive debate about the ethics of intellectualism and the authority of the writer" (2006: 2). Poyner contends that in his depiction of writer-protagonists in his novels, Coetzee dramatizes a paradox in postcolonial authorship: "whilst striving symbolically to bring the stories of the marginal and the oppressed to light, stories that heretofore have been suppressed or silenced by oppressive regimes, writers of conscience or conscience-stricken writers risk re-imposing the very authority they seek to challenge" (2009: 2). Hence, the postcolonial author and critic should be careful not to reproduce hegemonic systems of power they intend to challenge or reimpose dominant power structures. If postcolonial authorship is ethico-political at heart, then it should not replicate oppressive structures. Accordingly, the present article explores the intersections between the position of the postcolonial cultural critic and that of the postcolonial writer, both being ideally humanist figures with ethical-political concerns. The conflation between the postcolonial intellectual and the writer is manifested in the figure of the Magistrate in Coetzee's *WB*, who becomes a mouthpiece for staging Coetzee's struggles with representing politics and ethics in fiction without descending into plain propaganda or reproducing oppression.

Gayatri Spivak once suggested that "the subaltern could not 'speak' because, in the absence of institutionally validated agency, there was no listening subject" (2002: 24). It is intellectuals and the academic world that can serve as one validating institution giving voice or lending attentive ears to the subaltern. While intellectuals and critics have a responsibility to know and reveal society's Other, they should be aware of contradictions and ambivalences in their position, i.e., what Spivak called "the possibility that the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of Other as the Self's shadow" (1988: 75). Ambivalently, the critic/intellectual can be hegemonic and oppositional. The potential risks of having first-world intellectuals speak for the Other are serious since this Other is heterogeneous. In the words of Spivak, "The postcolonial intellectuals learn that their privilege is their loss. In this, they are a paradigm of the intellectuals" (1988: 82). Spivak concludes that in a colonial context, the subaltern does not have access to history and cannot speak, and that "the subaltern as female" is even more marginalized (1988: 82-83). Interestingly, Spivak makes it clear that the elite class of privileged intellectuals shapes the image of the subaltern: "Can the subaltern speak? What must the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern? The question of 'woman' seems most problematic in this context. Clearly, if you are poor, black, and female, you get it in three ways" (1988: 90). The intellectuals as the elite class are, accordingly, complicit in the construction of the subaltern as Other. Accordingly, questions of representation become essential for the writer, whether representing the oppressed or the sympathetic liberal humanist as the intellectual.

In this light, Said's calls for the secular, worldly critic are better understood, and so is Coetzee's problematic position in the context of South African apartheid politics. In both cases, questions of political relevance and commitment are at risk. In post-colonial theory, the term "comprador" has been broadly used to include "the intelligentsia—academics, creative writers, and artists—whose independence may be compromised by a reliance on, and identification with, colonial power" (Ashcroft et al. 2007: 47). Said's call for the independence of the intellectual from mainstream politics finds an echo in Coetzee's caution to avoid the "comprador" position. For Said, as for Coetzee and Spivak, the intellectual encounters the problem of representation and the perils of complicity. In the words of Coetzee in "Into the Dark Chamber," *WB* is about "the impact of the torture chamber on the life of a man of conscience" (1986: para.4). Coetzee grapples with a moral paradox: the question of how to represent torture in fiction without endorsing it or depriving the reader, how to depict history from the position of the oppressed without appropriating their voice, how not to transgress the limits of fiction into history or propaganda, how not to shy away from portraying violence, and above all how this "man of conscience" (a different label for the intellectual, author, or critic) stands in relation to power. Through the figure of the Magistrate, the novel dramatizes the intellectual's unavoidable relation to authority. In his Reith Lectures, Said poses a question that is crucial to our understanding of *WB*: "How does the intellectual address authority: as a professional supplicant or as its unrewarded, amateurish conscience?" (1994: 83). The Magistrate moves from timidity and indirect pleading for the prisoners to speaking his conscience and thus being the exiled figure of dissent, embodying the amateurish position Said favors. If there is a change in the Magistrate's attitude, it is from one of conformity, what Said calls "professional" intellectualism throughout his Reith Lectures, to dissent, what Said calls "amateurish" intellectualism.

The ethical intellectual and humanist discourse

For Coetzee, the torture room metaphorically stages the uneven power relations between the oppressor and the victim, and embodies the difficulties involved in the intellectual's position. Trapped between the dilemma of ignoring the atrocities of the state or reproducing them, the writer points to a real challenge: "how not to play the game by the rules of the state, how to establish one's own authority; how to imagine torture and death on one's own terms" (1986: para. 8). Playing the game by the rules of the state entails complicity, which is the fate the Magistrate in *WB* resists in imagining the torture that takes place in Joll's rooms, or in his dealings with the victims of state-sanctioned torture. Another pitfall can be a cliched depiction of the torturer as a demonic, evil figure or simply a tool manipulated by the state. Torture, to use the words of Kelly Adams, "creates a crisis not only of interpretation for the Magistrate and the reader" of the novel, but also one of "representation for Coetzee" (2015: 173). The novel's dramatization of the Magistrate's questioning of the relationship between truth and language (between telling and believing) and Joll's declaration that there is "a certain tone" to truth that the interrogator knows through training and practice (Coetzee 2000: 5)[2] all hint at the intellectual's predicament of representation that Coetzee the writer and critic grapples with. While Said questions the extent to which the intellectual involved in the public sphere should participate—"How far should an intellectual go in getting involved?" (1994: 105)—the Magistrate, a possible mouthpiece for Coetzee, also questions the extent to which the interrogator can exercise pain in pursuit of truth (5). Importantly, the Magistrate questions the extent of his own involvement in imperial politics after his "easy years" of "hunting and hawking and placid concupiscence" (9). Initially, he turns a deaf ear to the cries of pain coming from the granary (9). However, he goes there and sees for himself the dead corpse of the tortured prisoner (10). He talks to the prisoner's nephew and signs the false death warrant deposited by Joll (6), which makes him more conscious of his complicity with the torturers. He has been tempted into the dark chamber against his conscious wish, and his questions to the guard enable him to realize the falsity of imperial claims (6). His questions to Joll suggest his own inner struggle with knowing and telling the truth. The basic question for the intellectual, Said contends, remains one about truth: "how does one speak the truth? What truth? For whom and where?" (1994: 88). From one perspective, *WB* stages the Magistrate's struggles with speaking this truth to the Empire he serves, as well as his gradual transformation from a figure of consent to a figure of dissent, both being intellectual positions Said negotiates in his lectures on the representation of the intellectual.

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[2] All future references to Coetzee's novel will be to this particular edition. Page numbers are consistently given in the text.

The pitfalls of amateur intellectualism

In his Reith Lectures, *Representations of the Intellectual*, Said defines intellectual amateurism in terms of "the desire to be moved not by profit or reward but by the love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of the profession" (1994: 76). Professional intellectuals lose the full picture and can get absorbed in technical, abstract language. If the professional intellectual seeks objectivity and thus detachment or rewards, Said contends, the amateur intellectual favors "passionate engagement, risk, exposure, commitment to principles, vulnerability in debating and being involved in worldly causes" (1994: 109). For example, literature specialists can lose interest in history or politics while conforming to employers' wishes and their political agendas. In brief, amateur intellectuals do not conform to social and academic norms. On the other hand, Said defines amateurism as "an activity that is fueled by care and affection rather than by profit and selfish, narrow specialization" (1994: 82). Apparently, amateur intellectuals are moved by universal values of justice and truth against the authority of power and institutional influences.

Coetzee's novel begins with the arrival of Colonel Joll from the Third Bureau of the Civil Guard at the frontier settlement where the Magistrate has peacefully lived for years. Claiming he has arrived under emergency powers, Joll begins his ruthless campaign in search of possible barbarian enemies. The Magistrate, it should be stated, is also a seeker of truth, albeit of a different kind. He is an intellectual of sorts and a man of principles, which fits Said's conception of the amateur intellectual. He is an amateur writer with literary ambitions, a cartologist, a historian, a hunter, and an archeologist reading ruins and desert signs. His life in this frontier outpost—which has grown into an "agricultural settlement" in the desert (5)— away from the imperial capital has sharpened his senses. He reads the wind and the migrating birds as early signs of the arrival of spring (62). He collects and reads desert ruins in the form of wooden slips with enigmatic script (15) as an indication of an earlier settlement near the lake. His preoccupation with reading signs can be summarized in his exclamation: "How will I ever know?" (16). He reads the classics in his spare time and excavates desert ruins, trying to locate his service of the Empire in the jagged history of the rise and fall of civilizations. He is a reader of imperial history and a critic of imperial practices. In brief, the Magistrate conforms to Said's conception of the intellectual as an "amateur" figure and as an "outsider" (1994: x) to dominant ideologies of power and oppression. The Magistrate discovers that his previous life as a civil servant and "responsible official" (8) administering his duties in peace has changed once he confronts imperial power in the figure of his visitor, Colonel Joll.

For Said, intellectuals can be constrained by affiliations, parties, governments, financial considerations, and the pressures of professionalism. Such factors, Said maintains, can "compromise judgment and restrain the critical voice", especially when trying to please audiences or employers (1994: 68). Before he sends the barbarian girl to her people months after she was left behind and after Joll leaves on another border mission, the Magistrate decides to write two documents, one addressed to the provincial governor explaining and justifying his visit to the barbarians as an attempt to prove his goodwill. As for the second document, he is not sure what it should be: "A testament? A memoir? A confession? A history of thirty years on the frontier? All that day I sit in a trance at my desk staring at the empty white paper, waiting for words to come" (62). Such writing attempts can be seen as trying to break ties with imperial centers of power to gain the independent voice intellectuals aspire to. When words do not come, he gives up the project and leaves. His numerous talents and hobbies, however, remain in the amateurish sphere. In the words of Said, "insiders, experts, coteries, professionals" who mold public opinion make the intellectual a conformist figure serving "special interests" and "corporate thinking" (1994: xiii). So, the intellectual as an amateur figure of exile remains an outsider to rules and guidance. While professionals, Said holds, can act as consultants or experts trying "to provide authority with their labor while gaining great profit" (1994: xv), the amateur intellectual seeks independence from institutional or governmental pressures. Nevertheless, escaping the public sphere and avoiding politics in art are difficult to achieve. When he finds Warrant Officer Mandel in his office after the mission of sending the girl back to her people, the Magistrate ponders: "It should not be so easy to attain salvation. And is there any principle behind my opposition?" (85). He takes his status as a figure of dissent to authority for granted, and he is ready to sacrifice his freedom for his principles, yet he ethically questions his motivations for dissent.

The Magistrate links his inability to write to his inability to deal with this foreign woman in his bed whom the Empire views as the "barbarian" girl, thus conjoining artistic and sexual impotence, which symbolically points to the pitfalls of public intellectualism and the oppressions exercised by authority. Trying to leave a written statement, a history of the settlement, about the last days of the frontier town for future generations, he also fails: "What I find myself beginning to write is not the annals of an Imperial outpost or an account of how the people of that outpost spent their last year composing their souls as they waited for the barbarians" (168). Instead, he writes an idyllic plea on life on the frontier before border troubles. His amateur intellectualism, the "locutions of a civil servant with literary ambitions" (169), are opposed to the harsh winter approaching and the truth of expected invasion. His memorial is abortive, just like his sexual life. While taking the girl back to her people, he thinks: "Too much or too little: is it she I want or the traces of a history her body bears?" (70). In his ethical crisis, he cannot tell whether his interest in her is a desire for her whole body, restored to health after the marks of torture are erased, or a preoccupation with the tortured body carrying the marks of imperial history. The difficulties the Magistrate encounters in his intellectual and literary pursuits can be better understood in light of the challenges encountered by the postcolonial writer/critic, i.e., the extent of involvement and the ability to speak "truth to power" (Said 1994, 85). His failures and hesitations are the intellectual's uneasy relationship with authority, trying to establish a distance from the oppressor: "I must assert my distance from Colonel Joll!" the Magistrate interjects, "I will not suffer for his crimes" (48).

The ethical humanist: complicity and resistance

The Magistrate's ethical dilemma begins early in this novel, once he has to mediate between the tortured prisoners and his guest arriving from the capital to investigate a possible uprising against the Empire. Years of service in a "lazy frontier" (8) during which the Magistrate asked for a "quiet life" (8) before retirement ended with border troubles and rumors about a possible war with the barbarians. Justifying the capture of a sick boy and his old uncle for assumed banditry, the Magistrate says: "'No one would have brought an old man and a sick boy along on a raiding party.' I grow conscious that I am pleading for them" (4). However, his pleas on the prisoners' behalf never prevent the questioning and torture that follow and which he tries to ignore. Upon their next meeting, the Magistrate raises an ethical question to Joll. He is concerned about prisoners being exposed to more pressure during interrogation but already telling the truth and having nothing more to offer, or simply being forced (through excessive pain) to lie to please their tormentors: "And what a responsibility for the interrogator! How do you ever know when a man has told you the truth?" (5). While posing questions about the ethical duty of the interrogator not to inflict excessive or needless pain on the prisoner, the Magistrate is still aware of his difficult position of complicity with the oppressor, serving the same imperial center: "... who am I to assert my distance from him? I eat with him, I show him the sights, I afford him every assistance as his letter of commission requests, and more" (6). According to Ashcroft et al., the word "comprador" in postcolonial studies describes "a relatively privileged, wealthy and educated elite" who interact with and benefit from colonial practices and thus feel reluctant to "struggle for local cultural and political independence" (48). While the Magistrate is not a native agent collaborating and benefiting from imperial structures, he still occupies the privileged and dominant part in his relationship with the barbarian prisoners. If the "comprador" class is complicit with the colonizer, the Magistrate is but a colonizer/settler complicit with another colonizer (i.e., Colonel Joll). As the novel progresses, the Magistrate will intellectually reject this complicity with the oppressor.

Comforting the tortured boy after the death of his uncle, the Magistrate feels his complicity with the torturers: "It has not escaped me that an interrogator can wear two masks, speak with two voices, one harsh, one seductive" (8). He has mixed feelings of guilt and shame as he, like the torturer, tried to leave his marks on the Barbarian girl: "Whom will that other girl with the blind face remember: me with my silk robe and my dim lights and my perfumes and oils and my unhappy pleasures, or that other cold man with the mask over his eyes who gave the orders and pondered the sounds of her intimate pain?" (147-48). Hence, he views this complicity with Joll as "Two sides of Imperial rule, no more, no less" (148-49). His encounter with Joll makes the Magistrate ponder the very existence of the torturer, i.e. how one becomes a torturer, how torturers clean their hands afterward, and how they can break bread with others after such brutal acts: "Does he wash his hands very carefully, perhaps, or change all his clothes; or has the Bureau created new men who can pass without disquiet between the unclean and the clean?" (13). The Magistrate's epistemological impasse about knowing if the prisoner is telling the truth (i.e., to decide when to stop torture) is augmented by another level of ontological and ethical questioning of the life and behavior of the torturer. The mentality of the torturer and the conditions that create this type of people puzzle the Magistrate. On the one hand, the Magistrate's ejaculations serve to heighten his humanist vision and code of ethics. On the other hand, the Magistrate's ethical vision approximates Coetzee's attempt to object to torture by pondering the torturer's lifestyle and mode of being. Said asserts that the intellectual belongs "on the same side with the weak and unrepresented" (1994: 22). The Magistrate finds it ethically difficult to side with Joll, and he questions his position of complicity. His questioning of Joll's violent practices aligns him with Said's conception of "amateur intellectuals" who refuse to be co-opted by hegemonic power.

As a humanist, the Magistrate believes in peace rather than war, "perhaps even peace at any price" (15). Hence, he objects to Joll sending fishing people as prisoners to be held until his return from the desert. To his mind, the Empire has no external "enemies". However, his complicit stance of identification with the imperialists is manifest in his litany of complaints about their habits: "For a few days the fisherfolk are a diversion, with their strange gabbling, their vast appetites, their animal shamelessness, their volatile tempers" (20). The prisoners are made the other, the "filthy" counterpart of the civilized Empire. When the interrogation process begins, the Magistrate strains his ears not to hear the cries of pain and sounds of violence coming from the barracks hall. It is only when interrogation ceases that he can sleep, "away from the empire of pain" (24). The Magistrate, the guardian of justice and civilized manners, is made to question his ethical values just as the liberal humanist critic/novelist has to reconsider his/her relationship to oppressive regimes and different forms of hegemonic power. Gradually, however, the Magistrate moves from a position of avoidance or denial to one of confrontation and dissent.

As the first-person narrator, the Magistrate assumes the humanist stance expected from "amateur" intellectuals, per Said's account. Contemplating the pain and dehumanization the torturers imposed on the girl's father before her eyes, the Magistrate says: "Thereafter she was no longer fully human, sister to all of us. Certain sympathies died; certain movements of the heart became no longer possible to her" (89). When the main force comes back with a file of twelve barbarian captives, he is shocked that a loop of wire runs through their hands and cheeks to keep them meek. He feels disgusted at the sight: "My heart grows sick. I know now that I should not have left my cell" (113). In fact, the use of the word "cell" is illuminating as it disguises the Magistrate's unconscious wish to remain in his own private state of mind rather than get involved with this public spectacle of torture. He is trapped in ambivalent feelings of not wanting to hate the victimizers and not wanting to witness the atrocity and thus hate himself. Both experiences are depraving to the soul, and he decides to return to his cell to save himself from the atrocity to come: "Let it at the very least be said, if it ever comes to be said, if there is ever anyone in some remote future interested to know the way we lived, that in this farthest outpost of the Empire of light there existed one man who in his heart was not a barbarian" (114). The Magistrate acts as the man of law and justice, the humanist who is sickened by the sight of children encouraged to flog the prisoners. He wants to pass in history as the ethical humanist who first denies being part of this depravity before he gains the courage to speak "truth to power" in Said's terms. As an instance of a benevolent colonizer who "refuses", to draw on the words of Albert Memmi, the Magistrate cannot mentally escape a difficult situation: "to refuse its ideology [i.e. that of colonization's concrete reality] while continuing to live with its actual relationships" (2003: 64). This refusing colonizer "lives his life under the sign of a contradiction which looms at every step, depriving him of all coherence and all tranquility" (Memmi 2003: 64). It is only with departing that such contradictions can be resolved, a course of action the Magistrate does not pursue. A man of ethics and principles, the Magistrate says he felt pained to see the settlers deceive the nomads in barter (41). In the words of Memmi, the Magistrate becomes a colonizer who "refuses" on ethical terms: "Having discovered the economic, political and moral scandal of colonization, he can no longer agree to become what his fellow citizens have become; he decides to remain, vowing not to accept colonization" (2003: 63). Hence, the Magistrate's ethical dilemma persists, due to his concurrent realization of his complicity with the Empire and his awareness of the Empire's devious ways.

When the Magistrate returns to the imperial settlement and is questioned for "treasonously consorting" with the enemy, he responds to Warrant Office Mandel by denying imperial foundations of superiority and asserting an ethic of equality: "'We are at peace here,' I say, 'we have no enemies.' There is silence. 'Unless I make a mistake,' I say. 'Unless we are the enemy'" (85). For Said, one of the intellectual's main tasks is "to unearth the forgotten, to make connections that were denied, to cite alternative courses of action that could have avoided war and its attendant goal of human destruction" (1994: 22). Despite his belief in humanist values like peace, tolerance, and justice, the Magistrate embodies the intellectual's sense of bewilderment in the face of historical wrongs. His failure to capture the barbarian girl's story or adequately read her body stands for the intellectual's failure to represent oppression. Conceding that comprehending torture is ethically difficult, he also realizes that representing it is equally, if not more, difficult. And when he is arrested and about to be confined, he is happy that he is now a figure of dissent: "I am aware of the source of my elation: my alliance with the guardians of the Empire is over, I have set myself in opposition, the bond is broken, I am a free man" (85). He is resisting to uphold what Said calls the "eternal standards of truth and justice" (1994: 5). When Joll wants to use a hammer to crush the feet of the prisoners in the square, the Magistrate objects, hearing the word "No!" (116) come from his throat and chest despite himself. He sustains injuries: a broken hand and nose and a wound on his face. However, he insists: "'Look!' I shout. 'We are the great miracle of creation!' But from some blows this miraculous body cannot repair itself! How--! Words fail me. 'Look at these men!' I recommence. '*Men*!'" (117; emphasis original). The Magistrate's humanism is founded on his opposition to torture, on pursuing the ideal of justice despite the harsh imperial stratagems.

To reiterate, the novel demonstrates a shift in the Magistrate's position from deliberate silence and avoidance in his encounter with torture early in the novel ("Of the screaming which people afterwards claim to have heard from the granary I hear nothing" 5) to dissent as the novel reaches its climax. What Said calls the intellectual's "trimming, careful silence" and "turning away" which distort the intellectual's public role (1994: xii, 100) change as the Magistrate turns into an exile speaking "the truth to power" and becoming "controversial" (1994: xvi, 100). As a marginal figure of exile, the intellectual for Said stands "outside the comforts of privilege, power, being-at-homeness" (1994: 59). The Magistrate's problematic relationship with imperial power is manifested in his repeated objections "No! No! No!" (116) to depraving the prisoners, and his direct and public opposition to Joll can be understood in terms of the dissent he embodies as a public figure. Assuming that saying "yes" entails accommodation or co-option by power, then saying "no" signifies the refusal to conform that Said assigns to amateur intellectuals. Exploring problems of identity and personhood in *WB*, Adrian Grafe has presented the Magistrate as a "personalized" figure of "rebellion" whose guilty conscience is revealed in the aptly used first-person narrative; hence, for Grafe the novel dramatizes "the opposition between justice and law" (2018: 23). The Magistrate, Grafe maintains, is "distinctly conscious of his conscience, and his 'growing conscious' is part of the process of his becoming a person" (2018: 25). In other words, his dynamic identity formation is contingent on his ethical pleas on behalf of the prisoners, an act which alleviates his feelings of guilt and complicity. Instead of accepting imperial policies or seeking the approval of authority figures, the Magistrate confronts both his intellectual objections to torture as well as his fears of authority.

If words fail the Magistrate and he finds the body of the tortured girl enigmatic, it is because the novel "does not recover history as a fully narratable subject, but bears witness to it by refusing to translate the suffering produced by colonial oppression into historical discourse" (Craps 2007: 59). Hence, the Magistrate fails to read the girl's coded body just as he fails to articulate the pain of torture he is witnessing, and the Magistrate's hermeneutical crisis echoes the intellectual's task when confronting oppression that is not told and cannot be told. Such a spectacle of cruelty, the Magistrate objects, corrupts both sides and denies innocence to children. Joll, accordingly, mocks him for trying to be "the One Just Man, the man who is prepared to sacrifice his freedom to his principles" (124). Seeking exoneration before history, the Magistrate accuses Joll of being the real enemy who committed "filthy barbarities" against the barbarians against the principles of civilized nations (125). With his hands tied and his body hoisted on a tree, the Magistrate still thinks in humanist terms despite the pain, hoping that the children do not imitate the games of their elders, "or tomorrow there will be a plague of little bodies dangling from the trees" (133). His question to a torturer like Mandel reveals much philosophical depth about attempting to understand the zone in which the torturer lives and how he eats after committing the atrocities of torture:

> How do you find it possible to eat afterwards, after you have been ... working with people? ... Do you find it easy to take food afterwards? I have imagined that one would want to wash one's hands. But no ordinary washing would be enough, one would require priestly intervention, a ceremonial of cleansing, don't you think? Some kind of purging of one's soul too. (138)

Even when the Magistrate begins to care for the tortured girl left behind, he feels that the distance between himself and her torturers is negligible, and he shudders at this realization (29). His ethical commitment to her burdens him, although he does not know what exactly to do with her tortured body. It is his awareness of being complicit with the oppressors that urges him to establish a distance from imperial ways in favor of humanist values like toleration and acceptance: "Where civilization entailed the corruption of barbarian virtues and the creation of a dependent people, I decided, I was opposed to civilization; and upon this resolution I based the conduct of my administration" (41). However, his attempts at an ethical distance from the Empire bring him back to doubt and skepticism associated with complicity. His conversation with a young officer joining the new conscripts in the settlement reveals his humanistic stance against constructed bias: "How do you eradicate contempt, especially when that contempt is founded on nothing more substantial than differences in table manners, variations in the structure of the eyelid?" (55). One vital task for intellectuals, Said contends, is an effort to "break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communication" (1994: xi). Moreover, Said adds that intellectuals should question "patriotic nationalism, corporate thinking, and a sense of class, racial or gender privilege" (1994: xiii). However, the Magistrate's ambivalence is manifested when he questions his own ideals: "Do I really look forward to the triumph of the barbarian way: intellectual torpor, slovenliness, tolerance of disease and death?" (56). His humanistic discourse is never free from imperial prejudices and stereotypes as he has been a functionary in the process for too long. Such contradictions in the Magistrate's position capture the paradoxical position of the intellectual who is complicit with systems of oppression or simply assuming a position of privilege against the subaltern, thus running the risk of further silencing them. While for Said intellectuals are unpredictable, conforming to no rules or expectations, they remain secular figures worshipping no gods (1994: xiv). The spirit of opposition and dissent they hold is a "struggle on behalf of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups" (Said 1994, xvii). Due to opposing imperial authority on behalf of the captured prisoners, the Magistrate is imprisoned and tortured accordingly. Having struggled with overcoming a difficult position of complicity and avoidance, the Magistrate becomes what Said calls the "unafraid and compassionate intellectual" (1994: 101).

Conclusion

It should be noted that for some critics the Magistrate assumes a problematic position as the liberal humanist since he "tries to maintain a moral gap from foul acts of the group, yet he fails" (Waham & Othoman 2019: 183). However, we should not undermine his attempts at relating to the Other or his attempts at opposing the authority of the Empire. Coetzee, like Said in a sense, has pointed out the risks and pitfalls of the humanist as the intellectual, critic, or writer. The Magistrate's failures to decode the barbarian girl's body, to construct a coherent story of her pain, or to write a history of the Empire's last years, all point to the failures of liberal humanist discourse in the face of historical injustice. On the other hand, we should recall that imperial agents start leaving the frontier settlement at the end of the novel, allowing the Magistrate to resume some of his duties, and the Empire seems to be losing against the elusive enemy it has constructed. This indicates the ultimate triumph of the ideals of humanism and justice that the Magistrate represents against the oppressive authority practiced by the Empire. However, the intellectual as a liberal humanist has a role to play regardless of the outcome, i.e., regardless of their ability to actually change the status quo or subvert power structures. For Said, we should remember, the whole point is being controversial and active to "advance human freedom and knowledge" (1994: 17). Hence, the intellectual's critical sense should be augmented at any price, a necessary value often diminished when the intellectual seeks consensus-building or society's approval. On different occasions, Said experienced his public intellectualism in terms of a personal crisis. The life of Coetzee's Magistrate embodies those private tensions experienced by the public intellectual as the humanist. In the figure of the Magistrate, Coetzee found a way to negotiate ethical dilemmas and challenges faced by public intellectuals, especially those trying to speak "truth to power."

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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.06

Cucumbers and Creeps: Errors in Translation Studies and in the Polish Translation of Robert Macfarlane's *The Old Ways*[2]

In memory of Krzysztof Hejwowski (1952-2019),
the dearest friend and my guide to the world of translation studies

Abstract. Forty years ago, André Lefevere wrote a paper in which he exposed some of the 'howling' errors made by American translators of Berthold Brecht and declared the theme of errors to be unconstructive in the field of contemporary translation studies. Krzysztof Hejwowski, a Polish translation studies scholar, believed that the notion of errors should not be forgotten, no matter which way translation studies are heading. This paper is both a homage to Hejwowski and his 'conservative' agenda and an attempt to map the errors in the Polish translation of *The Old Ways* by Robert Macfarlane.

Keywords: Lefevere, Hejwowski, translation studies, errors, Robert Macfarlane.

Translation studies and errors

In 1982, in the early days of translation studies as an academic discipline, André Lefevere published an article entitled "Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature". Over the next few years Lefevere was to become one of the leading scholars (together with Theo Hermans and Susan Bassnett) responsible for 'the Cultural Turn in Translation Studies' and "Mother Courage's Cucumbers" has become one of the most often anthologized pieces of the rapidly developing academic discipline. It is included, for example, in *The Translation Studies Reader,* edited by Lawrence Venuti (1997) and, in Polish translation, *Współczesne teorie przekładu: Antologia* [*Contemporary Theories of Translation: An Anthology*] edited by Piotr Bukowski and Magda Heydel (2009).

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[2] This article is a slightly altered version of a paper delivered on 7 July 2022 at the University of Tartu, Estonia, during *Borders & Crossings: Transdisciplinary Conference on Travel Writing*. I am aware of the fact that, with its focus on errors in one particular translation, it goes against the mainstream of translation studies, but at the same time I hope that even though it may be read as a confrontational *erratum* in itself, it will begin a discussion on the problems translators face, as well as on strategies and techniques which they use while approaching narratives of travel.

"Mother Courage's Cucumbers" opens with Lefevere's statement that "translation studies can hardly be said to have occupied a central position in much theoretical thinking about literature" and that he will try to show "[...] how translations or, to use a more general term, refractions, play a very important part in the evolution of literatures" (2012: 203). In the long second paragraph, Lefevere at first clearly cherishes describing errors American translators committed rendering Bertold Brecht's *Mutter Courage und Ihre Kinder* into English; for example, he shows how in the translation of H. R. Hays, "the prayer book Mother Courage uses to wrap her cucumbers becomes transformed into a ledger, and the innocent cucumbers themselves grow into an imaginary town, Gurken[3], supposedly the point the last transaction was entered into that particular ledger" (2012: 203). Having described a few such errors, "howlers" as he refers to them (2012: 204), Lefevere announces: "I have no desire, however, to write a traditional 'Brecht in English' type of translation-studies paper, which would pursue this strategy to the bitter end" (2012: 204). Instead, he declares, "translations can be used in other, more constructive ways" (2012: 204), and argues that "[a] writer's work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through 'misunderstandings and misconceptions', or to use a more neutral term, refractions. Writers and their work are always understood and conceived against a certain background, or, if you will, are refracted through a certain spectrum" (2012: 204).

Lefevere's treatment of translations as refractions in which "misunderstandings and misconceptions" are inevitable became dominant in the burgeoning translation studies, and, as a result, translation errors have for a long time been thought of as belonging to the old, pre-theoretical and 'linguistic' period of the development of translation studies. One of the few scholars who opposed this approach was Krzysztof Hejwowski. In his *Translation: A Cognitive-Communicative Approach* (2004), he tackled head-on Lefevere's "more constructive approach" from "Mother Courage's Cucumbers". He argued that the "howlers" Lefevere quoted do not stem from "any refraction through a certain spectrum" but from the translator's mistakes. He added that "[s]uch mistakes can (and should) be pointed out and rectified" (2004: 199). In *Iluzja przekładu* (2015), Hejwowski (2015: 289) claimed that in Lefevere's (and Hermans's) approach, some of the old, key questions of translation studies (about equivalence, translation errors, translator's competence, freedom, and responsibility) are unnecessarily "annulled".

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[3] The German *Gurken* means cucumbers.

Hejwowski's 'traditional' approach to translation errors and his taxonomy of these errors prove to be particularly useful when we approach translations in which the frequency of errors as well as their variety are truly excessive, and I am strongly convinced that the Polish translation of Robert Macfarlane's *The Old Ways* is such a case.

The Polish translation of *The Old Ways*

In 2019, while working on a book, the working title of which is *The Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Translating Anglophone Travel Books into Polish*, I read closely, sentence by sentence, *The Old Ways* by Robert Macfarlane, first published in 2012, and its Polish translation, by Jacek Konieczny, published in 2018 as *Szlaki* by Wydawnictwo Poznańskie. As my list of notes on mistranslations of various kinds in *Szlaki* was growing surprisingly quickly, I was growing more and more curious about the translator himself, suspecting at first that he must be a novice in his trade and that, for some reason, the editor of the book, as well as the proof-reader, did not do a satisfactory job either. I was surprised to learn that Jacek Konieczny is a very experienced translator, with more than fifty books translated, and that in his interview for *Dwutygodnik,* he answered the question of whether the fact that he graduated in sociology and does not hold a degree in English is not detrimental [in his job as a translator] by saying that it is not detrimental, because "the command of the foreign language is not the most important [thing]. It is the faculty of being able to write in one's own language which is more important, and so I owe much more to my teacher of Polish in the primary school [...] than to a hypothetical English Department" (my translation G. M.).[4] Unlike Konieczny, I am firmly convinced that in order to be a competent translator one has to possess a very firm command in L1 and L2, and I will try to prove my point by providing some examples of what I consider to be errors in the Polish translation of *The Old Ways,* most of which could have been avoided. My present version of the notes to the chapter on the Polish translation of *The Old Ways* is more than fifty pages long, even though I still have not started with the theoretical considerations on the more general nature of the mistranslations in *Szlaki*. However, because of the limits on the length of the present paper I will provide here only a sample of the problems I have detected, organized according to a taxonomy of errors that follows the one presented by Hejwowski in *Translation: A Cognitive-Communicative Approach.* At this point I would also like to express thanks for lively discussions and brainstorms to Piotr Kozłowski, a former student of mine, who (under my supervision) defended (in July

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[4] "Nie, bo znajomość języka obcego nie jest najważniejsza. Istotniejsza jest umiejętność pisania we własnym języku, więc znacznie więcej zawdzięczam mojej polonistce ze szkoły podstawowej, [...] niż hipotetycznej anglistyce" (`https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/7236-dwa-zale.html`).

2021) his M.A. dissertation entitled 'Translating Travel. Robert Macfarlane's *The Old Ways* in Jacek Konieczny's Translation'.

Translating the title

Gérard Genette, in his influential study *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretations* (1987, trans. to English 2001), coined the term 'paratext' to refer to the territories of the book—like titles, forewords, epigraphs or footnotes—which mediate between text and readers. The crucial role of paratexts in travel writing has been recognized by many travel writing scholars.[5] In this section I will focus on just one example of paratext mistranslation in *Szlaki*: that of the very title of the book. The full title of Robert Macfarlane's book in the original is *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot.* In Jacek Konieczny's it becomes *Szlaki: Opowieści o wędrówkach.* I am convinced that both parts of the title in translation are wanting. Let us start with "the old ways". "Way" is used in the title in the meaning of a road/path/route which people used a long time ago, like "the Icknield Way" or "the Pilgrims' Way", which appear numerous times on the pages of the book. The word "szlaki", which is usually translated as 'routes', could be used in this context if it were preceded by the adjective "stare" ("old") [with "dawne" (also "old") as a weaker alternative]. But I am convinced that there is a better word in Polish to use in this context: the word "trakt" ("way", "road"). In the region of Podlasie, where I live, there are several "trakty napoleońskie" ("Napoleon's ways"), country dirt roads, leading more or less from west to east, on which Napoleon's *Grande Armee*, at least in the collective memory of the region's inhabitants, walked in 1812 on their way to Russia, and also, in a less organized fashion, on their way back a few months later. There are numerous "trakty królewskie" ("Royal Ways") in Poland, the most famous of which is the one in Warsaw that originally led from the Royal Castle in the Old Town of Warsaw in a southerly direction. Therefore, "stare trakty" seems to be a better solution than "szlaki" for the first part of the title.

The 'extended' title of Macfarlane's book is "A Journey on Foot". Konieczny renders it as "Opowieści o wędrówkach", which literally means "Stories (tales) of wanderings (trips)". This time I would like to challenge both words of the translation and suggest that one more word should have been used in the translation of this part of the title. There is no word for "stories" in the original title and I do not see any reason why it should be introduced in the translated title. The word "wędrówki" (wanderings, trips) is in the plural, while in the original we have "a journey", which is one journey. Why did Robert Macfarlane decide to use "a journey" in the title in the singular even though in the sixteen chapters of his book he described eleven separate journeys/trips? Presumably, he wanted to convey the meaning of all his external wanderings being, in fact, ‘one (internal) journey’. There are numerous references to and musings on this external and internal nature of his “journeys” in *The Old Ways,* the first of them at the very beginning, in one paragraph paratext entitled “Author’s Note”, when he states: “Above all, this is a book about people and place: about walking as a reconnoitre inwards” (Macfarlane 2013: xi). I think that the best Polish word to use in this situation is the word “podróż” (journey), which could carry similar ‘external’ and ‘internal’ connotations [“wędrówka” in the singular could also be considered as an alternative for “podróż”].

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[5] See, for example, A. Watson, The Garden of Forking Paths: Paratexts in Travel Literature. In : J. Kuehn & P. Kuehn (eds.), *New Directions in Travel Writing Studies,* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 54-70.

Whereas “opowieści” is an unnecessary addition, “on foot” remains untranslated in the Polish title. Even though two chapters (number 5 “Water—South” and number 6 “Water—North) are about sea trips during which the narrative persona used feet to a very limited extent, the overall title is “a journey on foot”. The first two sentences of the above-mentioned “Author’s Note” reads:

> This book could not have been written by sitting still. The relationship between paths, walking and imagination is its subject, and much of its thinking was therefore done—was only possible—while on foot. (Macfarlane 2013: xi)

Therefore, leaving this important phrase “on foot” untranslated seems to be an error. The Polish phrases which are usually used to cover “on foot” are “pieszo” or “na piechotę”, and therefore the second part of the title, if I were to translate the book, would be “wędrówka piesza”, and the whole title “Stare trakty; wędrówka piesza”, a long way from Konieczny’s “Szlaki; opowieści o wędrówkach”.

Titles are, obviously, very important paratexts. The decision to change the phrase “the old ways” into the simple “szlaki” not only ‘weakens’ the title itself and makes it blander, but it also influences (in a negative way) those moments, and there are plenty of them in *The Old Ways* when Macfarlane plays with this phrase in various manners. The first example of this can be found on the second page of the first chapter, “Track”:

This is the path I’ve probably walked more often than any other in my life. It’s a *young way*; maybe fifty years old, no more. (Macfarlane 2013: 6)	Żadną inną ścieżką nie przeszedłem w życiu tyle razy. Nie jest specjalnie stara. Ma najwyżej pięćdziesiąt lat. (Macfarlane 2018: 14)

So, Macfarlane calls the route he walks in the first chapter “the path”, but it also becomes “a young way”, in clear contrast to the old ways which he will be walking in the following chapters. Had Konieczny decided to use “stare trakty” (old ways) for his title, it would be easy to use the phrase “młody trakt” (young way) in contrast to “stary trakt” (old way), and in this way he would have also preserved the oxymoronic effect (which

I am convinced was intended by the author) of “a young way” (“młody trakt”). Instead, he comes up with the phrase “nie jest specjalnie stara” (it is not particularly old), which misses not only the oxymoron but also the fact that Macfarlane used two different words about the same object: “the path” and “a young way”, whereas in translation we only have “ścieżka” (path).

Errors of syntagmatic translation

I will start with some basic lexical problems I have detected while comparing the English original of *The Old Ways* with the Polish translation. The lexical mistranslations in *Szlaki* begin at the level of misreading, the translator translating not the English word Macfarlane used, but another English word, with just one letter different from the original. The list here consists of four pairs: copse-corpse, parson-person, haunting-hunting, county-country. I consider the copse-corpse misreading as the most ‘howling’ or ‘spectacular’ of them:

I like the country we are […]. It’s open hilly chalk country with great ploughed fields and a few *copses* on the hilltops. (Macfarlane 2013: 329)	Podoba mi się kraina, w której się znajdujemy […]. Jest to otwarty, pagórkowaty, kredowy krajobraz z wielkimi zaoranymi polami i nielicznymi *zwłokami*, leżącymi na wierzchołkach. (Macfarlane 2018: 374)

This is part of a description of northern France written down by Edward Thomas in a letter to a friend in February 1915; Thomas was sent there to fight in the Great War. For some reason the translator thought that the word used by Thomas and later by Macfarlane was “corpses” rather than “copses”, so we get this surrealistic description of the country Thomas likes with great ploughed fields and a few corpses (sic!) on the hilltops. However, the word “copse”, when it appears some twenty-five pages later in *Szlaki,* is correctly translated as “młodniak” (Macfarlane 2018: 401).

These practices have their parallels elsewhere in the country: in the line of white marker stones that used to run across Bodmin Moor from Watergate to Five Lanes, for instance, set there in the mid-1800s *by a parson* who wished to traverse his trackless and often fog-bound parish without getting lost or enmired. (Macfarlane 2013: 144)	Odpowiedniki tych praktyk możemy znaleźć w innych częściach kraju; w linii białych kamieni, która biegła przez kornwalijskie wrzosowisko Bodmin Moor z Watergate do Five Lane, ustawionych w połowie XIX wieku, *przez osobę,* która chciała móc pokonywać ten pozbawiony dróg i często spowity mgłą obszar, nie ryzykując, że się zgubi albo wpadnie w bagno. (Macfarlane 2018: 165)

In the original the person who put up white stones is a “parson”, meaning a rector or a vicar of a Protestant church. The “parson” was translated as “osoba” (person). Almost, but not quite. As this person is not a parson in the Polish translation, the parish is not necessary, and therefore it disappears in the translation.

Haunting and Fear (Macfarlane 2013: 305)	*Polowanie* i strach (Macfarlane 2018: 347)

Here, “haunting” becomes “polowanie”, that is “hunting”, even though in the text of the chapter there are almost two pages on ‘haunting’ and no reference to ‘hunting’ at all.

[…] the *county’s* most exclusive golf course. (Macfarlane 2013: 8)	[…] najbardziej luksusowe pole golfowe w *kraju*. (Macfarlane 2018: 16)

In the Polish translation this golf course is the most exclusive “w kraju”, meaning in the country. It should be “najbardziej luksusowe pole golfowe w (tym) (naszym) hrabstwie” (the most exclusive golf course in our county) or “hrabstwie Cambridgeshire” (in Cambridgeshire). The translator also had problems with the word “county” in this fragment:

Such moments are rites of passage that reconfigure local geographies, leaving known places outlandish or quickened, *revealing continents within counties*. (Macfarlane 2013: 78)	Takie chwile są rytuałami przejścia rekonfigurującymi geografię danego regionu, za którym znane miejsca zaczynają się wydawać obce albo przesunięte. *Ujawniają kontynenty ukryte w obrębie kontynentów*. (Macfarlane 2018: 92)

The phrase “revealing continents within counties” was translated as a separate sentence which literally means: “They reveal continents within continents”. While in the previous example “county” became “country”, here it becomes “continent”.

The more typical kinds of lexical mistranslations are the result of the situation when the translator decides on the wrong one out of a few different meanings of a word or a phrase. In this category, in my opinion, the most ‘spectacular’ mistranslation in *Szlaki* happened with “the creep”:

The timing and aiming of the *creep* has to be precise: synchronized between batteries [...]. (Macfarlane 2013: 333-34)	Moment i kierunek wystrzeliwania *tych skurwieli* należało zgrać z niezwykłą precyzją. (Macfarlane 2018: 378)

The translator here translated the word “the creep” as “tych skurwieli” which means, more or less, “these motherfuckers”, which is as vulgar as it is ridiculous. The whole phrase “wystrzeliwania tych skurwieli” in Polish is not only a mistranslation; it is also ambiguous. The phrase used by Konieczny literally means “shooting these motherfuckers”, and “these motherfuckers” could be either Germans or shells. This is a surprising mistake, as the word “creep” appears in the previous sentence, the beginning of which reads “The offensive will begin *with the creeping artillery barrage* – the ‘hurricane bombardment’” (Macfarlane 2013: 333), and the translator managed this bit quite well “Ofensywa zacznie się *od postępującego ostrzału artyleryjskiego*—‘huraganowego bombardowania [...]” (Macfarlane 2018: 377), where the phrase “creeping artillery barrage” is more or less correctly translated as “postępujący ostrzał artyleryjski” (literally ‘advancing artillery barrage”, although Polish military historians usually translate this phrase more literally as “pełzający wał ogniowy”[6]). Why did the translator not connect “creeping barrage” with “the creep” in the next sentence and decide to translate the singular noun “the creep” as “tych skurwieli” (“these motherfuckers”)? Probably because of the combination of two factors: a not very firm grasp of English, and translating in a hurry.

The translator’s problems with the English word “estate” resulted in a series of mistranslations:

The sound of an engine behind us, then the honk of a horn: *an estate Land Rover* bounced past, hardly slowing to let us leave the track. (Macfarlane 2013: 189)	Warkot silnika za naszymi plecami, potem ryk klaksonu: *land rover kombi* przetoczył się obok nas w podskokach, nie zwalniając nawet zbytnio, żeby dać nam czas na uskoczenie z drogi. (Macfarlane 2018: 216)

Here, “an estate Land Rover” becomes “land rover kombi” in Polish, which, when retranslated back to English renders “land rover estate”. The translator here mistakenly took the expression “an estate Land Rover”, meaning a Land Rover car belonging to the estate, as “a Land Rover estate”, that is a Land Rover station-wagon (to use the American term for this type of car). The word “estate” appears in the next sentence of the description “A mile further we passed the estate shooting lodge” (Macfarlane 2013: 189). This is translated as “chata myśliwska”, that is “hunting lodge”; so this time the “estate” is left untranslated. When the term “estate” appears for the third time in the very same paragraph: “I was glad to get away from the estate roads and out onto the unmetalled footpaths [...]” (Macfarlane 2013: 189) the phrase “the estate roads” is translated as “prywatne tłuczniowe drogi” (Macfarlane 2018: 217), that is “private gravel roads”. So, in the Polish translation, there is absolutely no connection between “estate Land Rover”, “estate hunting lodge” and “estate roads”; no idea of the narrator describing a specific estate with a Land Rover car, a shooting lodge and its own roads.

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[6] See, for example, `http://www.historycy.org/index.php?showtopic=50168&st=135`.

The translator had problems with the word “feather”, used by Macfarlane in two different chapters of his travel book to refer to the same ‘structure’:

It was a feather, a foot-and-a-half-long stone feather, made of a polished black rock with green flecks. [...] *The feather* was cool in my hands and impossibly heavy. (Macfarlane 2013: 175)	*Było to skrzydło, półtora stopowe kamienne skrzydło,* wykonane z wypolerowanej czarnej skały poprzetykanej zielonymi drobinkami. [...] *Pióro* było chłodne w dotyku i absurdalnie ciężkie. (Macfarlane 2018: 200-201)

The strange ‘structure’ described by Macfarlane, made by his friend Steve Dilworth out of dolerite and whalebone, is “a feather”. The word is repeated twice in the first sentence and then used once again some ten lines later. In the Polish version, it becomes “skrzydło”, which is a ‘wing’. The word is repeated twice. But by the time the translator gets to the next “feather” he has ‘learnt’ to translate it (correctly) as a “pióro”. So the same object is first “skrzydło” (wing) to be transformed into “pióro” (feather), which obviously confuses Polish readers. When, seventy pages later, the narrative persona picks up another feather, he makes this comment.

When I picked it up it weighed almost nothing: an inverse echo of *Dilworth’s dolerite and whalebone structure*. (Macfarlane 2013: 256)	Podniosłem je, wydawało się nic nie ważyć, odwrócone echo dolerytu *Dilwortha i rzeźby przedstawiającej kość wieloryba*. (Macfarlane 2018: 290)

This time Dilworth’s ‘feather’ is described by the persona as a “dolerite and whalebone structure”; while the translator has apparently forgotten about this object, which he called both “skrzydło” (wing) and “pióro” (feather) earlier. Here, he probably thought that there are two objects being referred to (even though the noun “structure” is used in the singular in the original): “doleryt Dilwotha i rzeźby przedstawiającej kość wieloryba”, which literally means “Dilworth’s dolerite and a sculpture representing a whalebone”, rather than one “structure” made by Dilworth of dolerite and whalebone.

Sometimes, using too general terms (hypernyms) may lead to some cultural misunderstanding:

An hour later I went for a walk with *a flask of whisky* to keep me warm. (Macfarlane 2013: 6)	Godzinę później wyszedłem na spacer z *butelką* whisky; chciałem mieć coś na rozgrzewkę. (Macfarlane 2018: 14)

A flask is a type of bottle but not exactly a "butelka" (bottle). In English the term "hip flask" often gets shortened to "flask", as is the case here. The equivalent in Polish is "piersiówka". The word derives from "pierś" (breast), suggesting an alternative placement of such a useful implement. Yet "flask", although a type of "bottle", differs from an ordinary bottle in that it is usually much smaller than a standard bottle (of whisky). It is handier because of its flat shape and is usually made of some durable stuff, like stainless steel, and for all these reasons it is much more practical to carry on you (either on your hip or your breast) than an ordinary bottle. Although Macfarlane makes it clear on several occasions in *The Old Ways* that he is not a teetotaller, he probably would not want to be seen by his Polish readers leaving his Cambridge house late on a December evening carrying a *bottle* of whisky on his hip.

Sometimes, the translator's lack of precision is not so culturally poignant, and merely clumsy:

[...] edited of its *golfers* by the darkness [...] the county's most exclusive golf-course [...]. (Macfarlane 2013: 8)	[...] pozbawione, jak to nocą, *zawodników* [...] to najbardziej luksusowe pole golfowe w kraju [...]. (Macfarlane 2018: 16)

The word "golfers" is translated as "zawodnicy", a word which means "competitors"; this word is much more general and not precise in the sense that not all "golfers" take part in "zawody" (competitions). So, it should be translated as "golfiści", a word which means "golfers", or alternatively as "gracze" (players).

Sometimes, such too-general terms result in a loss of comprehension:

South and uphill where I stood, big humps surrounded what appeared to be a small lake with a *flagstick* in its centre. (Macfarlene 2013: 7)	Na południe, czyli w górę zbocza, zobaczyłem wielkie białe garby otaczające, jak się zdawało jeziorko z zatkniętym *masztem* po środku. (Macfarlane 2018: 16)

Robert Macfarlane describes here a golf putting green (although it is now not green, but white, because it is covered by snow) with "a flagstick" in its centre. Konieczny translates the term "flagstick" as "maszt" (mast), which is not only not precise, but also misleading.

What we have here is a long stick with a flag on top; such a "flagstick" stuck in a hole is a very characteristic feature of golf courses. Konieczny, instead of using a descriptive term like "(długa) tyczka z flagą na szczycie" ([long] stick with a flag on top) or "kij z flagą pokazujący położenia dołka" (a stick with a flag showing the position of a hole)[7], uses a hypernym, "maszt", usually reserved for taller and more substantial vertical structures. Moreover, he 'forgets' about the "flag". In this way, whereas it is clear from Macfarlane's original fragment that he is describing "a golf putting green", even though he does not use the term, and the green is not green but white or grey in the moonlight, Konieczny, through a wrong selection of words, makes the description distinctively less clear and confusing to readers.

Finally, the translator felt free to move far beyond the range of meanings connected with a given word/phrase, for example:

[...] mix of excitement, incompetence, *ennui*, adventure and epiphany. (Macfarlane 2013: 31)	[...] mieszanina podekscytowania, niekompetencji, *uwznioślenia*, przygody i epifanii. (Macfarlane 2018: 42)

"ennui" is translated as "uwznioślenie", which means "ennoblement".

Realization errors

Sometimes in *Szlaki* lexical mistranslation is probably the result not of a lack of linguistic competence but, most probably, of too quick and perfunctory reading of the original, and working under the pressure of time, a similar phenomenon which has been suggested above in the case of pairs of words like 'copse-corpse'. Here are some more examples:

They looked at us, unsmiling [...] They knew the boat and they knew Ian, but the implication was clear enough: Keep away, this is our day, our rock. Ian waved the greeting, *they nodded back*. (Macfarlane 2013: 136)	Spoglądali na nas nie uśmiechając się [...] Znali łódź, znali Iana, ale ich sylwetki sugerowały wyraźnie jedno. "Trzymajcie się z daleka, to nasz dzień, nasza skała." Ian pomachał im na powitanie, *oni odpowiedzieli w ten sam sposób*. (Macfarlane 2018: 157)

The last sentence in translation means "Ian waved the greeting, they answered the same way". Whereas in the original they did not answer in the same way, that is they did not wave, but merely "nodded back", quite a different reaction. In fact, the narrator goes quite a long way to describe this tense, even if brief, meeting between the *guga* hunters and Ian (with his crew), and the effect is spoilt at the end in the Polish translation.

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[7] See, *Angielsko-polski słownik golfowy* (English-Polish golf dictionary), `www.golfowy.pl/slownik_golfowy`.

Kierkegaard speculated that the mind might function optimally at the pedestrian pace of *three* miles per hour […]. (Macfarlane 2013: 27)	Kierkegaard wysunął tezę, że umysł funkcjonuje optymalnie w czasie wolnego spaceru z prędkością *ośmiu* mil na godzinę. (Macfarlane 2018: 37)

The optimal pace for the human mind to function in the translation is changed from "three miles an hour" in the original to eight miles per hour; definitely a trot, rather than a "pedestrian pace".

[…] *two* yellow-striped dolphins broke water […]. (Macfarlane 2013: 106)	[…] *trzy* pokryte żółtymi pasmami delfiny wyskoczyły nad wodę […]. (Macfarlane 2018: 123)

Two dolphins from the original become "trzy" (three) dolphins in the translation. In a similar manner:

Scouring the beach, I discovered *a single white stone,* the size and shape of an ostrich egg. (Macfarlane 2013: 111)	Przeglądając plażę, odkryłem *dwa pojedyncze białe kamyki* o rozmiarach i w kształcie strusiego jaja. (Macfarlane 2018: 130)

"[A] single white stone" becomes "dwa pojedyńcze białe kamyki" which means "two single white pebbles". The word used by the translator for "stone" is "kamyk", which is a diminutive of "kamień" (stone). So, "kamyk" is a small stone, something like a pebble, a word which should not be used in the context of a stone the size of an ostrich egg. How a single white stone has been translated as two single white pebbles is beyond my comprehension. One more comment, "przeglądając plażę", is not a good translation of "scouring the beach". The Polish word "przeglądać" (to survey, to browse, to scan) does not connote well with "the beach". I would go for "przeczesując plażę, odkryłem […]" (while combing the beach I discovered […]).

With Finlay's help I managed to confirm more facts about Manus's Stones and *the man who had laid them.* Manus had indeed lived as a crofter […]. (Macfarlane 2013: 149)	Dzięki pomocy Finlaya udało mi się potwierdzić kolejne fakty na temat Kamieni Manusa i *ludzi, którzy je ustawili.* Manus rzeczywiście był zagrodnikiem […]. (Macfarlane 2018: 171)

In the original we have three nouns in the singular. The narrator states that Finlay helped him to confirm facts about “Manus’s Stones”, that is about one person named Manus, and that he also confirmed more facts about “the man who had laid them”, that is about this man called Manus. And the next sentence gives one more confirmed fact about Manus (that he had lived as a crofter). In the Polish translation the fact about Manus’s Stones is translated correctly, but afterwards we have “i ludzi którzy je ustawili”, which means “and the men who laid them”, the plural noun (ludzi) with the plural ending for the verb (ustawili). And then we move to the correctly translated phrase that Manus had really been a crofter. So, whereas in the original it is clear that Manus laid Manus’s Stones, in the Polish translation some mysterious “men who laid them” appear.

They had an acre of the land behind the house which ran up to the treeline of the forestry and *seventeen* acres of rough marshy pasture [...]. (Macfarlane 2013: 193)	Dziadkowie mieli akr ziemi wznoszącej się ku skrajowi lasu oraz *siedem* akrów nierównego, bagnistego pastwiska. (Macfarlane 2018: 222)

Seventeen acres of rough marshy pasture becomes “siedem akrów” (seven acres).

When Edward Thomas travelled to fight *on the Western Front,* [...] (Macfarlane 2013: 198)	Kiedy Edward Thomas pojechał walczyć *na froncie wschodnim* [...] (Macfarlane 2018: 228)

The Polish translator sent Edward Thomas not to the Western Front, but the Eastern Front (“na froncie wschodnim”).

I passed the elderly Spanish men, shirtless in the noon heat. (Macfarlane 2013: 256)	Minąłem starszego Hiszpana, który w południowym upale rozebrał się do pasa. (Macfarlane 2018: 291)

While the narrative persona passed at least two shirtless “elderly Spanish men”, in the translation he passed just one “starszy Hiszpan” (an elderly Spanish man).

Near Bariton, near the county border with Sussex. (Macfarlane 2013: 313)	Pod Bariton, na granicy hrabstwa Essex. (Macfarlane 2018: 354)

Thus, Bariton is moved from the border of Sussex to the border of Essex.

Mistaking two SL syntagms or verb frames

In *Szlaki*, mistranslation of a syntactical and/or grammatical nature is not as common as mistranslation caused by lexical complexities of words and phrases, but it is not particularly rare. Here are some examples:

The brown sails of the cattle boats have gone from the Minch. On slipways and jetties from Skye to Kintyre, thrift grows undisturbed in the crannies of stones […]. (Macfarlane 2013: 191)	*Brązowe żagle statków z bydłem wypływały z cieśniny Minch.* Pochylnie i mola, od Skye do Kintyre, porasta zawciąg zapuszczający korzenie w szczelinach pomiędzy kamieniami […]. (Macfarlane 2018: 219).

This is the beginning of the quotation Macfarlane used from a book by A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.* The first sentence was translated as "Brązowe żagle statków z bydłem wypływały z cieśniny Minch" ("The brown sails used to go from the strait of Minch"), misunderstanding the "have gone", which here means, "have disappeared" and translating the sentence in the past tense with the verb "wypływały" (sailed out of). It is not only an example of mistranslation, but also of clumsy Polish, for in the first sentence it is not the ships themselves, but their brown sails which "wypływały z cieśniny Minch" (sailed out of the Minch). Of course, this sentence does not connect with the second one in the Polish translation. The first one is about the cattle ship which sailed out of Minch, and the second correctly uses the present tense and conveys the idea of "thrift growing undisturbed".

The next example shows a problem that is partly grammatical, concerning the third conditional and the fact that it refers to the past, and is partly culture-bound:

If the Broomway hadn't existed, Wilkie Collins *might have had to invent it*. (Macfarlane 2013: 60)	Gdyby Broomway nie istniała, *mógłby ją wymyślić* Wilkie Collins. (Macfarlane 2018: 70)

Macfarlane uses the third conditional here, referring to the past, and referring to a well-known 1859 novel by Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White,* which opens with Walter Hartright, one of the novel's narrators, describing his meeting at night on the road outside London with the ghost-like figure of "a woman in white". Konieczny changes the conditional to the present, and his sentence means: If the Broomway did not exist, Wilkie Collins could invent it. Which does not make much sense in view of what has been written above. The Polish sentence "Gdyby nie istniała Broomway, Wilkie Collins byłby zmuszony ją wymyślić" refers to the past, and the fact that Collins might have *been forced* ("might have had to") to invent it. However, without the knowledge of Collins's novel, this sentence in Polish is pretty enigmatic. Should a translator's footnote be added here? How many more translator's footnotes should be added to hundreds of Macfarlane's footnotes? It is an open question. The kind of question I would prefer to be asking rather than complaining about errors.

Omissions (elisions)

Hejwowski is strict about omissions. He declares that they "are hardly ever justified – in translations of more ambitious literary works probably never" (2004: 226). It is individual words, short phrases, and whole sentences which are omitted in *Szlaki.* I will start with two examples in which whole sentences are elided, in an attempt to show the detrimental effect omission has on comprehension:

> On one July evening in 1932, 16,000 people boarded special scheduled Southern Railway trains in London to follow a moonlit walk over a stretch of the Downs, gathering to watch sunrise from the Ring. *But then in 1987 the Great Storm blew in and wrecked Chanctonbury.* It's now missing most of its main trees, and its interior has reverted to a sprout scrub of ash and bramble. (Macfarlane 2013: 317)

For some reason, in the Polish translation the whole sentence "But then in 1987..." is left untranslated. This sentence is important in this paragraph, as it 'connects' the first and third sentences of the quoted fragment. Without it, the whole paragraph is not logical and lacks clarity.

They were shot at from the banks. Warlordism was rife here. *There were no casualties*. But to come under fire before they'd even reached the mountain [...]. (Macfarlane 2013: 268)	Zostali ostrzelani z brzegu. W okolicy roiło się od watażków. Wszystko rozumiem, że ale żeby zostać ostrzelanym zanim w ogóle dotarło się pod górę [...]. (Macfarlane 2018: 302)

The whole short sentence "There were no casualties" is left untranslated, which changes the perception of the fragment considerably. Moreover, the next sentence is not very clear because there is one word which is unnecessary and the sentence is not grammatical. "że ale żeby zostać ostrzelanym" means "that but to come under fire", the unnecessary word is "że", which here means "that"; this "że" is probably some overlooked remnant of an earlier version of this sentence.

Sometimes the elision of a phrase is only a part of a sentence, but such phrases in Macfarlane's precise, even though poetic, prose are rarely redundant:

The event had outraged the Sabbatarians on the island (of whom there were many) and delighted the secular modernizers (of whom there were fewer, *Finlay being one*). (Macfarlane 2013: 145)	Zdarzenie to wzbudziło oburzenie ludzi fanatycznie czczących świętość niedzieli (których było wielu) i uradowało świeckich zwolenników postępu (których było mniej). (Macfarlane 2018: 166)

The phrase "Finlay being one" is left untranslated. This might seem not a very crucial deletion if we look at this sentence only. But this sentence comes at the end of a long paragraph devoted to Finlay MacLeod, "naturalist, novelist, broadcaster, oral historian, occasional selkie-singer and seal-summoner and an eloquent speaker in both English and Gaelic" (Macfarlane 2013: 144-45), and therefore the omission of the "Finlay being one" markedly reduces the rhetorical passion of the narrative persona.

Yet, it still seems to sail upon the flatlands that surround it, *as Ely does upon the Fens*. (Macfarlane 2013: 257)	Mimo to miasto wydaje się żeglować po otaczającej ją równinie. (Macfarlane 2018: 291)

The simile used by Macfarlane here of Segovia and Ely, a cathedral town in the Fens some fifteen miles north of Cambridge, is left untranslated. Besides, the pronoun in the Polish translation should be "je" rather than "ją" as it refers to the word "miasto" (town), which in Polish is neuter in gender and should have the pronoun "je", not the feminine pronoun "ją". The elision of the simile with Ely and the Fens is similar to another elision in the sentence "The house has been recently constructed *on Morrisian principles*" (Macfarlane 2013: 338), where "Morrisian principles" is elided in the Polish translation. It is difficult to assess to what extent these two examples are the result of some conscious "domesticating strategy" of the translator, or whether they point to the haste in which he was translating *The Old Ways*. Sometimes, the elision of just one word causes a profound change in the meaning:

This convention—born of a region that did not pass through centuries of feudalism, and therefore *has no inherited deference to a landowning class* [...]. (Macfarlane 2013: 16).	Obyczaj ten—zrodzony w części świata, która nie została poddana wielowiekowym wpływom feudalizmu, *a przez to nie odziedziczyła odrębnej klasy posiadaczy ziemskich* [...]. (Macfarlane 2018: 23-24)

The Polish translation literarily means: "This convention—born of a region which was not subjected to centuries of feudalism and therefore has not inherited a separate class of landowners." It is not an inheriting "landowning class" which is crucial in the original but an inherited "deference to a landowning class". There is no "deference" (szacunek) in the Polish translation. One word is missing but the meaning is changed a lot.

Translation of culture-bound items

And, finally, just two examples of mistranslation in the category of culture-bound items:

Now and then I treat myself to a night in *a bed & breakfast* [...] but mostly I sleep just wherever I am walking. (Macfarlane 2013: 313)	Od czasu do czasu pozwalam sobie *na spędzenie nocy w łóżku i śniadanie* [...] ale zazwyczaj śpię tam, gdzie akurat dojdę. (Macfarlane 2018: 355)

Here the translator did not recognize that "a bed & breakfast" means a *pension*, a cheap hotel, and he translated the phrase as "Now and then I treat myself to a night in bed and to a breakfast".

A former student of mine, Matt Lloyd, had walked the full *Camino* one autumn, with a knapsack and a ukulele. (Macfarlane 2013: 243)	Jeden z moich dawnych studentów, Matt Lloyd przeszedł jesienią całą *drogę św. Jana* z plecakiem i ukulele. (Macfarlane 2018: 275)

Here "Camino" becomes "droga świętego Jana" ("the road of St. John"). Why St. John and not St. James? Why did the translator not leave the Latin/Spanish word "Camino", used also in English and Polish, but instead venture out on his own little translational pilgrimage, changing saints on his way?

Final remarks

There are many more instances of what I consider errors in *Szlaki;* they have not been presented because of the editorial limits on the length of the present paper. I am convinced that the selection of errors presented and discussed is comprehensively representative of the whole range of problems present in this translation. While embarking on the theme of problems encountered in Polish translations of Anglophone travel writing, I imagined that I would be focusing mostly on slightly more 'sophisticated' issues connected with the translation and publication of travel writing, such as the extent to which translators' and/or editors' footnotes should be used to help Polish readers with specific issues. It turned out, instead, that while working on the Polish translations of *The Old Ways* by Robert Macfarlane (as well as on *The Road to Wigan Pier* by George Orwell), I was making longer and longer lists of items I considered to be errors, many of which are of a relatively basic, rudimentary nature. At the beginning of my travel/translation research, I came across a statement Elżbieta Tabakowska made in the chapter entitled

"Polish Tradition" in Mona Baker's *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies,* that after "the political upheaval of 1989 [...] [i]n addition to international best-sellers a large number of substandard books began to appear in equally substandard Polish translations" (1998: 529). Then, I was taken aback by the boldness with which the (slightly bizarre) dichotomy was constructed between "international best-sellers" and "substandard books", and also by the apparent relish with which the derogatory label "substandard" was used twice in the same sentence to refer both to books and to their translations. I still believe that such labelling and dichotomising should be avoided by researchers at all costs, but I now see that a serious problem exists in this area. Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, a renowned Polish publishing house of long-standing, published a travel book by a renowned British writer that few scholars or critics would call 'substandard'. The graphic layout of the translated book, with a photo by Filip Springer, a celebrity writer, and photographer, is fully professional, with all the appropriate blurbs by the appropriate celebrity writers. But then, despite two "series editors", Sylwia Smoluch and Bogusław Twardowski, one book editor, Piotr Chojnacki, one proof-reader, Anna Gradecka, (whose names and functions are listed on page 2), we get a translation riddled with errors at various levels, making the complex, poetic and artistic prose of Robert Macfarlane, at many points, clumsy and difficult for the Polish reader to comprehend.

It is not directly a problem of Jacek Konieczny's lack of a degree in English. Obviously, such a degree helps but is not necessary to have a firm grasp of the language from which one translates. Konieczny, despite his lack of an English degree, is convinced that he is a competent translator from English, particularly considering the fact that he has translated and published more than fifty books. My working hypothesis, which I would like to test and/or develop, is that with this huge increase in the number of books translated from English into Polish after 1989 (including travel books), there has been a great increase in the number of professional translators making their living out of it. But the book market in Poland has not increased much in size, which means that with literally thousands of new books published each year, many of them translations from foreign languages, the average number of copies of a given title sold is diminishing, although this is only a supposition because such data are considered confidential. As translation costs constitute a considerable part of the expenditure encumbered by publishers, it is natural that publishers try to reduce these costs by paying translators as little as possible. This, in turn, means that translators, in order to survive, must 'produce' many, many pages of translation a day. This means that they make mistakes, at least some of which they would not have made if allowed to work at a more relaxed pace. And then three editors and a proof-reader employed by Wydawnictwo Poznańskie also work so quickly and perfunctorily that they let all these errors remain, together with such misspellings as "należąy" (instead of "należący"), "takih" (instead of "taki") or "śmieci" (instead of "śmierci") (Macfarlane 2018: 252, 255, 367).

Another hypothesis worth venturing is that the translation of Anglophone non-fiction travel books (travel writing) offers, on average, more challenges to a translator than the translation of a love story, fantasy novel, or thriller. The combination of complex, 'artistic', often poetic language, yet grounded in a non-fictional paradigm often supported by many discourses—in the case of *The Old Ways* such discourses include: naturalistic, geological, sporting, tourist, academic—is prone to result in mistranslation on a much larger scale than the same translators commit while translating, for example, popular detective fiction.

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Funding

This study was supported by the Regional Initiative of Excellence Programme of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education for the years 2019-2022; project number 009/RID/2018/19; the amount of funding 8,791,222 PLN.

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BOOK REVIEW

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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.07

The Commodification of James Joyce

Consuming Joyce: A Hundred Years of Ulysses in Ireland,
by John McCourt, Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, 288 pp.
ISBN: ePDF: 978-1-3502-0583-3. £65.

Since its publication in 1922, James Joyce's *Ulysses* has been mined by critics more than it has been read by the general public. For several decades academic work on the novel was largely carried out by American scholars, much to the chagrin of Irish academics, and lambasted by everyone from the Irish press and politicians to Joyce family members, and perhaps most of all by the Roman Catholic establishment, which in the years after the formation of the Irish Free State operated almost as an arm of the government.

John McCourt's highly readable monograph study describes, decade by decade, the reception not only of *Ulysses*, but also of Joyce's other works in Ireland, and analyses the growing commodification of Joyce, charting the growth of the 'Joyce industry' from the early Bloomsday celebrations held by half a dozen enthusiasts to the modern day festivities attended by thousands of revellers, most of whom are happy to admit that they have barely opened Joyce's *magnum opus*. McCourt focuses on three aspects of the consumption of *Ulysses*: book sales and the early difficulty of obtaining copies of the book; scholarly exploration and critical reception at home and abroad; the use and abuse of Joyce and his work by vested interests, including the Irish government, private businesses, and the Irish tourist industry. A fourth and hitherto under-researched thesis is that Joyce's self-imposed exile is central to any interpretation of *Ulysses*. McCourt argues that Joyce was influenced by his life away from Ireland, especially in Trieste, much more than is acknowledged by most Joyceans.

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Though banned in the United Kingdom and the United States, *Ulysses* was never banned in Ireland. Indeed, the only work of Joyce to be banned in Ireland was *Stephen Hero,* the posthumously published version of what was to become *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* which fell foul of the censors from 1944 to 1951, the year in which the Censorship of Publications Board banned 539 texts out of the 717 over which they cast their disapproving eye.

In 1924, two years after its publication, W. B. Yeats, who described *Ulysses* as a work of genius, told Ezra Pound that copies were on sale in Ireland, though booksellers were reluctant to advertise their stock. The Irish Bookshop in Dublin had a copy in the window, but this was unusual. This is hardly surprising as the vilification of Joyce and *Ulysses* was vitriolic, even hysterical at the time and later, for example: "Unspeakable heap of printed filth" (*The Nation*), "Irish scum" and "filth" (*Catholic Bulletin,* the latter comment from a Jesuit from Clongowes Wood College, Joyce's first school). That was the kind of backlash that *Ulysses* faced, and McCourt cites many instances of Irish pearl-clutching during the 1920s, including those from across the Atlantic, e.g. in the Irish-American newspaper *The Advocate,* where the novel was described as a "cesspool".

Ten per cent of buyers of the first edition of *Ulysses* were Irish, but some of those closest to Joyce were embarrassed to own a copy. His aunt Josephine, of whom Joyce was fond, locked her copy in a drawer and burned letters, but others were supportive. Apart from literary figures like Eliot and Pound, the great Irish tenor John McCormack, who had bought a first edition (Joyce also gave him a signed copy in Paris in 1922), defended the book repeatedly. McCormack was made a Papal Knight in 1928, and a Privy Chamberlain the following year, and this shows the ambivalence with which Joyce and his work were met by the hierarchy of the wider Church. It is remarkable that as late as 1963, Eason's bookshop in Dublin was selling *Ulysses* wrapped in brown paper, but in 1989 Irish President Patrick Hillery, on a visit to the Vatican, presented the library of St. Isidore's Franciscan college with a three-volume facsimile copy of the book.

Joyce had many influential and generous friends, not least of whom was the New York lawyer John Quinn, who regularly funded *The Little Review,* a literary magazine that serialized *Ulysses,* and fought the censors hard on Joyce's behalf, as he had done for Lady Gregory's touring company when it ran into trouble in the US for producing the work of John Millington Synge. Quinn championed several Irish writers, and was ready to help Joyce in any way he could, including money for the treatment of Joyce's eye condition. Otherwise, *Ulysses* was vilified both by the Irish community and powerful censors like the notorious John S. Sumner, vice secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, whose 1921 trial saw the censoring of *The Little Review*'s *Ulysses* chapters. It was not until Judge John M. Woolsey's landmark 1932 ruling that the book was not obscene that *Ulysses* was free.

McCourt follows the reception of *Ulysses* more in terms of its critical reception among scholars, especially in the United States, where academics soon took the lead in Joyce studies. Time and again, American universities acquired Joyce's manuscripts when they could have been bought by Irish institutions. In 1930, in the *Irish Statesman,* Frank O'Conner wrote that Joyce was, "a writer to be studied rather than read", which reflected the fact that the general reading public were simply not interested in ploughing through the huge and difficult volume. McCourt cites umpteen examples of both praise for *Ulysses* among (mostly American) academics, and obloquy heaped upon the work by (mostly Irish) churchmen, politicians, and journalists afraid of provoking the ire of the shadow state, which the Roman Catholic Church seemed to have become in Ireland. When Joyce died in 1941, his friend Mary Colum was unable to find a priest to say a mass for Joyce, and Eamon DeValera was against sending an Irish official to Joyce's funeral in Zürich. Lord Derwent, the British Minister to Bern, gave an admiring and generous speech at the graveside, but it would be a mistake to see irony in this; Joyce had many admirers as well as detractors in England, and had been awarded £100 from the Royal Literary Fund as early as 1916.

Richard Ellmann's magisterial Joyce biography was met with some hostility from Irish Joyceans when it appeared in 1959. L. A. Strong saw "those GI's of Joycean scholarship, the footslogging Americans in search of D.Ph's". It seemed that in Ireland writers interested in Joyce preferred to publish memoirs rather than academic studies, and while these books are enlightening, the academic heavy lifting was done in the United States. McCourt pays tribute to the work of American Joyceans without omitting that there was a steady increase in Irish academic interest. He suggests that Irish academics were perhaps somewhat intimidated and irked by the groundbreaking work being done across the Atlantic.

It was in the 1960s that Joyce finally began to be better appreciated in Ireland. Throughout that decade and into the 1970s, successful adaptations, on screen and on stage, were met with enthusiasm, and the late 1960s saw academic symposia discussing Joyce seriously, although the efforts of scholars were not always welcomed. In 1962 in New York, Mary Manning said, "Criticism in this field is no longer criticism; it is vivisection". It was an untypical view, especially stateside, but there had always existed, and will always exist, a view that Joyce's work should be simply read rather than analysed. Don't dissect it to understand it, some say, but McCourt argues that you simply have to. To get the most out of reading *Ulysses,* a knowledge of Irish history, Irish idiom, and Irish life is required. Joyce paid his readers the ultimate compliment of not condescending to them. He required intelligence and education from his readers, and those that apply both are rewarded most.

The commercialization of Joyce—what has become known as the Joyce Industry—is an element of his popularization, and McCourt takes the view that while sometimes crass, no publicity is bad publicity. The Martello Tower in Sandycove was opened in 1962, thanks to donations by John Huston and the support of T. S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett and others, and it became the focal point for Bloomsday celebrations until the James Joyce Centre finally acquired its North Great George St. premises in 1982.

Joyce's rehabilitation was not seamless, and Joseph Strick's 1966 film adaptation of *Ulysses* was banned in 1968 amid sometimes hysterical criticism. The ban in Ireland was lifted in 2000. Nevertheless, Joyce's status was finally being recognised, and his tourist potential was increasingly exploited. McCourt sees Joyce's 100th birthday celebrations as the turning point in Dublin's and Ireland's acceptance of their controversial son. Although no statue was erected, American Express paid for a bust in St. Stephen's Green. The ceremony was not attended by Joyce's increasingly litigious and notoriously bad-humoured grandson, Stephen, whose many grumpy, mean-spirited shenanigans are simply laid out by McCourt throughout the book with an air of weary resignation rather than rancour. Bunting was put out above the streets, and the Irish Department of Foreign affairs released £30,000 to fund posters, films and lectures abroad. The Joyce industry was born. A second bust, to be displayed in University College, was paid for by Royal Tara China from Galway, Nora Joyce's birthplace. Perhaps the clearest sign of Ireland making its peace with James Joyce was when Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Charles Haughey hosted a birthday reception in Dublin Castle, at which the literary, cultural and political great and good were in attendance (including, surprisingly, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel).

Apart from American Express, Irish companies have sponsored Joyce-associated events and artworks, including Guinness, which commissioned twelve artworks from Gerald Davis for the *Wine of the Country* exhibition. Other firms have jumped on the Joyce bandwagon with less taste, but the celebration of Joyce remains generally joyous and harmless (Bloom's Hotel, the Anna Livia Departure Lounge, Dublin Airport, an Irish Ferries ship named *Ulysses*). In 1987, an idea for a Bloom's Pillar was mercifully rejected, but in 1990, Marjorie Fitzgibbon's Joyce statue, wistful and with his trademark cane, appeared in North Earl Street and gave rise to the now famous Dublin penchant for giving commemorative works amusing titles. The statue was locally named *The Prick with the stick*, and the Anna Livia pool and fountain, moved from O'Connell Street to make way for the Spire, is known variously as *The Floozy in the Jacuzzi*, *Bidet Mulligan*, *Viagra Falls*, and *The Hoor* (i.e. whore, pronounced *hoower*) *in the Sewer*. In 1997, An Bord Fáilte (Irish Tourist Board) announced that Joyce's "presence is central to their marketing strategies", and while some have decried what they see as the tasteless commercialization of the great author, others are less inclined to look a gift horse in the mouth. John Daly, in 1988, described Joyce as the "love-child of Michael Collins and Jack Charlton", a quote which sums up the ambivalent attitude to Joyce held by the Irish, a people well able to make fun of themselves.

Buildings associated with Joyce have been marked by plaques, and some might wonder why. Leopold Bloom's fictional birthplace, 52 Upper Clanbrassil Street, has a plaque on its wall commemorating an event that never took place. The plaque outside Joyce's birthplace in Rathgar certainly makes sense, but there is a tendency to take these things too far. Some Joyceans, including Professor McCourt, were upset to say the least when it was announced in 2021 that the building at 15 Usher's Island, where Joyce's *The Dead* is set, was to be redeveloped as a backpackers' hostel. The building was rented by Joyce's great aunts, and Joyce visited them often, but in recent years the place has fallen into disrepair, and the planning authorities decided to allow the redevelopment as the best way to preserve the building, whose structure will remain unaltered. By the time Joyce left Ireland, his family had inhabited no fewer than twelve houses. If Joyceans were to preserve each and every one of them, a substantial property portfolio would have to be looked after. Perhaps, in twenty or thirty years, the Usher's Island house will again come up on the market, and a benefactor will fund its restoration as a Joyce museum.

McCourt argues that "Joyce could simply not have been Joyce if he had stayed in Ireland". Escaping from the suffocating parochialism of Edwardian Ireland (an image that is perhaps over-egged), Joyce embraced continental Europe as his real home. This was especially so during his years in Trieste and Paris, where he formed many real and lasting friendships, e.g. with Italo Svevo (one possible inspiration, along with Alfred Hunter and Leopoldo Popper, for the character of Leopold Bloom) and Paul Léon. Joyce's sister Eva claimed that her brother often said that he would have liked to return, but McCourt argues that Joyce's life had moved on so far that he could never have returned to the place he felt had spurned him.

To sum up, McCourt's *Consuming Joyce: A Hundred Years of Ulysses in Ireland* is a welcome addition to Joyce studies, and proves that the Joycean mine is nowhere near exhausted. Joyce famously joked that *Ulysses* would keep the professors busy for a hundred years. In that, he was conservative in his estimate. This monograph about his major novel, highly readable, erudite but with a light touch, full of anecdotes old and new, should find a ready home on the bookshelves of all Joyceans.

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BOOK REVIEW

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DOI: 10.15290/CR.2022.39.4.08

Nineteenth-Century Visions of Race: British Travel Writing about America by Justyna Fruzińska, Routledge, 2021, 158 pp. ISBN 9781032129327. £ 104.

The title of Justyna Fruzińska's monograph promises a refreshing and uncommon look at a topic and a period which for some time might have seemed all too well explored, and yet, she no doubt opens new research paths and poses previously unstated questions, offering complex, though not definitive solutions. Fruzińska's main preoccupation is with the representation of the racial/-ized Other in the works of British travellers journeying to America in the time period between 1815 and 1861, and the authors she discusses include Frances Wright, Frances Trollope, Thomas Hamilton, Harriet Martineau, Charles Augustus Murray, Frederick Marryat, Charles Dickens, and Isabella Lucy Bird, to name a few. She points to significant convergences in their accounts, predominantly with regards to their attitudes towards slavery and a peculiar shared ambivalence towards the non-whites they encountered, noting how these similarities stemmed from both a prevalent bias of the age and a seemingly lesser fact, which she, however, proves to have been grossly underappreciated—a cross-germination among the British travellers and writers who, as Fruzińska aptly observes, all read, recycled (not to say: plagiarized) and recontextualized one another's works.

For some time, it appeared as though the subject area had been exhaustively explored by scholars of various academic proveniences, approaching the subject matter—most generally, representations of race in American and British nineteenth-century literary accounts—from a wide array of angles. Many higher education institutions offered courses devoted to the subject area, and by and large, these have now earned pride of place at universities worldwide. However, up until roughly the 2010s, the area felt somewhat stagnant, perhaps due to its having been thoroughly scrutinised alongside largely uniform paths. Since the 2010s, a gradual revival has been taking place, most notably due to the work of scholars and academics such as Kate Flint and Tim Fulford. Fruzińska's monograph promises to take American and British race studies even further, and her idea of linking travel writing to the concept of the Other and racial issues in 19th-century British and American (though not exclusively) works comes across as fresh and long-called for.

The concept and methodology of the volume merit praise. Fruzińska brings together Anglo-American travel writing and racial discourses and situates them within the socio-historical context of the nineteenth century, offering an original take on issues well discussed, but hardly ever—if at all—approached from the angle of representation studies. This accounts for an innovative perspective filling the gap in travel writing studies that have hitherto rarely joined forces with minority discourses, and if they have, this was usually to uphold the kind of white supremacist thinking and imaging that Fruzińska's work seeks to dismantle. This is, by all means, an original perspective that constitutes a brave new approach to the field.

The structure and order of the material are logical, assuming the zooming in/zooming out perspective to tackle the investigated issues. What should also be stressed is the ingenuity and wit with which the very Table of Contents is prepared—chapter titles, and the titles of the subparts within the chapters, effectively whet the reader's appetite and make her curious to read on and discover what these are about. There are also some nice bits of alliteration in the chapter titles, some 'informed' puns—and these all make even the contents page itself stand out. This is not just another standard and accurate contents page but one which, while categorizing the investigated material and ordering it neatly, already manages to draw the reader into the intellectual adventure proposed by the author.

Fruzińska's writing style is original, well-paced, and elegant, thus making up an inspiring and gratifying reading experience. It does the academic market a great favour in that the text is written in a lucid and polished manner which allows the reader to engage with it and follow the author's argument, without having to work through the undue mesh of wordiness or stylistic and/or factual platitudes. One of the work's great strengths is also its broad academic appeal—while primarily definitely geared at researchers and academics engaged in the field of American Studies, as well as literary scholars and intellectuals with a background in the humanities pursuing their investigations of (history of) travel writing, and race and postcolonial studies, the book could be of interest to historians specialising in American history and its discourses, to researchers of inter/trans-cultural encounters and literary representations thereof, and, last but not least, to advanced-level students (MA, postgraduate) working towards their diploma theses on British and American literature and culture, especially in the nineteenth century.

The volume contains all it needs to stir the reader's curiosity and promises a stimulating intellectual adventure, delivered in an elegant style and with meticulous attention to good academic practices. The work opens with an illuminating introductory essay that lines up the chronology of British travel accounts devoted to America and explicates the significance of the emergent transatlantic relations, showing how they were not just exploits in travelling adroitness but—perhaps even more importantly—case studies of this curious new world with its unprecedented rules and laws. The rest of the material is neatly broken down into four chapters and a somewhat sparse but effective conclusion. Each of the subsequent chapters—"Nineteenth-Century Conceptions of Race", "Touring the Land of the Unfree", "Children of the Forest, Noble and Ignoble Savages: Encounters with Native Americans", and "Gazing at Racialized Bodies"—focuses on a set of key concepts related to instances of mutual observation performed by both British and American subjects (race, exclusion, discrimination, nature, gaze, and spectacle, etc.), and in every case, the discussions offered by the author are sharp and well-structured.

The last chapter, "Gazing at Racialized Bodies", strikes a particularly strong impression and almost feels like the proverbial cherry on this well-seasoned academic cake. The chapter starts with the complexities of the gaze, of gazing and being gazed at/gazed back at, exploring the power play informing those acts. The author manages the textual balance well, juxtaposing the more descriptive passages with more factual paragraphs and supplementing all with apt quotations. Further on, in the part "Seeking esthetic pleasure", the author demonstrates how travel accounts have contributed to discussions of race and whether or not and to what degree they have been fuelled by the travellers' craving for satisfying their curiosity, to the point of making up what they might or might not have seen. It is very interesting to follow the author's reasoning and trace the intricacies of these inter-dependencies which, as the subsequent parts of the chapter show, have played a major part in shaping the projected images of the 'savage', 'noble' or 'ignoble' racial Other.

By focusing primarily on travel writing, Fruzińska's book compares very favourably with some of the competing works. The author investigates very specific features of the genre, which facilitates a painstaking inquiry into how racial discourses tie in with travel writing, in the particular time period and under the specific circumstances she positions her research. In this way, Fruzińska takes the daring step of expanding the notion of race and representation by critically comparing the travellers' descriptions of Native Americans and black slaves, thus evading significant limitations and gaining an even greater plurality of representative stances.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Latin American Documentary Narratives. The Intersections of Storytelling and Journalism in Contemporary Literature by Liliana Chávez Díaz, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021, 312 pp. ISBN: 9781501366031. £ 64.80.

The Mexican journalist Juan Villoro claims that the Latin American chronicle (*crónica*) is the platypus of prose. Similarly to the platypus that brings to mind various species (a duck, an otter, a beaver) and remains outside one rigid category, the chronicle, which resembles different genres, is in fact a genre of its own. Like the novel, it narrativizes the world of characters, creates an illusion of life, and transports the reader to the centre of events; like the short story, it compresses a dramatic sense into a short space, thus implying that reality is meaningful and speaks a language of its own; like the interview, it contains dialogues; like the modern theatre-play, it reorders spatial and temporal elements of the plot-line; like the Greco-Latin theatre-play, it features a polyphony of witnesses (acting like a kind of chorus); like the essay, it puts forward strong opinions; and like the autobiography, it is informed by memorial tonality and a first-person perspective. The catalogue of influences can be extended almost *ad infinitum* (Villoro 2016: n.p.). The Venezuelan journalist Boris Muñoz maintains that if the chronicle is like a platypus, reporters are more like bats, because despite being mammals like most land animals, they fly. To fly, in this figurative sense, means to use the language to give writing a certain verbal aestheticism and a use of the imagination that makes it literary (Muñoz 2012: 630).

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In the 19th century, Latin American writers began experimenting with hybrid forms of narrative. It was a quest for new ways of storytelling, for a hybrid form, in which, according to Anibal Gonzales and Alejo Carpentier, the journalist and the novelist became the same person. In Latin American culture there is no clear definition of the chronicle. Alberto Fuguet, a Chilean writer, admits that he does not know what a chronicle is, and that he fails to distinguish between journalism and fiction when it comes to writing, because they represent the same "gaze" (Aguilar 2010: 159). What is more, the chronicle is not the only genre practiced by Latin American journalists. As Mark Kramer says, "the genre of telling true stories goes by many names" (Kramer & Call 2007: xv). Chronicle (*crónica*), reportage (*reportaje*), interview (*entrevista*), *testimonio,* creative nonfiction, to name but a few, all these occupy an in-between space stretching from journalism to fiction, and all of them can be called the platypuses of prose, or better, as Liliana Chávez Díaz proposes, "Latin American documentary narratives".

Liliana Chávez Díaz, who specializes in contemporary Latin American narrative, and who has been a cultural and investigative journalist, in her recently published book *Latin American Documentary Narratives. The Intersections of Storytelling and Journalism in Contemporary Literature* ventures into complex terrain to contribute to our understanding of various hybrid journalistic genres (such as *testimonio, crónica,* new journalism, literary reportage, non-fiction). She decides to give them one common name: "Latin American documentary narratives" in the face of their hybridity and fluid boundaries, and explores them as a Latin American cultural phenomenon.

Chapter 1 constitutes a historical overview of *testimonio, crónica* and literary journalism, and discusses their stylistical differences. The question that arises is why the author presents only three of the hybrid journalistic genres practiced in Latin America and does not take part in the discussion on the differences between *reportaje, crónica, entrevista,* and *noticia,* and does not present their history as was the case with testimonio, crónica and literary journalism. The author briefly mentions *reportaje* and *crónica* (79), and interview and news (112), and returns to them later, in Chapter 6. However, it is unclear why she does not give them more attention in Chapter 1, which was supposed to constitute “a historical overview of diverse genres” (8). Such prominent journalists as Germán Castro Caycedo, Juan José Hoyos and Daniel Samper Pizano[2], who discussed the complexities of history and the nomenclature of the aforementioned genres, are not even mentioned in Chávez’s book. However, once Chávez moves to the analysis of the primary texts, *Latin American Documentary Narratives* shines. In Chapter 1 the author also proposes a new reading of “documentary narratives”, which concentrates on the process of production, style of writing, ethical approach, and the encounter of the journalists with their informants.

In Chapter 2 Chávez concentrates on two works: Gabriel García Márquez’s *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor*[3] (1955) and Rodolfo Walsh’s *Operation Massacre*[4] (1957), which are credited as the first major non-fiction novels of investigative journalism and antecedents of contemporary documentary narratives. Chávez undertakes their detailed analysis.

Chapter 3 focuses on the life stories and works of Elena Poniatowska and Carlos Monsiváis, who is one of the founding fathers of Latin American narrative journalism in the twenty-first century. Chávez analyses the works of these two chroniclers of Mexico City. The chapter describes their different worldviews, styles, methodology, their emotional commitment to their work, and the representation of ‘others’.

In Chapter 4 Chávez examines the narratives of Argentinian writer Tomás Eloy Martínez and the history behind them, and proposes a palimpsestic reading of Martínez’s various works and visions of Juan Perón (Peronist cycle). At a time when the Argentine press was in crisis, journalists disappeared, and Perón maintained state censorship, Martínez believed that to write about Argentinian reality one had to resort to fiction, which, following William Faulkner’s idea, was far “more true” than any kind of journalism (qtd in Thompson 1979: 106). However, journalists have given testimony to life in Latin America, perhaps more vivid and more complex than the novel. And although their texts often read like good novels, they are about facts. Their language springs from urgency, from necessity, and achieves a total representation of life.

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[2] For further discussion, see, for example: Juan José Hoyos. 2009. *La pasión de contar: el periodismo narrativo en Colombia, 1638-2000,* Medellín: Ediciones Hombre Nuevo; Daniel Samper Pizano. 2004. *Antología de grandes reportajes colombianos*. Bogotá: Aguilar.

[3] The author of *Latin American Documentary Narratives* used the original titles of these works in Spanish. The full title is *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor: Who Drifted on a Liferaft for Ten Days Without Food or Water, Was Proclaimed a National Hero, Kissed by Beauty Queens, Made Rich Through Publicity, and was Then Spurned by the Government and Forgotten for All Time.* First English language edition: 1986, translated by Randolph Hogan.

[4] First English language edition: 2013, translated by Daniella Gitlin.

Chapter 5 concentrates on social and environmental issues in the works of the Mexican Juan Villoro and the Argentinian Martín Caparrós, who, according to Chávez, are "two of the best chroniclers in contemporary Latin America" (2022: 135). Chávez analyses the research methods and literary devices used by these chroniclers in their respective works *The Fear in the Mirror. A Chronicle of the Earthquake in Chile* (2010) and *A Moon. A Hypertravel Diary* (2009), which were born out of their private writing and recount dramatic experiences in Chile, in the case of Villoro, and in different parts of the world in the case of Caparro's work.

The presence of violence in the history of Latin America has been continuous and has manifested itself in different ways. Violence is now recognized as a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that permeates the core of many Latin American societies, and is also interlinked with an extremely high incidence of insecurity and fear. The different manifestations of violence contrast, overlap and intertwine with each other to form a very complex layering of multiple practices. In recent decades, Latin America has also produced the highest rates of urbanization, poverty and exclusion, and it has definitely been a place where being a journalist has often been a dangerous profession (Moser & McIlwaine 2004: 41). Chapter 6 analyses what Chávez calls "documentary metafictions", life stories of violence published by such authors as Leila Guerriero (Argentina), Cristian Alarcón (Chile), Arturo Fontaine Talavera (Chile) and Santiago Roncagliolo (Peru). The author examines the ways they represent 'others' in times of violent oppressive regimes and social crisis, and the relationship between the journalists and their sources.

Appendix to the book consists of transcripts of interviews Chávez conducted with Elena Poniatowska, Leila Guerriero, Christian Alarcón, Arturo Fontaine, Santiago Roncagliolo, Francisco Goldman, Martín Caparrós, and Juan Villoro. It seems unclear why Francisco Goldman is on the list of the interviewed journalists. He is a US novelist and journalist who covered the wars in Central America and wrote a nonfiction account of the assassination of a Guatemalan Catholic Bishop in a 2007 book *The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop?*, but he writes in English. Shouldn't his journalism be analysed in the context of American journalism?

Although Chávez's analysis of different journalistic genres remains at times unclear, and becomes foggier in an international context (new journalism, *reportaż zaangażowany*, literary reportage, *periodismo narrativo*, etc.), the book's strength lies in the brilliant reading of the corpus of the texts. Chávez's work is an important study of the Latin American hybrid journalistic narratives, the platypuses of prose. It is important also from the perspective of postcolonial trauma narratives as Chávez analyses the texts which show interest in the experiences and sufferings of those belonging to non-Western cultures (see: Craps 2013).

Journalism is a profession at the service of the right to know, and the documentary narratives analysed in Chávez's book give voice to those who have suffered. They draw attention to exploitation and injustice, and describe the reality that might otherwise be unknown. Victims have a right to tell their own stories, and they have a right to be recognized as legitimate sources of truth. Storytelling and "narrative truth" contribute to "the process of reconciliation by giving voice to individual subjective experiences" (Borraine 2002: 152). It is also a way "to speak for others and to others" (Felman 1995: 14). Bhabha claims that the right to narrate means the right to be heard, to be recognized and represented, and continues that:

> The arts and humanities contribute to the process of cultural translation by propagating and protecting what I call the "right to narrate"—the authority to tell stories, recount or recast histories that create the web of social life and change the direction of its flow. The right to narrate is not simply a linguistic act; it is also a metaphor for the fundamental human interest in freedom itself, the right to be heard—to be recognized and represented. (Bhabha 2014: n.p.)

Such a view was propagated in the 1980s by the law and literature movement, and the legal storytelling movement. In the 1990s, they tried to converge studies of legal and witness testimony into a storytelling imperative, and they entered into dialogue with Latin American *testimonio* and trauma studies (Stone Peters 2012: 20-21). Engaged storytelling has the capacity to illuminate history, time, and experience through narratives that invite listeners to find their respective places within these stories, and to actively move beyond them. Stories, to use Hayden White's thought, translate knowing into telling. They allow for coherence, integrity, fullness and closure, especially in the case of trauma experience. Stories transmit messages, impose a meaning on the events, and help survivors of trauma make sense of their experiences. Stories and storytelling are central to human experience and understanding. Liliana Chávez Díaz's book is dedicated to it, and it also opens a lively international discussion about the many facets of Latin American documentary narratives. Among the points in discussions are the parallels between Latin American documentary narratives and their North American cousin. In the period of the 1950s-1970s there were two parallel literary journalisms in Latin and Anglo America. Both registered the social, political, and economic transformations that were occurring on both continents. Among the more notable authors of such journalism in the United States were Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, Jimmy Breslin and John Sack. Among those in Latin America were Gabriel García Márquez, Rodolfo Walsh, and Miguel Barnet. Both groups produced some of the most compelling narrative nonfiction in their respective languages. But although their style of writing and the techniques they used were similar (recording everyday details, detailed descriptions, scene-by-scene construction, for example), the political and cultural contexts in which they wrote their stories were very different, and that is why their narrative projects were different in scope and nature (Calvi 2010: 63-64).

The book also opens a discussion about the representation of the Other, truth-telling, and shows that more research in this area is needed, including the documentary narratives from other countries in Latin America. Chávez shows her readers that documentary narratives form a group of interrelated genres with fluid boundaries and flimsy barriers. They are also related to others, such as travel literature, memoirs, historical and ethnographic essays, and fictional or semi-fictional literature. To show that Chávez entered murky waters in taking up the topic of documentary narratives, suffice it to quote Darío Jaramillo Agudelo about Villoro's definition of the platypus of prose: "the platypus is much more platypus than the one Villoro saw as a platypus"[5] (Jaramillo Agudelo 2012: 16). The topic is a challenging one but the author coped with the matter extremely well, and her book is a vital contribution to the field. *Latin American Documentary Narratives,* despite the aforementioned minor shortcomings, is an obligatory read for anyone interested in the subject, and gives its readers many jumping-off points from which to immerse themselves in this field of inquiry.

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[5] "[...] el ornitorrinco es mucho más ornitorrinco que lo que le vio Villoro de ornitorrinco"

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