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The Interplay of the Domestic and the Uncanny in Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*

Abstract. This article examines the effects resulting from the interplay of the domestic and the uncanny in Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*, a novel that boldly blends the conventions of the novel of manners and Gothic fiction. Analysing the selected key elements of the story, it is argued that while the uncanny is domesticated for a considerable part of the narrative, in the Gothic layer of the novel the mechanism of the uncanny is used to bring to light repressed voices. In the process, the long-established sources of inspiration for fantasy literature are rejected, and the nineteenth-century tradition of women's writing, in both its realistic and Gothic threads, is used to reinvigorate the thematic and structural repertoire of the genre.

Key words: uncanny, domestic, Gothic fiction, fantasy literature, Susanna Clarke.

A reader of Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* (2004) is confronted with an extensive three-volume novel that evades straightforward generic classifications and plays with a number of literary conventions. This novel not only reveals traces of such (sub)genres of fantasy as alternative history, historical fantasy, and fantasy of manners, but can also be read as an exquisite pastiche of nineteenth-century literary traditions, especially the novel of manners, characterised by its emphasis on the domestic sphere, and Gothic fiction, from which the supernatural elements of the novel are derived. Interestingly, these two dominant traditions are not juxtaposed against each other but carefully interwoven, which draws critical attention to the interplay of the domestic and the uncanny in the novel, and invites one to examine the effects and meanings resulting from such a unique approach to writing fantasy fiction.

First, it should be observed that Clarke's 'signature play' with the realistic and the supernatural, familiar and unfamiliar, evokes connotations with the concept of the uncanny as developed in "The Uncanny" (1919) by Sigmund Freud, who grounds his conceptualization of the term in the lexical ambiguity of the German words *heimlich* (familiar) and *unheimlich* (uncanny). Obviously,

as he observes, *unheimlich* is the negation of *heimlich* in the sense of ‘homely’ or ‘native’, which initially might lead us to conclude that “what is ‘uncanny’ is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar” (Freud 1955: 220). A closer semantic analysis reveals, however, a different shade of *heimlich*, which also signifies something ‘hidden’, ‘furtive’ or, to use Freud’s nomenclature, “concealed and kept out of sight” (225). Freud (1995: 226) further argues that the meaning of the term “develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite”, which eventually makes *unheimlich* “a sub-species” of *heimlich*. In its most basic sense, therefore, the effect of the uncanny is related to the occurrence of the feeling of fright, discomfort or strangeness arising without warning when something known and familiar suddenly becomes strange and unfamiliar. As Freud (1995: 241) writes, “this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression,” or in other words, “something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light.” While the notion originally occupied only a minor position in the Freudian canon, it has been reworked by various theorists, including Derrida, Todorov and Cixous, to become a late-twentieth century theoretical concept (Masschelein 2011: 3-7, 15-16) that “transgresses the disciplinary boundaries of literary studies, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics and fundamentally partakes of all three domains” (Masschelein 2011: 125).

Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell, quite atypically set in a specific historic period around the time of the Napoleonic wars, opens with reversing the mechanism of the uncanny by presenting the unfamiliar as familiar. The supposedly supernatural element of magic is initially established as a legitimate aspect of nineteenth-century England’s reality, delineated with truly Austenesque attention to social custom and proper manners. Magic is a purely theoretical discipline, equated with antiquarian research and scholarly knowledge – a domain of a group of “gentleman-magicians”, who formed a society and met to “read each other long, dull papers upon the history of English magic” (Clarke 2015: 3) and who “did not want to see magic done . . . only wished to read about it in books” (Clarke 2015: 21). From the appearance of two practicing magicians, Mr Norrell and Jonathan Strange, the reader is expecting a change, which indeed comes but does not go as deeply as anticipated. The former, in fact, does perform magic, which he treats as a necessary nuisance, but is still depicted as a reclusive, socially awkward scholar obsessed with acquiring knowledge, regulating its accessibility, and striving to make it “a respectable profession – no less than Law and a great deal more so than medicine” (Clarke 2015: 44); the latter is a man with a natural flair for magic and much better social skills, who favours improvised experimentation and postulates magic should be made available to everyone, including women and the lower classes. As a result of blurring the distinction between magic and knowledge, Mr Norrell and Jonathan Strange epitomise different attitudes to scholarship, i.e. meticulous research versus intuitive creativity (Scha-noes 2012: 244), different worldviews inherent to the Enlightenment and Romanticism (Thomson 2011: 322), or even different authorial approaches to writing fiction.

Despite these differences, leading to a temporary separation of the two magicians, staged here as an exemplary pamphlet war, they are united by Norrell’s “lively ambition to bring back magic to

England” (Clarke 2015: 41). Seeking public recognition, social position, and renown, both of them delve into something they vaguely comprehend, and fail to foresee the disastrous consequences of their actions. Furthermore, both belong to the privileged class of white, middle-class, wealthy men, focused on their gentlemanly occupation, which happens to be magic. Thus, in Clarke’s narrative the magic in the hands of Mr Norrell and Jonathan Strange does not seriously challenge the existing social order but becomes incorporated in its power structures. Both magicians, even if somewhat eccentric, find themselves comfortable within the system, while their magic is not meant to change the *status quo* but to produce practical solutions and conform to the rules by which the society operates, which is well exemplified by Strange’s service for the army in the Napoleonic wars, and once again shows Clarke’s strategy to render the uncanny as familiar and domesticated.

Jonathan Strange is not expected to blast fire or wipe out the enemy with powerful spells – the actual killing is left to ordinary, lower class, and preferably foreign *guerilla* soldiers. His involvement befits his social standing, whereas being a magician is just a subcategory of being a well-respected gentleman:

“Can a magician kill a man by magic?” Lord Wellington asked Strange. Strange frowned. He seemed to dislike the question. “I suppose a magician might,” he admitted, “but a gentleman never could.” (Clarke 2015: 223)

Overall, Strange’s exploits as a military magician contribute to Wellington’s success, and include the practical tasks of creating new roads for soldiers, changing the landscape, and moving the position of forests, rivers, and towns to confuse the enemy. Yet, his most spectacular achievement, with the biggest potential for uncanny effect, is raising seventeen dead Neapolitan soldiers to interrogate them. Necromancy, clearly an act of forbidden black magic, expected to curdle the blood of the readers, fails to achieve this effect due to unforeseen problems with communication – the zombies turn out to speak “one of the dialects of Hell” learnt, as Lord Wellington approvingly observes, very quickly for “[t]hey have only been dead for three days” (Clarke 2015: 357). The problem is soon fixed and the enlivened corpses begin to speak their “native, *earthly* language – a thick Neapolitan dialect of Italian, which to most people was quite as impenetrable and almost as horrible as the language they had been speaking before” (Clarke 2015: 357). They prove useful in providing the desired information. In fact “[b]eing dead, the Neapolitans were infinitely more anxious to please their questioners than any living informer could have been” (Clarke 2015: 357); yet Strange, ignorant of how to send them back, is haunted by the living dead until Wellington, who “greatly regretted such cruelty to men who had already suffered a great deal” (Clarke 2015: 358), gives the order to throw them on a bonfire.

The passages recounting these adventures show Strange’s magic in terms of Mendlesohn’s intrusion into reality¹ – resurrecting the dead is far from ordinary after all – which is, however, quickly

1 Concerned not so much with the definition of fantasy literature as with its construction and language, Farah Mendlesohn, in her influential *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008), distinguishes between four main categories, or modes, determined by the way in which the fantastic element enters the world of the narrative, i.e. the portal-quest fantasy, immersive fantasy, intrusion fantasy, and liminal fantasy. Each of them establishes its own set of practices, narrative

accommodated as familiar. The zombies, a vivid example of the uncanny as creatures that are both well-known and alien, simultaneously alive and dead, and thus creating a cognitive dissonance, usually serve to reveal one of the most universally repressed fears – the fear of our mortality. Yet, in the discussed passages, dread is virtually absent as it is submerged by practical concerns, and the process of reversing the mechanism of the uncanny produces a comic relief rather than fear. The otherness of the living-dead lies not so much in their ontological dualism as in their inability to speak a comprehensible language; the problem is resolved swiftly, with a conventional note of regret only, once they have ceased to be valuable. It is also relevant that the familiar is rendered as Englishness while the unfamiliar is denoted as foreign – a dialect of Italian is as alien as a dialect of hell; the landscapes on the Continent are nonchalantly transformed just as the maps of Europe can be created anew after the wars, as long as the process does not affect merry old England itself.

In this context Mr Norrell's mission to restore English magic fits into the bigger project of establishing British supremacy over other nations. The war waged against Napoleon "had made Great Britain the Greatest Nation in the World", and the magic "had been of vital importance in achieving this" (Clarke 2015: 362), one more tool employed as a means of establishing an empire in which Englishmen would see themselves half a century later "as the creators of a worldwide system in which they as it were gigantically replicated themselves, carrying with them their language, their culture, their institutions, their industry" (Kumar 2006: 189). These attempts to domesticate magic as an inherently English, not a universal, phenomenon, with the Englishness additionally restricted to upper-middle class gentlemen, dominate a considerable part of the narrative, which despite containing the elements of fantasy does not question the existing social order, akin in fact to that of the mimetic novel.

If the analysis stopped here, we could prematurely conclude that *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* fails as literature of subversion, which is posited by Rosemary Jackson (1981) to be a constituent element of fantasy, perceived as "a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss" (3) and opens "for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law [and] dominant values systems" (4). Yet, within the second layer of the novel, whose mode is derived from the Gothic literary tradition and clearly indicated to the reader by several mentions of Beckford, Lewis, Radcliffe and Byron, the fantastic escapes absolute domestication, and the parallel world of the Faerie intrudes into peaceful drawing-rooms, taking its toll. Even Strange, freed from Norrell's authority, undergoes a certain evolution and engages in exploring the old-forgotten roads connecting England with Faerie, the mysterious and gloomy land in-

strategies, and stylistic devices, which are meant to establish a particular "reader's relationship to the framework", a certain reading strategy that, Mendlesohn (2008: xviii) claims, might be anticipated by the authors as "part of their own poetics". In "intrusion fantasy", which is of greatest interest here, the fictional world of the narrative is "ruptured by the intrusion, which disrupts normality," Mendlesohn writes, "and has to be negotiated with or defeated, sent back whence it came, or controlled" (115). The thrill of the reader then is in the waiting for "the *approach* rather than the arrival of the fantastic" (118); the arrival itself might be in some cases experienced as disappointing or inadequate as "it marks the end of the adventure rather than the beginning" (118). For a more detailed discussion of *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* as intrusion fantasy, see pp. 165-170.

between the known and unknown reality, as a result of which magic appearing “so familiar” and “so *English*” suddenly becomes “inhuman, unearthly, *otherlandish*” (Clarke 2015: 428).

Perceiving the Gothic in *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* mainly in terms of the decorum, Thomson (2011:320) writes that “[w]hat sets her novel apart from the old, hoary tradition is how rarely its crosscurrents appear as tensions or paradoxes or even troublesome matters” and briefly notes the process of the domestication of the uncanny discussed in more detail above. Yet, he does not fully explore Clarke’s Gothic streak, also characteristic of the broader category of “intrusion fantasy”, demonstrated by her constant oscillation between latency, defined by Mendlesohn (2008: 16) as “the withholding, not of information, but of visuals or events,” and escalation, which relies on intrusions beginning “small and often quite distant” and then increasing “in magnitude, in scope, or in the number of victims.” This type of storytelling, from Gothic fiction to horror movie, relies heavily on “a sense of encroaching intimacy” (Mendlesohn 2008: 116), achieved by building tension, at the heart of which lies the feeling that there is always something lurking in the darkness, beyond the surface of the world, and escaping rational explanations.

The true “bringer of chaos” (Mendlesohn 2008: xxi) into the otherwise ordered and organized reality in Clarke’s novel is a mysterious “gentleman with thistle-down hair” (Clarke 2015: 84), a mischievous elf lurking in the darkness, summoned by Mr Norrell to assist him in bringing back to life Mrs Wintertowne, whose premature death prevents her from marrying Sir Walter Pole, an MP. The whole ordeal is presented in terms of a business transaction rather than romantic impulses; it is settled that the lady is to spend half of her life with Sir Walter and the other one with the elf. The profits are carefully calculated, and Mrs Wintertowne’s life is a currency in the exchange that benefits and satisfies all three gentlemen (the elf gets a half of her life; Sir Pole is able to marry her and secure his finances with her dowry; Mr Norrell gets political support for the enterprise of restoring magic) but brings little in return to the lady herself. However, an attempt to domesticate this magic resurrection in the same manner as in the case of the dead Neapolitans, i.e. by presenting its mundane and practical aspects, fails this time. Mr Norrell has been outwitted by the Gentleman and, consequently, lady Pole is destined to spend her days with her husband in London and the nights dancing at eerie balls in Lost-hope – a dreary, otherworldly, ominous mansion belonging to the elf and described in the vein of Gothic fiction. Unable to communicate the truth due to a muffling spell, so that every time she tries to tell anyone about her fate it sounds nonsense, she eventually becomes an embarrassment to her husband, who literally removes her from society by sending her to a secluded house in the countryside. Arabella, Jonathan Strange’s wife, becomes another prisoner of the darkling in the parallel Gothic reality while her husband is too preoccupied with magic to notice the fact. Similarly to Norrell, Strange is outwitted by the gentleman with thistle-down hair and tricked into believing that his wife has died (what “died” was actually a tree magically transformed into her shape by the elf and sent as an impostor). Strange’s inability to tell the difference between his wife and the tree comically undermines his failure, both as husband and magician, to go beneath the surface, to perceive his wife as a real woman not a silhouette, and to recognize the magic intervention.

With limited agency over their own lives, and their activity being restricted to the domestic sphere, both Lady Pole and Arabella typify innocent angels in the house²; yet the house fails to be a safe harbour in Clarke's novel. Lost-hope, the premises of the gentleman with thistle-down hair in the Faerie, virtually encroaches Lady Pole's apartments (both in London and in the countryside) to become their integral part. The existence of a supernatural house within an ordinary house, rather than next to it, not only blurs the boundary between fantasy and reality, but also challenges the assumed security of the domestic space. The danger, the narrative implies, lies within this space, not outside; and this realization triggers the mechanism of the uncanny: "the feeling of the uncanny is uncanny precisely to the extent that the sensation comes about in places where one should feel most secure, or with which one is most familiar" (Wolfreys 2004: 240). Interestingly, whereas Sir Walter Pole, Jonathan Strange and Mr Norell, as representatives of the establishment, are oblivious of the existence of the Gothic mansion within a familiar London estate, to Lady Pole both places are equally real. Her entrapment in Lost-hope symbolically represents the entrapment of women in the role of domestic angels; her inability to express her dread due to the muffling spell corresponds to the lack of a female voice in historical records.

The magic, performed in Clarke's novel by men, makes the effects of male dominance tangible, and relegates women into the Gothic layer of the narrative, a literary space that according to Ellis (1989: x) creates "in a segment of culture directed toward women, a resistance to an ideology that imprisons them even as it posits a sphere of safety for them." This observation seems to be particularly valid for the Female Gothic, the term coined by Ellen Moers in *Literary Women* (1976) and referring to Gothic fiction written by women, which can be seen as "a coded expression of women's fears of entrapment within the domestic and within the female body" (Smith, Wallace 2004: 1), as well as the articulation of "the terror and rage that women experience within patriarchal social arrangements, especially marriage" (Williams 1995: 136). The echoes of this rage are actually expressed in the novel by Lady Pole herself when she is finally rescued by two amateur magicians and accuses both Mr Norrell ("I have been enchanted! ... Bargained away for the sake of a wicked man's career! ... We must write to the editors of the newspapers!") (Clarke 2015: 788) and Jonathan Strange ("I consider him by far the worse of the two. By his negligence and cold, masculine magic he has betrayed the best of women, the most excellent of wives!... Oh, how these men protect one another!") (Clarke 2015: 788) of sacrificing and neglecting women for the sake of their personal and political ambitions.

The transformation of Lady Pole from an angel in the house into a raging monster, whose fury stems from the enforced silence, resonates with Gilbert and Gubar's (2000: 77) construction of "a madwoman in the attic," a figure that "emerges over and over again from the mirrors women

2 Although the very phrase "angel in the house" comes from the 1854 popular poem of the same title by Coventry Patmore and is associated with the Victorian ideal of womanhood, Gilbert and Gubar (2000) have convincingly argued that the foundations of the model considerably predate the actual poem. As they write, "[t]he ideal woman that male authors dream of generating is always an angel" (20) and the angelic qualities inherent in this ideal are always the same as in Patmore's verse, including passivity, submissiveness, meekness, grace, self-sacrifice and purity.

writers hold up both to their own natures and to their own visions of nature.” Their influential discussion of the 19th century literature written by women demonstrates that the “mad double” is central to both gothic and anti-gothic novels as it allows their authors to “dramatize their own self-division, their desire both to accept the strictures of patriarchal society and reject them” (Gilbert, Gubar 2000: 78). The second heroine of the novel, Arabella Strange, does not rebel against the patriarchal structures as vehemently as Lady Pole, yet in the end of the novel, after she has found her way back from the Faerie, she refuses to join her husband, entrapped in the Other-world, choosing to live on her own rather than share his fate. While Thomson (2011: 324) observes that a feminist reading of the novel is actually complicated by the fact that it is a love story, in which Strange declares “I have changed England to save my wife” (Clarke 2015: 805), it should be emphasized that his role in saving her is less prominent than he actually believes. Moreover, if *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* is a love story to a certain extent, it is one that concludes not with the reunion of lovers, but with their separation, with Arabella choosing her independence over marriage.

Even if the uncanny appears domesticated to a large extent throughout the novel, in the Gothic layer of Clarke’s narrative the mechanism of the uncanny operates in the manner defined by Freud to bring to light not only the repressed voice of women, but also that of people of colour and the lower-class poor, which is discussed in more detail by Elizabeth Hoiem (2008). The conclusion of the novel, in which the gentleman with thistle-down hair is finally defeated not by the two officially practicing magicians but “by the allied efforts of women, blacks, and the very poor white magicians put out of business by the professionalization of magic” (Hoiem 2008), also transforms England by opening it up to the Faerie. Although Mr Norrell and Jonathan Strange unknowingly played their part in the very process and came up with the necessary spell, their role in the revival of English magic proves accidental, and the magic that “returns” to England is not the gentlemanly profession desired by Mr Norrell but a more unpredictable force derived from the Raven-King, a mythical medieval magician-king of both England and Faerie. His story is told mainly through the footnotes, which can be seen as another unfamiliar (for fantasy fiction), or uncanny, structural intrusion that disrupts the flow of the narrative. These continual textual interruptions, sometimes used to add a trivial remark of little significance, are predominantly employed to build a whole system of magic, which is practically absent from the main narrative. As Mendlesohn (2008: 167) observes, “it is through the footnotes that the world of the fantastic slips through to disrupt the meaning or common understanding of the tale told in the main text.” In a novel so preoccupied with knowledge, they also draw attention to the issue of the validity, or invalidity, of textual and historical sources by frequently citing fictional texts, such as Francis Sutton-Grove’s (1682-1765) *De Generibus Artium Magicarum Anglorum*, 1741, and *Prescriptions and Descriptions*, 1749” (Clarke 2015: 64), as well as referencing equally fictive folk tales as real.

Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell at its surface level tells the story of two male magicians, as different as the heroines of *Sense and Sensibility*, who are trying to restore English magic, yet in doing so the novel consciously refers to the tradition of women’s writing, both stylistically and themati-

cally. The combination of two familiar traditions, Austenesque domestic realism and supernatural elements derived from the Gothic, additionally supplemented with a pastiche of historic documents, results in a surprisingly fresh and unfamiliar prose. While this quite unusual blend rarely produces the effect of real fear or fright, which is marked as a hallmark of the uncanny effect by Freud, it does create a certain hesitation in the reader, and makes the novel, to borrow Thomson's (2011: 321) words, "a *strange* read," during which silenced and repressed voices come to the surface. Drawing on the mechanism of producing the moment of the uncanny through estranging ordinariness, Clarke appropriates these old-established literary traditions to defamiliarize the form of a fantasy novel, which typically relies on other sources for inspiration. Yet, the process affects more than the form of the narrative, and allows one more voice to be heard – that of an author tired with the male-hero-oriented setting of fantasy. This default setting stems from the history of the genre, whose major forefathers, including Robert E. Howard, J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, were white men of Anglo-Saxon origin, drawing inspiration from European mythology, religion, medieval history and heroic or chivalric literature. Rejecting these sources of inspiration, Susanna Clarke, no longer a mad woman in the attic, is free to draw on the tradition of women's writing and forge her own lore and history to 'replace' what she finds unsatisfactory for the purpose of her enterprise. Boldly blurring the borders between real and imagined, familiar and unfamiliar, history and fantasy, *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* expands the boundaries of the genre and proves fantasy conventions to be open to creative and insightful reinterpretations.

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Can Themba: The Legacy of a South African Writer

Abstract. The article seeks to explore the world of Can Themba, a foremost literary figure during the era of apartheid. Through an examination of a selection of his short stories we realise that writers often found sub-textual ways of confronting that pernicious system. This article argues that Themba did just that. Finally it also seeks to make problematic issues of labelling and stereotyping.

Key words: apartheid, township, myopic, allegorical, cultural morality, Tsotsi.

This article hopes to perhaps revive an interest in Can Themba's writing. To do this it explores and examines Can Themba's short stories with particular reference to 'Mob Passion', 'Passionate Stranger', 'The Dube Train', 'Forbidden Love', and 'The Will To Die'. These stories exemplify the veneer of 'normality' propagated by a regime intent on a systemic cultural hegemony, where the lives of swathes of people were usurped at the expense of privileging the few.

By definition a work of art eschews superficial and inconsequential criticism. Instead, its literary significance arises in many diverse contexts. A work of fiction is no different. For any literary work to be meaningful to an audience it not only has to be appreciated in terms of its entertainment value but perhaps of greater import is its place in a contextual literary milieu. Can Themba's work suggests a rebuttal of a system (of apartheid) that had become so entrenched in the social and individual mores of that society, that it had become the norm and therefore unproblematic. Through an analysis of some of his short stories we see his narratives exploring deeply intertwined nuances of the apartheid system. We also begin to understand that they also demonstrate an ideological shift from the tacit acceptance (of apartheid norms) to a more symbolically oriented critique of the system. We as audience enjoy his engaging storytelling and then also begin to ponder their sub-textual revelations.

The name Can Themba means something to the 'Drum generation'. In the fifties and sixties he exemplified the easy flowing literary style of the intellectualized 'township' individual who wrote under apartheid. He weaved into his writing closely observed snapshots of life under siege but not at the expense of satire and comedic revelation. He was as Achebe once remarked a person who

‘moved and had their being in society’. Achebe clearly meant that Can Themba’s skill as an author was predicated on an intricate knowledge of the nuances of township life where shebeens³ presented themselves as social havens to the foraging street-wise youths. His talents were apparent to all in that era especially the way in which his vividly described characters were often upstaged by his currency of ironic twists.

He was born Daniel Canadoise D’orsay in Marabad South Africa in 1924. He graduated with a first class degree in English from Fort Hare University in 1947. He was a person who lived his life to the full in a landscape where the shebeens, with their infusion of township jazz, informed his cultural horizons. He was to exploit this immersion by writing short stories for Drum magazine. It presented him with a vehicle to exploit his talents and in particular, his representations of township life. Themba was of course part of that life himself since he drew his characterizations from those with whom he interacted. Eventually, and perhaps inevitably, he fell prey to the scourge of alcoholism that led him to be sacked as Assistant Editor of Drum in 1959. Thereafter he went into voluntary exile in Swaziland in 1963 where he worked both as a teacher and writer. In 1966 he was labelled as a ‘statutory communist’ under South Africa’s infamous Suppression of Communism Amendment act. His writing as a result became proscribed in South Africa. He died in 1967 from cardiac failure.

In every story we see Themba’s characters interplay their moments of literary ‘humanity’ at differing junctures of their everyday lives in their apartheid conceived ‘townships’, that in turn served as artifices of social division, repression and control.

We also suggest that an analysis of Themba’s works reveal a deeper structure intertwined with intimations of Fanon’s ‘fictionality’⁴. Although his characters display universal norms and mores they arguably serve as symbolic representations of Themba’s denunciation of apartheid.

In ‘Mob passion’ he looks at a world of fratricidal terror. Whereas in ‘Passionate Stranger’ the minutiae of ordinary lives are laid bare. He brings us down to earth in ‘The Dube Train’ where he excels. His allegorical style demonizing (symbolically) the South African state as it then was. It is in this story where the ‘unmasking’ of one of its main characters, the ‘Hulk’ occurs and where Themba ensures that he (the ‘Hulk’) becomes a symbol of people power. In ‘Forbidden love’ he demonstrates his awareness of social conflict engendered by a process of stereo-typing and labelling. Finally as Foxy in ‘The Will To Die’ he portrays himself.

‘Mob Passion’ was his prize winning short story and earned him fifty pounds from Drum magazine. It has the overtones of a favourite Shakespearean tragedy; Romeo and Juliet. However, the setting of the story typifies Themba’s chosen location; that of the township. Crime is rife and the internecine feuding represents the inward violence adopted by people in despair. Despite Themba’s depiction of gang related crime and violence he engages his audience in a manner that elicits sympathy for his characters.

3 Shebeen; loosely approximating an informal place, often a house, where alcohol is sold

4 Fanon 1967. *Black Skin. White Masks*. New York: Grove Press

The very beginning of 'Mob Passion' sets the focus of the story. The writer immediately engages his audience by suggesting the implicit fear engendered by the railway station:

They were heaving and pressing, elbows in faces, bundles bursting, weak ones kneaded. Even at the opposite side people were balancing precariously to escape being shoved off the platform. Here and there deft fingers were exploring unwary pockets. **Themba:7**

This is South Africa in the raw.

Themba's characterizations are significant in the story and we are witnesses to his attempt to 'normalize' his characters under the abnormality of the apartheid system. He says of his main character:

Linga was a tall, slender fellow, more man than boy. He was not particularly handsome but he had those tense eyes of the young student who was ever innerly protesting against some wrong or other. **Themba:7**

Keeping in mind that this was Can Themba's first significant short story we see his Romeo and Juliet theme dominating a story that is suffused with the violence of the township. Juliet (Mapula) attempts to save Linga (Romeo) from her uncle Alpheus who represents the 'aggrieved' party. She in turn turns on her uncle and axes him:

it sank into his neck and down he went. She stepped on his chest and pulled out the axe.....the she saw the mangled body of the man she loved and her nerve snapped. The axe slipped from her hand and she dropped on Linga's body, crying piteously. **Themba:16**

The 'impossible' love story is played out in Themba's Shakespearean theme where the only winner is the apartheid system that encourages inter-ethnic violence and killing.

'Passionate Stranger' is another important story of Themba's that addresses the issue of outdated ethnic traditions that seem to prevail in modern society. Compared to 'Mob Passion' it is written in a light and humorous style whilst portraying a serious dislocation between a father and his daughter.

In this story Themba 'escapes' from the overwhelming inflictions of the apartheid era by providing his audience with both humour and passion. The male protagonist is Reginald Tshayi who meets the sister (Ellen) of his friend Osbourne under circumstances where he is branded a 'tsotsi'. Ellen had already been promised to the son of a chief in an arranged forthcoming marriage. However it was love at first sight.

They lay in each other's arms long and still,.....The first storm of passion spent a great peace descended on them as soul met soul in perfect unity. **Themba:3**

However her father wants her to adhere to his wishes. Eventually she confronts the chief's representatives and convinces them of her love for another. The marriage is called off and we the audience realize that Ellen's defiance stands both as a motif and as a symbol of her individuality and resistance to an outmoded (apartheid) system.

The 'Dube Train' is another of Can Themba's stories brim full of symbolic representations of the South African state in the '50's. His allegorical style, in this story aptly demonizes a myopic and oligarchic South Africa. His description of the main character the 'Hulk' conjures up visions of a cartoon-like depiction of a stereo-typical figure with concomitant exaggerated features:

The neck was thick and corded, and the enormous chest was a live barrel that heaved back and forth.

Themba: 150

The story opens with a description of a new day. Themba himself seems to portray the narrator who feels 'rotten' in a depressing world. His forthcoming train journey provided no respite from his state of mind. The train journey itself merely reinforces his depressive world view where he says:

'congested trains filled with sour-smelling humanity'. **Themba:149**

Through Themba's eyes we see life as a journey that has to be undertaken but where the road is never quite certain and its *raison d'être* unclear.

It is in a third class carriage that the narrator awaits the journey and recognizes his good fortune in boarding the train at all! Themba's description of the carriage parallels the narrator's mood. One of the doors is obviously broken and in disrepair just as the carriage windows are. Here again Themba uses his close descriptions in an allegorical fashion. The windows are 'paneless' and depict moral servitude.

The narrator comments on his fellow passengers by observing their normality. He allows his readers to wallow in their misconceptions and to believe that this particular journey will be nothing out of the ordinary. The way in which the tsotsi boards the train is particularly well observed.

he turned nonchalantly and tripped along backwards towards an open door. It amazed me how these boys know exactly where the edge of the platform comes when they run like that backwards. **Themba:150**

This tsotsi (thug) is the central focus of the story and demands our attention since he arguably exemplifies the thuggery of apartheid and is in turn its creation in all its base crudity. He is drawn from Themba's own experience of the under-class where the tsotsi's de-humanized acts (on the train) complement the systemic 'flogging' of the population by the ruling elite.

In the story itself, Themba introduces the enormous figure of the 'Hulk' who seems to symbolically represent the oppressed masses of South Africa. However it is the tsotsi to whom Themba invests with such malignance so that we as the audience are able to see in him, the socialized manifestations of the worst excesses of the system. The tsotsi has no respect for humanity and reifies his fellow humans. On boarding the train he attempts to engage a young woman who had been 'ducking' him. He swaggers around with an uninhibited nonchalance showing his contempt for womanhood. He refers to the woman as 'rubberneck' with a fully fledged disdain. This is his form of address although she had not met or seen her before. She, is however fully aware of his callousness and his raw and obscene language. Her protestations lead to a vicious slap that sends her hurtling over the narrator.

The Tsotsi is the crude invention of a system so enshrined in the social and political landscape of apartheid South Africa that at one and the same time it repulses and attracts us; makes us laugh and makes us cry. He is keenly observed by Can Themba as the narrator draws our attention to him via his behaviour towards the young woman in his carriage. The only person to react to this outrage; an old woman says:

Lord, you call yourself men! You poltroons! You let a small ruffian insult you. Fancy, he grabs at a girl in front of you....you might be your daughter.....if there were real men here, they'd pull him off and give him such a leathering he'd never sit down for a week. **Themba:152**

In response the tsotsi hurls vile invective at the woman'. Finally the quiet hulk-like figure responds:

'Hela you street urchin, that woman is your mother'. **Themba:153**

The tsotsi had never been insulted in this manner before. Was he not the 'owner' of the train? Parallels begin to appear at this juncture with the apartheid system. We begin to discern, symbolically, the nature of the tsotsi. His character seems to represent the metaphorical apartheid 'beast' whereas the hulk appears as the embodiment of the pilloried masses under apartheid.

The knife wielding thug lunges at the hulk's jugular without fear. A deflection caused by the train's movement causes him to miss his mark and instead the knife causes a superficial gash across the hulk's chest. He reacts by:

He caught the boy by the upper arm with the left hand and between his legs with the right and lifted him bodily.....The flight went clean through the paneless window... **Themba:153**

Justice prevails and the tsotsi's reign ends among the detritus; the cans, the bottles, the cardboard of a sick, vomiting dying system.

'Forbidden love's' theme sharply differs from the one above. It was published in 1955 and is a good example of one of his favourite themes; love. This time we see lovers across the artificial lines of colour and 'race' as defined and given legal credibility in apartheid South Africa.

Michael is from the 'black' race and Dora is a 'coloured'. Once your 'race' was ascribed in apartheid era South Africa you were provided with a designation. This ascription was not only marked on your identity document but it also affected where you lived, whom you could marry and socialize with and your voting rights. In fact Dora alludes to this when she says:

Why wasn't it I Mike? Why wasn't I dark, instead of fair. Then you might not have been so afraid of my love. **Themba:24**

The divide and rule policy of the apartheid regime ensured that those pigeon-holed and labelled, sometimes arbitrarily, by apartheid driven legislation still absorbed and accepted those divisions as part of their cultural morality. It is this that Themba questions. There is no escape from the pernicious affects of the apartheid regime even where love is concerned. The fear of reprisals

and consequences are aptly described by Themba as the lovers are punished for their crime. However the tale ends with a degree of redemption when the two lovers finally ignore the demands of the regime and stand up for themselves. A victory against apartheid!

The final expose of Themba's writing is in the form of a semi-autobiographical piece entitled 'The Will to Die'. Themba himself is Philip Matauoane a teacher and graduate from Fort Hare (Themba's alma mater). Foxy as Philip is known is a 'runt of a man'⁵ who 'wore clothes that swallowed him'⁶

However when Foxy spoke everyone knew 'that in that unlikely body, resided a live restless brain'

Themba:89

Foxy knows that dissolution and despair of his situation can only end in disaster as he attempts to absorb societal expectations (of him) through marriage, children and drink. Ultimately he pays the final price by being beaten to death by:

'four or five men singing hymns in the sitting room'. **Themba:92**

Themba's suicidal tendencies are exposed in the character of Foxy who represents an intellectual elite who fail to confront the regime head-on and who ultimately prefer the final solution to all one's problems; suicide.

The literary output of Can Themba during the apartheid era in South Africa demonstrates, without doubt, the enormous reservoir of actual and potential talent that went to waste in that era. We feel strongly that literary icons such as Can Themba need to be re-engaged in the process of coming to terms with the massive upheavals caused by the apartheid regime.

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5 From *Requiem for Sophia Town* p. 89

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REVIEW ARTICLES

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**Beata Piątek. *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction.*
Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2014.
pp. 197.**

It has been claimed that literary criticism has directed both memory studies and trauma studies into unknown territories, opening new vistas of research and scholarly investigation. If this is the case, then Beata Piątek's book on the intersections of history, memory and trauma in contemporary British and Irish fiction, published by the Jagiellonian University Press, illustrates the point superbly, adding new dimensions to a by now well-established academic pursuit. In the humanities, a true "memory boom" (Huyssen 1995:8; Berliner 2005:197) was noticed in the second half of the twentieth century, with numerous publications bringing to the fore such issues as the relationship between the historical past and its reconstruction, post-memory and counter-memory, as well as drawing attention to gendered, lost and silenced memories. But it was not until the 1980s that the debate on memory gathered momentum. Szacka (2006:17) believes that one of the reasons for the new interest may have been the 1980 appearance of the English translation of Maurice Halbwachs's *La mémoire collective*, simultaneously in New York and Chicago, the latter edition with an introduction by Mary Douglas.

In the wake of the research of such scholars as Pierre Nora, Paul Ricoeur, Jan and Aleida Assmann, and Paul Connerton, memory is no longer viewed as personal and subjective, or as the fac-

ulty of an individual. Its social, collective, cultural and political aspects have been well described and documented. From “a topic for poets and their visions of a golden age” (Huysen 2003:2) it transformed into “a social, cultural and political force to challenge, if not reject, the founding myths and historical narratives” (Meusburger, Hefferman and Wunder 2011:3). Thus, as a psychological, sociological and philosophical notion memory belongs to the category of “travelling concepts” (Bal 2002:24), whose designation implies movement between academic disciplines and change of meaning. It is therefore vital to establish in what sense it is used in Beata Piątek’s book. A cursory glimpse at the titles of selected subchapters – “Historical Revisionism and Cultural Trauma”, “From Cultural Trauma to Victim Culture”, “The Movements of the Mind Remembering”, “Mummification of Childhood”, or “The Invention of the Past” – reveals that memory is understood by the author as multi-dimensional and multi-layered, depending on the agency of both individuals and groups, an unstable entity subject to distortions and disruptions.

Since the 1990s, when Trauma Theory entered the field of literary criticism, important analytical and methodological tools have been provided by psychoanalysis to comprehend fully texts engaging “with the notion of traumatic memory” (Whitehead 2009:114). The pioneering role in this respect should be accorded to American scholars. The volume *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, edited by Soshana Felman and Dori Laub (1992), followed by Cathy Caruth’s two influential studies – *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996) – paved the way, and have now achieved canonical status. In literary criticism, considerable attention is currently given to diverse forms of cultural representations of memory and their therapeutic/restorative power. Traditional forms of life-writing (memoir, autobiography, and diary) and also fictional narratives, undergo substantial generic transformations to address the issue of the “unrepresentability” of traumatic memories, and highlight the fragile link between trauma and testimony, as well as between traumatic experience and defensive amnesia. Beata Piątek’s *History, Memory, Trauma in Contemporary British and Irish Fiction* falls into line with the above-mentioned volumes, continuing the tradition of literary scholarship that invites critical reflection.

It is a thorough and thought-provoking study of fourteen novels by two British (Pat Barker and Kazuo Ishiguro) and two Irish (John Banville and Sebastian Barry) writers. Published in the years 1976 – 2011, all the analysed texts concern trauma and the relationship between memory and history, although they focus on events and places as diverse as the Great War, Irish history at the time of De Valera’s Presidency, Shanghai in the 1930s, or post-atomic bomb Nagasaki. The book opens with a theoretical chapter, which presents the state-of-the-art information on Trauma Theory and Memory Studies. Referring to the work of Cathy Caruth, Ann Kaplan, Soshana Felman and Dori Laub, the author introduces the most important terminology, defining shell shock, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, inter-generational trauma, as well as discussing the relationship between memory, history and fiction. The content of this chapter is wide-ranging and the observation astute. The reader is familiarized with a number of important concepts, e.g. Pierre Nora’s *lieux* (and *milieux*) *de mémoire*, Dominic LaCapra’s “empathic unsettlement” and “vicarious victimhood”, and the

distinction between “facts” (an epistemological category) and “events” (an ontological category) elaborated by Jan Pomorski.

The remaining four chapters are divided into two parts: Part One – *History and Trauma* – deals with the novels by Barker and Barry, illustrating the novelists’ attempt to demythologize the Grand Narratives of national history. Part Two – *Memory and Trauma* – discusses the novels of Banville and Ishiguro, where history is viewed through characters’ individual life-stories, providing a microscopic perspective of common men.

The discussion on the work of Pat Barker contains insightful and illuminating analyses of *The Regeneration Trilogy* (i.e. *Regeneration*, *The Eye in the Door*, *The Ghost Road*, 1991 – 1998) and two later novels – *Another World* (1998) and *Double Vision* (2003) – all dealing with the topic of World War I. Piątek demonstrates that Barker’s preoccupation with the history and myth of the Great War evolves, coming “dangerously close” (51) to the glorification of victim culture and the domestication of violence in *Double Vision*. Barker’s feminist critique of history as Grand Narrative is deftly interpreted with the effective use of the theory of cultural trauma put forward by Jeffrey C. Alexander and Neil J. Smelser. To experience trauma on the collective level, society’s whole existence must be threatened, and the experienced situation must be understood to be indelible and to have a negative effect, conditions fulfilled by World War I. While Barker’s *Regeneration Trilogy* presents WW I as a cultural trauma of the whole nation, it may be simultaneously read as entering into a dialogue “with the accepted, patriotic version of the history of the Great War” (64). Interrogating the myth of camaraderie across class distinctions and subverting the notion of common patriotic feeling, the British novelist lays bare the persisting structure of a patriarchal, divisive society.

Referring to Sebastian Barry’s four novels: *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty* (1998), *A Long Way* (2005), *The Secret Scripture* (2008) and *On Canaan’s Side* (2011), Beata Piątek successfully depicts the metamorphosis of the novelist’s approach to Irish national history – from schematic, one-dimensional characters that people the pages of the first book, portrayed through a black-and-white, politically biased vision of historical events, to a complex, nuanced and multi-faceted presentation of diverse lives’ trajectories in *The Secret Scripture* (2008) and *On Canaan’s Side* (2011). The Irish writer’s narrow, ideological, revisionist stance gradually gives way to a total rejection of the possibility of objective history, while historical metafiction replaces a simple bipolar view.

Two sections of the book that deserve special attention are the analyses of Kazuo Ishiguro’s *A Pale View of the Hills* (1982) and that of Pat Barker’s *Another World* (1998). Trauma, described by Gilmore (2001:6) as “self-altering” and “self-shattering experience of violence, injury and harm” cannot be articulated. It often reveals itself in nightmares and silences. When experienced collectively by an ethnic, religious, or national group, it causes serious damage, subjecting people to a hurtful experience which leaves a mark on their collective memory and consciousness. In the proposed close reading of Ishiguro’s novel, set in post-1945 Nagasaki, Piątek contends that the narrator’s traumatized, repressed memories enter the text on the level of its narrative structure, so that we can discern trauma on the level of the story and trauma of the text. The novel’s gaps

and contradictions, the distortion of logical sequence, as well as the high level of uncertainty and indeterminacy, force the reader to put together scattered fragments of the protagonist's life-story, the task being "similar to that of a therapist listening to the testimony of a trauma victim" (127). Thus, the main character's traumatic experience finds reflection in the broken, non-linear representation of events (traumatized narration, hence "trauma of the text" co-existing with "trauma in the text"), which, in turn, puts the reader in the position of co-witnessing trauma, and through LaCapra's "empathic unsettlement" generates "the affect of trauma in the readers" (45).

One might extend the analysis further, following a ternary model of narrative suggested by O'Neill in *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory*, which is used in narratological studies. O'Neill distinguishes three narrative levels: story, text and narration. Story is understood as "the realm of characters" (O'Neill 1996:34), text – as the realm of the narrator, and narration/discourse as the realm of the implied author. At the bottom level, the level of the story itself, which is the fictional reality and the world of "what really happened" (O'Neill 1996:34), trauma in *A Pale View of the Hills* refers to the character/narrator Etsuko, who has lost her family and who deliberately represses her awful memories (trauma in the text). At the level of text, trauma authenticates the narrative voice through numerous gaps and omissions, hallucinations and nightmares (trauma of the text). Finally, at the level of narration, which corresponds to the narrative level of the Implied Author (Cobley 2014:125), trauma engages the reader in co-witnessing. Such a reading might add a broader scope to the approach proposed by Piątek, following Irene Kacandes's claim that novels concerning traumatic experience make explicit requests for the reader's co-witnessing through narrative strategies.

Another subchapter worthy of note is "The Past Invading the Present – Transgenerational Trauma in *Another World*." Basing her discussion on the concepts proposed in the 1970s study *The Shell and the Kernel* by two Hungarian-born French psychoanalysts, Maria Torok and Nicolas Abraham, especially their notion of "transgenerational phantom", Piątek argues that Barker's novel recognizes in a family secret the transgenerational trauma of fratricide passed to subsequent generations. Transgenerational phenomena, discussed in psychoanalytical theory, link the secrets of ancestors with the unconscious of their descendants, finding reflection in second- or third-generation subjectivities. Thus, trauma may be unwittingly inherited and invisibly passed on.

Beata Piątek's slim yet dense volume is slightly marred by a few inaccuracies and a flaw. Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* is a novel, not a collection of essays (19), Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* appeared in 1984, not in 1981 (27), Ilan Pappé is an Israeli not a Palestinian historian (116, footnote 19), and the term "cultural memory" was introduced by the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann, not the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (27), as recognized in a number of important publications, e.g. Whitehead (2009); Saryusz-Wolska (2009); Gomille and Stierstorfer (2003). The flaw is the lack of an index.

Moreover, claiming that Halbwachs "tries to treat individual memory and collective memory as analogous" (30) seems far-fetched. For Halbwachs, memory is a social phenomenon while collective memory is a construct which is determined and shaped by the present. Although societies and

communities do not remember as such, and it is individual people, members of these groups, who preserve memories, still as members of groups (groups formed through kinship, common religion, social class bonding) individuals become enmeshed in shared thoughts, ideas and concerns, becoming part of the social milieu of a given group. Halbwachs's study concerns social factors, not individual consciousness. He writes about "social frameworks of memory", by which he understands "the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of society" (Halbwachs 1992:40). Thus, how individuals, families, religious and ethnic groups remember certain events depends on and is shaped by the situation in which they find themselves in the present. The profound role of Halbwachs's ideas for the development of memory studies lies in moving "the discourse concerning collective knowledge out of a biological framework into a cultural one" (Assmann 1995:125).

Beata Piątek's study offers an invitation to re-assess the literary output of four major contemporary writers of the English-speaking world: John Banville, Pat Barker, Sebastian Barry and Kazuo Ishiguro. Wide-ranging and rich in its corpus of critical reading, well informed by research in the field of psychoanalytic theory, trauma and memory studies, it is an absorbing piece of scholarship, challenging and thought-provoking, aiming to open new critical perspectives. It demonstrates unequivocally the profound role of literary fiction in forging, shaping and expressing the collective and cultural memory of nations as novels become agents of remembrance and media of memory. Discussing issues of the personal trauma and cultural trauma of collective experience, exploring the mythologized versions of historical events against the backdrop of the unknown past, the book throws into stark relief complex intertwining relations between identity, memory, history and narrative, where the strict boundaries between the personal and the national become blurred.

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WORK IN PROGRESS

“Work in progress” is a forum for students and university graduates who wish to present the results of their research.

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Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City as a manifestation of American values of freedom and democracy

Abstract. Architecture of a particular country is one of the most visible manifestations of its cultural heritage. When approaching this subject matter in reference to United States of America, mentioning Frank Lloyd Wright is inevitable, as he is often referred to as “the greatest American architect of all time”. Frank Lloyd Wright’s vision of Broadacre City was a project that consumed the greater part of the architect’s life. The article investigates the technical, structural and ideological aspects of the Broadacre City concept. The main objective of this article is to establish whether Broadacre City was designed in the spirit of the most fundamental American values of freedom and democracy and how those values were manifested in the project itself.

Key words: Frank Lloyd Wright, Broadacre City, American values, freedom, democracy.

Introduction

According to various sources devoted to Frank Lloyd Wright’s life and work, he was recognized as “the greatest American architect of all time” by the American Institute of Architects in 1991 (Web 1). This event only confirmed his expectations, as Wright himself once claimed: “(...) not only do I fully intend to be the greatest architect who has yet lived, but fully intend to be the greatest architect who will ever live. Yes, I intend to be the greatest architect of all time” (as quoted in Weesjes, 2011:1). He is believed to be the creator of almost 1000 structures during his seventy-year-long

career, some 400 of which were actually built (Weesjes, 2011:2). His architectural genius was additionally appreciated by the *Architectural Record* by putting twelve constructions of Frank Lloyd Wright's on the list of the one hundred most important buildings of the 20th century.

Frank Lloyd Wright's work significantly influenced the architectural world of America, contributing to the development of various styles and trends in national, as well as European architecture. He devoted his entire life to architectonics, designing various buildings, and realizing commissions. Nevertheless, it was the Broadacre City idea that focused the greater part of Wright's attention, especially in his later years. This multilayered, utopian vision of future America was repeatedly revisited and revised by its originator. Notwithstanding the fact that it is not as easily and commonly known as, for instance, the Fallingwater House, the Broadacre City should be placed among the most significant works of the architect, since its features are a complete embodiment of his beliefs and ideals. Wright was an advocate of, inter alia, the promulgation of American values of freedom and democracy which translated into many aspects of Broadacres. The main intention of the following article is to determine whether Broadacre City should be referred to as a display of American ideals of freedom and democracy.

The Broadacre City

The idea of the Broadacre City was first revealed to the public in the book *The Disappearing City* (New York: Payson, 1932) written by Frank Lloyd Wright, and was revised twice in such publications as *When Democracy Builds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945) and *The Living City* (New York: Horizon Press, 1958) (Brown, 2007:1). It was developed late in Wright's life (*The Disappearing City* was published when Frank Lloyd Wright was 65 years old) and worked on until his death. The Broadacre City, or as Wright often referred to it, Broadacres, attracted a wider audience in April 1935, during an industrial arts exposition held in Rockefeller Center, New York. Frank Lloyd Wright exhibited there a detailed twelve by twelve foot scale model of his vision of the ideal city in the form of a three-dimensional "cross section of a whole civilization" (Fishman, 1982:91). A picture of the mockup is presented below.

The Broadacre City was Frank Lloyd Wright's utopian development concept created together with its socio-political scheme. Wright believed that his vision would inevitably and naturally emerge in the architectural fabric of the United States, replace traditional urban establishments and give way to the creation of synthesized urban and rural developments.

Once built, one self-sufficient unit of the Broadacre City would cover an area of four square miles (1,040 hectares) and would accommodate approximately 5,000 people in 1,400 homes (Johnson, 1995:140). Each individual would be guaranteed a minimum of one acre of land, free of charge. An area of such size would allow people to have a garden, or even a small farm next to the house, so to enable self-sufficiency (Nelson, 1995:341). Due to its structure, the Broadacre City is a perfect example of the incorporation of an urban settlement (a settlement with all the amenities and facilities of the city) into a rural landscape (Nelson, 1995:341).



Picture 1. Photograph of the Broadacre City scale model

Source: on the basis of Web 2

The concept of the structural design of the Broadacre City was based on two already existing and operating inventions:

- The motor car, which led to the general mobility of Americans
- The radio, telephone, and telegraph that enabled electrical intercommunication to become complete (Wright, 1935:346)

and on another one that was to become, according to Wright, generally accessible in the upcoming years – an aeroplane. He believed that those inventions made old cities “no longer modern” and such dense, crowded conglomerations as New York or San Francisco were on their way to wither and decay (Wright, 1935:346). In their place Broadacre Cities would occur. He claimed that the idea of the Broadacre City would be possible to execute mostly due to properly planned

communication and transportation systems. Only by arranging and integrating units in such a way that every household would have an even access to all indispensable urban facilities would it become feasible. As Krohe wrote in his article “the car would simultaneously make huge swaths of land accessible for development and make it possible to live on it without foregoing social connection” (Krohe, 2000:29). According to Wright, it is not urban sprawl that makes the automobile indispensable – it is the car that makes it possible to exist.

In Broadacres all the institutions of advanced society would be dispersed throughout the city so that every citizen would have ready access to them. Factories, stores, schools, cultural centers and professional buildings would all be of small scale and, as Nelson claims in his article, “located in such a way as to ensure that there is no central point around which people and power can cluster” (Nelson, 1995:341). Even the county seats would not be the center focus of the community. Such persistency in terms of a departure from the centralized model of the city has its roots in Wright’s ideology. He believed that centralization was an urban relic of the past. There was a time when it was necessary, even though it has always entailed, according to Wright, overcrowdedness and incursion of the individuality and democracy, but with mechanical mobilization and electrification there is no longer any need for committing the misdemeanor of centralization.

Single family dwellings were to be the predominant building type. This kind of building is most commonly associated with the architectural work of Frank Lloyd Wright; it would occur in every section of the city. A tower building is another housing type which could be found in Broadacres, but its existence within that design is not so obvious and natural. If Wright was trying to escape the overcrowdedness of the city, why should he use in the Broadacres the kind of building which is a perfect example of urban development? It seems that for Wright the skyscraper itself was not a problem, it is the clustering of skyscrapers. If the residential tower building is situated in a surrounding of nature and in isolation from other tall structures, it can still be a valid and coherent part of Frank Lloyd Wright’s tenets (Web 3).

The environment of the Broadacre City would be comprised of carefully adjusted land uses, assigned to particular zones and areas so that they fitted the land. Frank Lloyd Wright’s vision was bipolar in its character: it simultaneously included tall urban structures and rural settlements surrounded by agriculture which, when combined, formed both a pastoral and yet urban setting (Aguar and Aguar, 2002:256). Naturally, if Broadacres substituted regular cities and covered the landscape of United States, they would vary among one another in terms of land use distribution, since the function should always harmonize with the existing landscape. For redistributing land and regulating its use, a county architect would be responsible. He would wield powers of “the agent of the state in all matters of land allotment or improvement, or in matters affecting the harmony of the whole” (Wright, 1935:346).

Frank Lloyd Wright did not seem to consider the Broadacre City to be just another commissioned design. The architect became personally and ideologically involved and, therefore, the Broadacre City was an embodiment of his world view and his values, which he had been establishing throughout his life. Consequently, the physical layout of the Broadacre City was designed to be

a vessel for an economically and politically reformed society. As Krohe states in his article “Broadacre City embodied a program for economic reform that was the keystone of a model democracy he [Wright] called Usonia” (Krohe, 2000:28). Wright believed that Broadacres, and particularly their architecture and land use distribution, were going to be a perfect environment in which democracy, freedom and individualism would thrive.

Freedom and Democracy in Frank Lloyd Wright’s Understanding

Wright was often referred to as a continuator of Thomas Jefferson’s ideals. Jefferson has frequently been called “the most democratic of [Founding] fathers” (Kazin, Edwards, Rothman, 2011:149), as he preached public education, free press, free voting, limited government, and agrarian democracy that avoided the rule of aristocrats (McPike, 2003:8). He believed that democracy has its roots in citizens’ economic and physical independence, which belief was also advocated by Wright (Nelson, 1995:339). It is important to emphasize, however, that Jefferson’s views were inextricably linked with the political system; democracy for him stood for the structure of a particular organization, state or country, or a form of government, whereas for Wright democracy stood for an ideal (Dehaene, 2002:95), for which the freedom of the individual was the groundwork. According to Wright a society could be called democratic only when every citizen “would have entered a full state of inner freedom” (Dehaene, 2002:95). This can be achieved only when democracy grows into its “true form” and old “classical” forms are rejected (Dehaene, 2002:95). Such a statement implies that even though America has always been a democratic country in terms of its structure, it had never been fully democratic from the perspective of Wright. Dehaene in his publication concerning the Broadacre City provides the interpretation of Frank Lloyd Wright’s perceptions of freedom: “Man had squandered his freedom from the false “civilizations” of the old world and now found himself trapped in the city, once again built according to the “old ideal”. In order to regain freedom, the individual had to move away from the old center and become himself again the center of society” (Dehaene, 2002:95). Wright seemed to blame the structure of cities of his time for the shortcomings of freedom. A new kind of city (the Broadacre City) would solve this problem, and become the aforementioned “true form” of democracy. Inhabitants of Broadacres would be able to live their lives democratically due to recovering their freedom.

Another noteworthy aspect of Frank Lloyd Wright’s understanding of democracy is the fact that he has always thought of it as a process or a way (e.g. of living), not as a form (e.g. of government). In Lionel March’s opinion, by democracy being a lifestyle Wright meant that every adult should take part in the establishment of “the values that regulate the living of people together”, as it would contribute to the development of individuals and, simultaneously, to the growth of general social welfare (March, 1970: 198). This participation would not be one-sided, though. All social institutions (industry, schools) should, according to Wright, have common purpose in setting free and developing every individual into “the full stature of his possibility” (March, 1970: 197). Nevertheless, Wright rejected the idea of the “rugged individualism” of America as it contributed

to the evolution of plutocratic capitalism, which he referred to as crude and vain power promoting “cowardly selfishness” instead of “noble selfhood” (Wright, 1958:46). In his opinion, the notion of democracy should be perceived in the same way as its fathers viewed it: as the “free growth of humane individuality” and “mankind free to function together in unity of spirit” (Wright, 1958:45).

Frank Lloyd Wright created his own definition of democracy on the basis of Jeffersonian ideals. This definition was the groundwork for the Broadacre City and revealed itself in that design repeatedly.

American Values of Freedom and Democracy Expressed in the Broadacre City

There is a fairly widespread tendency to equate Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture with the architecture of American democracy. Not only was Wright aware of that, but he also seemed to purposely foster the “identification of himself with the American spirit” by appearing in all kinds of media and cultivating “an imperious image of plain-speaking anti-collectivist democracy” (from an editorial to an article by Wright, 1935:345). He advocated recasting the architectural model of the United States into Broadacres – a design whose grounds were, according to Wright himself, established on the American values of freedom and democracy. How were the aforementioned values manifested in the Broadacre City? Which features of that proposal testify to Frank Lloyd Wright’s beliefs?

Decentralization

The foremost feature of Broadacres that attests to Wright’s intention to advocate the values of freedom and democracy is connected with the idea of decentralization. This departure from the centralized model of a city and a return to inhabiting the rural landscape was the fundamental premise of the Broadacre City. Wright severely criticized the centralized urban patterns which were, and still are, the hallmarks of the American city. He believed that they were “promoting dehumanizing values, robbing people of their individuality and jeopardizing their democratic lifestyle” (Nelson, 1995:338). He thought of centralized cities as relics of the past, built on the foundations of the old world, in which clustering was inevitable due to the limited means of transportation and communication (Wright, 1932:11). According to Brown, Wright “mocked the idea that a man in his right mind would leave the opportunities granted in the countryside to live in the confines of the overcrowded city” (Brown, 2007:1). The Broadacres, with their automobile-oriented structure and policy of assuring a minimum of one acre of land for every dweller, were to be a solution for the holdover, anti-democratic cities of the past.

Mobility

As was already mentioned, the Broadacre City proposal would be possible to implement due to the emergence of the automobile and telephone. These were the inventions that, according to Wright, vastly contributed to the promulgation of a democratic lifestyle, since they ameliorated freedom

of movement and communication. Therefore, assuming that the Broadacre City was a truly democratic vision, it was unavoidable for those inventions to appear as a coherent part of Wright's proposal. Additionally, the aforementioned innovations were to enable the process of decentralization in the Broadacre City acclaimed by Wright. The fact that every inhabitant of Broadacres would possess at least one car would help in effacing the difference between quarters and and, therefore, would allow dispersed development. Later alterations of the vision of the Broadacre City involved the concept of aircraft being available to the same extent as an automobile, making total mobility a reality.

Rent

Moreover, the large, centralized cities of Wright's time, being too congested, overcrowded, and overbuilt, appeared to him as economically artificial or simply "uneconomic" as he states in *The Disappearing City* (Wright, 1932:8). He claimed that "human concentration upon the city has been abnormally intensified because, as hangover from traditions having their origin in other circumstances, three major economic artificialities have been grafted upon intrinsic production and grown into a legitimate economic system" (Wright, 1932:8). These aforesaid artificialities were all connected with the idea of rent (rent for land, for money, and for access to machine inventions), which is an "extrinsic form of unearned increment" (Wright, 1932:8) and whose existence, according to Wright, contributed to the factitious and exaggerated growth of the phenomenon of the centralization. Frank Lloyd Wright held an unfavorable view on the idea of rent, which, he believed, caused an absolute dependence on the operations of others for the success of individual (Brown, 2007:2) and, thereby, prevented true democracy and true individualism from thriving. It is the tenant-landlord relation, with all its liabilities that should be blamed for people losing their individual freedom and, therefore, receding from a democratic lifestyle. Wright's view of the concept of land ownership is best exemplified in his own words from *The Living City*: "when every man, woman and child may be born to put his feet on his own acres, then democracy will have been realized" (Wright, 1958:49).

Furthermore, with the abandonment of the notion of rent, which would be possible due to the widespread land ownership, freedom of employment would occur. In the Broadacre City people would not be forced to work on a "need-to-pay-rent basis" (Brown, 2007:3) anymore, they could choose their profession only according to their fields of interests or ability. As their earnings would have to be spent neither on rent nor on food, they would be able to choose their occupation with no restraints. Consequently, property and work would finally be deprived of their monetary values, since such an order of things tended to benefit only the selected few. In the eyes of Frank Lloyd Wright this is another aspect which contributes to perceiving Broadacres as cities built on the foundation of freedom and democracy.

Organic architecture

Delving into the decentralization idea applied in the Broadacre City, it has to be mentioned that it was to be performed in the full meaning of the term: in Wright's vision neither the center nor the

distinction between urban and rural land uses would be recognized (Fishman, 1982:92). Wright believed that “true democracy would be achieved by reclaiming one’s individuality and engaging in natural architecture rather than communal living of the cities” (Brown, 2007:2). Therefore, the United States as we know them should be, in Wright’s vision, replaced by small houses dotting the rural landscape. Housing developments would be designed in accordance with organic architecture, whose most important tenet assumes that every building should be created in such a way, so to become an “extension of nature and its principles” (Cruz, 2012:29). Therefore, residential areas were to be sprawled over open countryside and harmonize with the natural landscape. The architect maintained that accepting the organic architecture as the groundwork for a city would conduce to shaping the democratic life of its citizens. According to Wright, organic architecture enables dwellers to connect to his or her land in such a way that “roots him/herself in freedom from the constraining notion of centralized city” (Özpek, 2006:53). Due to the eradication of the boundaries and limits of the city, democracy would triumph and “no man will live as a servile or savage animal; holing in or trapped in some cubicle on an upended extension of some narrow street” (Wright, 1958:96).

Agrarian Democracy

In addition, Wright envisioned that each allotment’s design should promote a domestic, family-oriented, self-sufficient lifestyle and should be inhabited by people who are at least part-time farmers (Nelson, 1995:339). This kind of self-sufficiency, possible not only due to the practice of agriculture or horticulture, but also thanks to the abandonment of landlord, tenant, and rent phenomena, thus allowing the development of universal ownership of land, was to ensure people complete physical and economical independence, in line with both Jeffersonian and Wright’s theory of democratic society. Donald Leslie Johnson in his article provides an accurate summary of the Broadacre City philosophy, giving particular attention to the rurality of the vision:

Broadacres was a concept meant to reinforce and reinterpret the American tradition of rurality and to encourage a return to democratically formed village life with all its implications, if in modern geometric form. Villages were to be scattered about the vast North American landscape, integrated “along the horizontal line which we call the great highway”, disposed by compatible determinants such as work, travel, industry, population density and other internal or regional needs. Moreover, the Broadacre villages were to be self-sufficient... (Johnson, 1995:139-140).

The quotation indicates the existence of connections between the premises of Wright’s Broadacres and the Jeffersonian idea of agrarian democracy, whose frequently repeated surmise refers to the independent farmer being the “backbone of democracy” (Renck, 2002:1). Wright, similarly to Jefferson, perceived agriculturalists as symbols of “honesty, integrity, democracy and statesmanship” (Renck, 2002:2), values deeply rooted in American tradition. By designing Broadacres, the architect meant for America to become a nation of independent citizens, who cultivate the soil, grow crops and rear animals and are “bound to the land, which cannot be moved” (Renck,

2002:14). Such people would be more inclined to vest their interest in the nation and society, as their welfare and prosperity would be dependent on the ground they own. They would be liberated, however, from the constraints, limitations, and dependence on the general food industry and from the jeopardy of losing their properties. In Broadacres, self-sufficiency represented by producing food for each inhabitant's own needs is an indicator of the democracy of the society.

Equal access to urban amenities

Referring again to Johnson's summary of the Broadacres' philosophy and the description of Wright's vision provided previously, another evidence for the Broadacre City being the manifestation of freedom and democracy is the way in which all services, medical care, amenities, or industrial structures were to be disposed throughout the Broadacres. Wright designed and dispersed them, so to guarantee if not equal, and then at least close to equal access to them for all inhabitants. Such a city structure represented fairness and justness, which are, next to freedom and individualism, the most essential features of democracy. All people in the Broadacres would have equal chances for individual development, as each and every one of them would be granted comparable possibilities. A minimum of one acre of land, automobile, even access to the amenities, entertainment and other places of modern city – with all that every citizen of the Broadacre City would be supplied.

Individualism

In Wright's opinion, the development of the individual seems to be a prerequisite feature of the democratic lifestyle, as it contributes to regulating the rules of people living together and to the general evolution of the community. It is also essential, since even the "Declaration of Independence of the U.S. regards individualism as the victory of democracy" (Özpek, 2006:36). This is the reason why in Broadacres individualism thrives and commercial state-owned businesses tend to be avoided. There would be no middleman as the distribution of goods would flow directly from the producer to the consumer. Industry in Broadacre City would be either privately or cooperatively owned (Nelson, 1995:339). Additionally, dwellers of Wright's ideal city were to be not only part-time farmers, but also part-time mechanics and part-time intellectuals (Nelson, 1995:339). All this was to create the abundance of possibilities of development for every inhabitant of democratic Broadacres.

Government limited

The importance of personal advancement in Wright's design is also connected with Jefferson's view on that subject. He represented the opinion that true democracy is equivalent to a society in which "every member would be the best of possible men" and opposite to "the society ruled by its best men" (Dehaene, 2002:95). Such an attitude was to eliminate the notion of aristocracy and would lead to a significant limitation of the body of local government. What substantiates the application of this attitude in the Broadacre City vision is that the only local public administrator would be the county architect. Wright advocated that "government [should] be reduced to nothing

more than a county architect who would be in charge of directing land allotments and the construction of basic community facilities” (Wright, 1935:348). The architect would be chosen “by the county itself” (Wright, 1935:346) and his or her main responsibility would be concerned with the redistribution of land. Furthermore, the national government’s role would be significantly limited as well. Its sole purpose would be “the regulation of natural resources, the provision of the national defense, and the compilation and distribution of information” (Nelson, 1995:339).

Concluding remarks

The design, structure and socio-political scheme of the Broadacre City are obvious avatars of Frank Lloyd Wright’s ideology of promoting freedom and democracy. Many aspects of the vision were created in such manner so to provide Broadacres’ inhabitants with the possibility of living their lives in accordance with a democratic lifestyle. Aforesaid features contribute to creating the image of the Broadacre City being a manifestation of the American values of freedom and democracy not only in Wright’s understanding, but also in reference to the universal comprehension of these terms and in accord to the ideals of one of the Founding Fathers of the U.S. – Thomas Jefferson.

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