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Department of English
ul. Liniarskiego 3
15-420 Białystok, Poland
tel. 0048 85 7457516
✉ crossroads@uwb.edu.pl
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MAYOWA AKINLOTAN
University of Texas at Austin

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Yoruba-Irish Literature: Intersection in the Language of Supernatural in Yeats and Soyinka

Abstract. The present paper aims at showing the intersection that Irish and Nigerian (especially the Yoruba) literatures share, particularly in the construction of the idea of supernaturalism, which is clearly exemplified in two of their most important works. No previous mention has ever been made of the convergence and divergence in the construction of the supernatural worlds in Yeats and Soyinka works, which are perfect metaphor for the two cultures representing Irish and African worlds. Using a descriptive textual analysis method textual evidence underpinning ideologies and narratives of the supernaturalism in these two worldviews are analysed. The paper shows, through the analyses of the language construing the idea of supernaturalism in Yeats' *Countess Cathleen* (1892) and Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1976), not only the similarities and dissimilarities in how Irish and Yoruba cultures conceptualise their worlds of supernaturalism but also how such a belief system is negotiated and operationalised in the real world.

Keywords: Yeats ad Soyinka, Irish-Yoruba literature, literary intersection, *Countless Cathleen*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, supernaturalism, death and life.

1. Introduction

The idea to do a comparative analysis on the concept of supernaturalism in the duo works of Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) and Yeats' *Countess Cathleen* (1892) is informed by my striking contact with Irish supernaturalism during my postgraduate days. According to the imperial literary canon which I read during my days in African universities, the two works belong to different cultural backgrounds. However, a careful reading of many works emanating from these two different cultures shows a rich ground of meeting point for different belief systems, such that one could suggest they may have shared histories. One of such belief systems is the similarities and dissimilarities found in the creation and representation of the supernatural world in their literary works, most notably those of Yeats and Soyinka. Among numerous textual evidences, elements of supernatural such as the belief that divine beings and phenomena could act as a deliberate intervention in human affairs and matters, are clearly present in both works. Also, supernatural associates representing death, eternity, soul, myth, afterlife, miracle, and the possibility of an

intervention of the supernatural forces onto human scheme of things are not only well explored in the works, but also operationalised as an important factor shaping the people's daily choices in these literatures.

First, in *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), the notion of death and soul is explored within the context of African world. Death is not a final end but a medium giving a life to a soul. In other words, soul is in itself a being, a life that can be transformed by death, which shows a clear relationship between soul and death. This explains the inevitability of the King's horseman to transform his life into a soul which will in turn allow him to perform his eternal duty of riding the horse to his eternal home. It thus suggests that death is responsible for isolating the soul from all the daily physical architectures that enclose it. So, death is not a means to an end but an end to a means. For instance, in Yeats' *Countess Cathleen* (1892), soul is seen worth much more than the human body or flesh. The human body often seeks to suppress the soul, yet only the soul will journey to eternal home. Hence, Yeats shows that the battle line for soul-winning is drawn between Catholicism and the Irish creed, while Soyinka shows that of a battle between the newly imposed Western Christian religion (of which Catholicism was at a forefront in the Eastern Nigeria, Protestant in the Southern Nigeria, and Islam in the Northern Nigeria) and the Yoruba creed.

According to Yeats and Soyinka, the new religion (i.e. the Catholicism in Ireland, and all the different but competing denominations in Nigeria) and the traditional creed sides with the supernatural forces, which they do using different methods. As Yeats shows, the medium with which the Merchants conducted the soul-winning task brings about a success in which more than expected number of souls is won. Also, the inability of Cathleen's spiritual foresight to prevent the steal is influential to the outcome of the play. Furthermore, the ideas of the timelessness of soul and afterlife are also used as crucial narrative techniques in both works. While Elesin Oba will happily ride home the King's horse after death, Cathleen's soul will be well received in heaven because of her good intentions.

At the center of the two plays are affinity between life and death, body and soul, mortality and immortality of body and soul, human sacrifice, death as a cultural and/or religious duty, the interlink of human world with the supernatural world, the belief in supremacy of the supernatural world, among many other themes. It can thus be argued that if these two texts of different backgrounds can arrive at a point with many similar/same ideas, then it goes to say that this intersection should be further studied, identifying shared cultural properties and ideologies as they may influence their supernatural worldviews, and everyday lives. As there has never been any mention of this link between these two cultures, the present study aims to open up a channel of discussion in this direction.

2. Supernaturalism: A Thought

According to Pandian (2002:3), supernaturalism is the belief in the existence of non-natural beings and powers, is constituted in myth and ritual, which, as vehicle for achieving coherence, meaning, and transcendence, are ultimately rooted in mytholiminal rationality. Mytholiminal rationality is

a modality or aspect of human rationality that is involved on the one hand with the production of symbolic coherence (myth) and on the other with the production of transcendence (liminality) (cf. Pandian 2002: 3).

I share the definition of Pandian but reject his idea of stripping supernaturalism from the garment of religion. Supernaturalism works in tandem with every cultural system (Clifford, 1973). Soyinka and Yeats confirm this phenomenon in how they represent realities in their different but similar cultural worlds. For instance, Soyinka situates his supernatural play within the African world, using the medium of the Yoruba mythology while Yeats does the same by contrasting the Irish supernatural belief system with that of the catholic Christian's system which is in competition with the former. According to the two literary works under review, although they have the same substance and serve the same function, the workings of belief systems, especially those elements concerning its religion and mythology, which underpin supernaturalism, differ from one culture to another.

3. Preliminary analyses and supernatural elements

Different elements of supernaturalism permeate these two works at hand. It is outside what is held as natural law and observable world for soul to be article for sales. Soul-winning is arguably one of the tenets of Christian mission which Yeats and Soyinka clearly engage with. One important textual evidence concerns the decision of Cathleen to sell out her soul, a decision which arises as a result of a lack of material resources that develops from the loot of her treasury. Cathleen's treasury has been looted in a mysterious way and would therefore sell out her soul in order to survive. Yeats intends to clearly show the connection between our physical world and the world beyond, and that actions and choices in either world certainly impact on events and order of things in the other world. This argument is further shown by the spiritual-laden interaction between Aleel and the Angel, the miraculous appearance of the three Merchants who would later invite Spirits in the same way, and Cathleen's trance. In a very similar functional purpose, Cathleen's trance is the same as that of Elesin in Soyinka's *Death and the King Horseman*.

Soyinka and Yeats construe the phenomenon of the survival and transition of soul through a fierce contest between two forces. Unlike Soyinka, Yeats' contest is clearly between Catholicism and operationalisation of the traditional Irish belief system of supernaturalism. According to the work, Countess Cathleen, Aleel, Oona, and Mary are devotees of the former faith, while Shemus, Teig, and the hungry peasants are followers of latter faith. According to Mary, the followers of the traditional Irish belief system, that is, Shemus, Teig, and the hungry peasants follow the leadership of 'demons.' Mary also describes the three Merchants, who have brought enough food and drinks to the hungry land, as followers of demons. In Soyinka's work, Mary is a perfect equivalent of the Officer Mr Pilking who accuses Elesin as a follower of barbaric Yoruba traditional belief system. Both Countess Cathleen's camp (of the Catholicism) and the Merchants' Camp (of the traditional Irish system) have the same primary mission of 'winning' souls onto their gods/vineyards. As Yeats argues, the great famine caused many Irish believers to backslide, selling up their souls to

the Merchants in return for food and drink, which amounts to some sort of 'salvation' from physical death. The backsliders could not trust the pathway to eternal salvation being promised by the Catholicism, which is further complicated by the famine.

Soyinka does create a similar supernatural world as well. Elesin's delayed death is forced through by Olohun-Iyo's invocation. On seeing the corpse of his son, Olohun-Iyo, who is Elesin's father, facilitates the death of his son through invocation. To Olohun-Iyo, doing so is an highly rewarding soul-winning missionary service. The survival of the soul of the King in the eternal world completely rests upon the death and transition of the Elesin's soul to meet up with the King's. Olohun-Iyo's invocation results into a supernatural surge.

Elesin's decision to happily die and save the soul of his master is against the belief system of the newly introduced Christian religion which the colonial government represents. Hence, it is a criminal offence to deliberately take one's life. Amusa, an officer of the colonial government, is one of those charged with reporting such crimes, but the *egungun* occultic power would influence Amusa's decision not to report Elesin's intention to die. In the African world, death can be a duty to be performed as is Elesin's duty to die and meet up with his master. Elesin's death is a call to a cultural duty, failure of which promises a disastrous and catastrophic future for the people of his community. As with Yeats, the relationship between death and soul is the central idea explored in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1976). As with a contest between Catholicism and Irish belief system in Yeats', so is a contest between Christianity and the Yoruba belief system in which both systems are exemplified by Mr Pilkings, the colonial district officer and his wife Jane and Elesin, the king's horseman.

The imprisonment of Elesin, which is to prevent him from performing his duty of a call to die, could only bring more deaths as Olunde, the son of the incapacitated King's Horseman, felt a sense of urgency to avert a disastrous future for his people '...with his life.' (Soyinka 1976). Olunde performed the duty on behalf of Elesin, saving the souls of the king and that of his people who would face disastrous future should the soul of the king continue to wander endlessly in the afterlife. In other words, Olunde does not only carry out the timely duty of his family lineage but also offers a much-needed sacrifice for his entire community. Although Soyinka states that Mr Pilkings' resistance should not be solely interpreted as a clash between the old values and the new values, or a clash between the western methods and African traditions (Soyinka 1976), the play clearly compares with Yeats' themes of the relationship between death and soul and of a similar supernatural architecture.

4. Textual Analyses: construing the supernatural worlds

To some varying degree, both playwrights share some historical background in that they both belong to societies that have been subjected to forceful colonialism. Resistance to the imposition of a new order has been established. Conscious cultural revivalism was, and still, is ongoing, and is evident in the literary productions. While Irish literary works have achieved considerable success, African literature has appeared imprisoned infinitely. Yeats recalls the frightened Irish history of

the Great famine, while Soyinka recalls how colonial's intervention in the cultural and religious life of the people they are forcibly governing resulted into more disastrous endings. Although set in the historical famine Ireland, no better background than the Great famine of the 17th century could have provided better surreal human conditions where choices pertaining to religious live are not only critical but also representative of the people's worldviews, sensibilities and belief systems. Like Yeats, Soyinka also documents important moments in the historical struggle for cultural independence by his people. According to Soyinka, the material of *Death and the King Horseman* (1976) was from 1946 actual event. The playwright writes: "In 1946, in the ancient Yoruba city of Nigeria, a well meaning District Officer Simon Pilkings intervenes to prevent the ritual suicide of the Yoruba chief, Elesin- a sacrificial suicide demanded by the death of the King. There follow drastic repercussions in both indigenes and colonial communities" (Soyinka 1976).

Just as Christ's sacrifice on the cross of Calvary for the sinful souls of the human world, it is right to say that both Cathleen and Olunde defy all odds, and offer their lives to death in exchange for the salvation of the souls of their communities. Cathleen and Olunde represent many Irish and Yoruba who conceptualise death as a form of transition, and as a cultural duty to be performed in a timely manner when necessitated. According to Cathleen, the famine has forced almost all the peasants into 'sins', which involves trading their souls for material things in order to survive. As it is evident in the excerpt below, Cathleen's sense of duty compels her to not only trade her expensive soul to redeem others but also to secure permanent salvation for the people on earth.

CATHLEEN.

I come to barter a soul for a great price
 The people starve, therefore the people go
 Thronging to you, I hear a cry come from them
 And it is in my ears by night and day,
 And I would have five hundred thousands crowns
 That I may feed them till the dearth go by.
 There is more:
 The souls that you have bought must be set free.
 I offer my own soul.

FIRST MERCHANT

Five hundred thousand crowns; we give the price,
 The gold is here; the souls even while you speak.
 Have slipped out of our bond, because your face
 Has shed a light on them and filled their hearts
 But you must sign, for we omit no form
 In buying a soul like yours.

CATHLEEN

Take up the money, and now come with me;
 When we are far from this polluted place
 I will give everybody money enough.
 (half rising) Lay all the bags of money in a heap

And when I am gone, old Oona, share them out
To every man and woman; judge and give

According to their needs, Elesin and his son, Olunde give up their lives for the salvation of others, to avert disastrous ending. Mr Pilkings' human knowledge and power are rendered useless in the execution of fate predestined by the gods. It is a mandatory cultural duty for the King's horseman, Elesin to die and accompany the soul of the King as they ascend to the ancestral world. This ascension will be aided by a horse, and a dog of which the former is a vehicle, and the latter a path-tracker. The dog tracks the path for the horse to follow. The horse is Elesin on whom the king will ride to the ancestral home. The consequence(s) of the failure of Elesin to die and therefore prevent the king from reaching home is/are undoubtedly disastrous and calamitous, not only for Elesin but also for the entire community. To avert this disastrous future, Olunde, the son of the incapacitated Elesin Oba, overtakes human error by performing the duty on behalf of his father who has been taken custody by the colonial government since he publicly declared his intention to die. Olunde avoids curse that could have been placed upon his family lineage, and that of the deadly future of his community, and consequently inspires his father's ultimate death.

ELESIN.

I cannot approach. Take off the cloth. I shall speak
my message from heart to heart of silence.

IYALOJA

(moves forward and removes the covering) Your courier Elesin, cast
your eyes on the favoured companion of the King. (Rolled up in the
mat, his head and feet showing at either end is the body of OLUNDE)
There lies the honour of your household and of our race Because he
could not bear to let honour fly out of doors, he stopped it with his
life. The son has proved the father. Elesin, and there is nothing left in
your mouth to gnash but infant gums.

Thus, heroic honour may be appropriate for the larger-than-life Countess Cathleen and Olunde. Meanwhile man has deprived Elesin of his honour. This explains the African belief that man can hamper, delay and deprive mortal's success as it may be admissible in the supernatural world.

Unlike Yeats, Soyinka shows how the human world feels the resultant effects of the interplay of the supernatural and human worlds. Mr Pilkings' show of human knowledge in matters of the supernatural world is strongly frowned at in the supernatural world. Such arrogance of human error in matters of the supernatural can bring about significant unending human pains and sufferings, which remain valid belief in today's Africans' worldviews. Rather than the sole Elesin's soul, Pilkings' interference does not only double the casualties but also affirms the inevitability of fate. It also interprets that man, irrespective of age, expertise, knowledge and craft is an innocent 'child' in the affairs of man that are midwived by the supernatural forces. The following conversation between Iyaloja and Pilkings further show the cost of human error in supernatural affairs.

- IYALOJA.** To prevent one death you will actually make other deaths?
Ah, great is the wisdom of the white race...
- PILKINGS.** (in a tired voice): Was this what you wanted?
- IYALOJA:** No child, it is what you brought to be, you who,
play with strangers' lives, who even usurp the vestments of our dead
yet believes that the stain of death will not cling to you. The gods
demanded only the old expired plantain but you cut down the
sap-laden shoot to feed your pride....

If there is human sacrifice, there must be afterlife, an imagined world where the heroes ascend. The interconnectivity of these worlds could not be explained by methodological processes. As it is evident, the duality of afterlife is presented by Soyinka and Yeats. The souls of heroic people like Countess Cathleen will ascend to the heaven, while those of the unspirited will ascend to Hell. Yeats' reference to the distinction of Hell and Heaven is a pun on the strict worldview on morality and immorality by the Catholicism. Such strict distinction does not exist in either the Irish or the Yoruba world, both of which compete with the western ideology of moral paradigm. In addition, the world of the ancestors where the soul of King is destined is an equivalent of Heaven, a resting home. But the King's soul could not journey to the Heaven on its own without the help of his aide the Horseman. In other words, the failure of the horseman to arrive may amount to the soul of the King 'hanging' in a place other than the Christian Heaven. In other words, if the Christian imagined world of Heaven is nothing but a resting home, then the Yoruba's idea of the world of the ancestor is an equivalent. Hence, Countess Cathleen, the King, Olunde, king's horse and the dog would arrive different at culturally-laden and built heavens, where God, angels, and good people are believed to dwell, while out-of-favour Elesin, Teig, Shemus, and the Merchants would arrive at Hell, at least according to Mary. However, it is surprising that Cathleen's admittance is only motivated by her altruism.

- THE ANGEL.** The light beats down; the gates of pearl are wide.
And she is passing to the floor of peace,
And Mary of the seven times wounded heart
Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair
Has fallen on her face; The Light of Lights
Look always on the motive, not the deed,
The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone.

On the other hand, the criteria for admittance into Soyinka's Yoruba perfect dwelling place is not measured by deed but by act; an accomplishment of duty, irrespective of human error or barriers. In a contemporary world, one would expect prerogative of mercy for Elesin but, according to the playwright, 'oh, how late it all is. His son will feast on the meat and throw him bones...'

Furthermore, the two works present us with supernatural events and occurrences that shape the resolution of the plays. Like in the Christian world where it is believed that the challenges of life are better fought in the spiritual, Countess Cathleen's downfall is charted in the spiritual, just as Olunde interceded for his father, engaging in invocation which brings about the desired ultimate fate. Unlike Elesin, who does not have the means to prevent his people from enduring calamity should he fail to perform his duty, Cathleen does have more than enough wealth that would prevent the people from trading their souls for food.

CATHLEEN

My thanks to God, to Mary and the angels
 That I have money in my treasury,
 And can buy grain from those who have stored it up
 To prosper on the hunger of the poor
 But you've been far and know the signs of things
 When will this yellow vapour no more hang
 And creep about the fields, and this great heat
 Vanish away, and grass show its green shoots?

Just as Pilking, Cathleen is a human agent that must be dealt with in order to win souls for the other camp. Hence the best way to deal with that is to capture her power, which is the wealth. This means that when she becomes poor, it will be difficult or almost impossible to attract souls to her camp. In other words, Cathleen's material resource has been a barrier to Merchants' ability to win more souls to their own camp. The Merchants' aim is to win all the human souls, using different strategies that include monopolizing materials which attract humans. Just like the contest between Pilking and Elesin, the following excerpt shows how the magical merchants plan to battle Cathleen in the spirit.

FIRST MERCHANT.

Although I bid you rob her treasury
 I find you sitting drowsed and motionless,
 And yet you understand that while it's full
 She'll bid against us and so bribe the poor
 That our great Master'll lack his merchandise.
 You know that the she has brought into this house

The attack is carried out spiritually, overpowering the physical presence of man that secures the treasury. Such is the similar overpowering of Pilking by the spiritual intervention of the gods through the invocation entered into by Olunde, together with the spiritual desire of the entire community.

OONA (entering hurriedly)
 Ochone! Ochone! The treasure room is broken in,
 The door stands open, and the gold is gone
 Ochone!
 That my good mistress should lose all this money

CATHLEEN
 Let those among you—not too old to ride--
 Get horses and search all the country round,
 I'll give a farm to him who finds the thieves.
 (A man with keys at his girdle has come in while she
 speaks. There is a general murmur of The Porter!
 The porter!

PORTER.
 Demons were here. I sat beside the door
 In my stone niche, and two owls passed me by,

Whispering with human voices. By losing the treasury, Cathleen loses both her physical and spiritual power to contest comfortably in the contest for the souls of a people who have gone mad by the painful touch of famine. For artistic purposes, Yeats restores her spiritual consciousness, enabling her to realise that the attack is a signal to home call. In a further contest, Cathleen would seek the aid of her own spiritual superior.

CATHLEEN. Ah, no, not that.
 A sad resolve wakes in me. I have heard
 A sound of wailing in unnumbered hovels,
 And I must go down, down—I know not where—
 Pray for all men and women mad from famine
 Pray, you good neighbours.

(The PEASANTS all kneel. COUNTESS CATHLEEN ascends the steps to the door of the oratory, and turning round stands there motionless for a little, and then cries in a loud voice)

Mary, Queen of angels,
 And all you clouds on clouds of saints, farewell!

The famine grows taller, and more people continue to trade souls with the 'demons' as Mary argues. But Countess Cathleen's strength has been significantly weakened, forcing her to trade her own soul in order to recollect enough money for the redemption of the souls of her people. She could have redeemed all the souls with the strong power of her wealth, but she has already lost the battle in the spiritual, a scenario that translates into the physical. As it will be shown, the Merchants, again, summon the spirits-dancers, who perform dance theatre.

FIRST MERCHANT. I'll call them, and who'll dare to disobey?
 Come, all you elemental populace
 From Cruachan and Finbar's ancient house.
 Come, break up the long dance under the hill,
 Or if you lie in the hollows of the sea,
 Leave lonely the long hoarding surges, leave
 The cymbals of the waves to clash alone,
 And shaking the sea-tangles from your hair
 Gather about us.
 (The SPIRITS gather under the arches)

SECOND MERCHANT. They come. Be still a while.

There is an equivalent of this spiritual presence on the physical world in Soyinka's *Death and the King Horseman*. For instance, Elesin is buried in invocation by the Praise Singer's chants which invites supernatural forces that eventually caused Elesin's ultimate death. The fact that this performance of duty happened in the presence of the opposition shows the interconnection of the physical and spiritual worlds. The surge for Elesin's death is beyond the control of Elesin himself! In a similar vein, the willingness and bravery of Olunde to overtake his father's death further shows the superiority of the supernatural world over the physical human mind. It can be argued that such bravery facilitates the presence of the unseen forces that midwife the ultimate Elesin's suicidal ritual. The significance of this lies in the interface of two worlds; the spiritually-inspired physical bravery of Olunde combines with the supernatural forces to forcibly intervene. According to the Praise- Singer, time and fate go hand in hand.

PRAISE-SINGER. Elesin, we placed the reins of the world in your hands yet you watched it plunge over the edge of the bitter precipice. You sat with folded arms while evil strangers tilted the world from its course and crashed it beyond the edge of emptiness-you muttered, there is little that one man can do, you left us floundering in a blind future. Your heir has taken burden on himself. What the end will be, we are not gods to tell. But this young shoot has poured its sap into the parent stalk, and we know this is not the way of life. Our world is crumbling in the void of strangers, Elesin.

(ELESIN has stood rock still, his knuckles taut on the bars, his eyes glued to the body of his son. The stillness seizes and paralyzes everyone, including PILKINGS who has turned to look. Suddenly, ELESIN flings one arm round his neck, once, and with the loop of the chain, strangles himself in a swift, decisive pull. The guards rush forward to stop him but they are only in time to let his body down. PILKINGS has leapt to the door at the same time and struggles with the lock...)

According to the physical laws, certain questions such as what killed Elesin or what inspired his surge can be asked. However, no answer could be found in those physical laws, except in the supernatural world. In other words, one can trace his death to a number of factors which are primarily led by the invocation and the incantations of Oluhun-Iyo. His sacred words are highly spirited and possessed, causing the presence of Spirits as those of Merchants within the time and space of Elesin. In other words, Praise Singer's incantation and invocation do not only create the enabling spiritual atmospheric condition but also provide sufficient energies and vibes that outweigh those of the oppositions.

The relationships between body and soul, flesh and man, and self and soul are exemplified by the representations of Countess Cathleen, Elesin and Olunde. Man is a body made up of flesh with which soul interacts and links with the supernatural world. The souls of Elesin and Olunde connect the flesh with the supernatural world, moving beyond the physical world. Elsewhere, John Donne has argued in the poem *Death, Be Not Proud* (1610) 'one short sleepe past, we wake eternally. And death shall be no more; death, thou shall die.'⁶ According to Donne, only the flesh or body that can die, which thus means that death is a passage to eternity of soul.

The idea of death as an end to a means but not as a means to an end inspires Countess Cathleen and Olunde who sacrificially give up their bodies/flesh for the salvation of many other souls. Although Cathleen and Elesin suffered physical death, according to Yeats and Soyinka, their souls will not only find happiness in the afterlife but will also serve as a lesson to many in the physical world that the salvation of soul is more important than the glorification of the human flesh or body. As the excerpt below show, Cathleen's soul drifts into eternity among others souls; a journey which is confirmed by a supernatural representative, *The Angel*.

THE ANGEL.

The light beats down; the gates of pearl are wide.
And she is passing to the floor of peace,
And Mary of the seven times wounded heart
Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair
Has fallen on her face; The Light of Lights
Look always on the motive, not the deed,
The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone.
(ALEEL releases the ANGEL and Kneels)

In Soyinka's work, the transition from the world of flesh and blood into the world beyond may not be journeyed with only the body and flesh. The King has passed away and the body/flesh is no longer important as it is not required to embark on the spiritual journey to his ancestral home. Iyaloja provides insight into the path:

IYALOJA.

They have slain the favourite horse of the king and slain his dog. They have borne them from pulse to pulse centre of the land receiving

prayers for their king. But the rider has chosen to stay behind.
This soul journey links us up with the object of transaction by the
merchants. We may further ask why the merchants trade not in body
and flesh, but in souls?

FIRST MERCHANT.

They have not sold all yet.
For there's a vaporous thing—that may be nothing,
But that's the buyer's risk—a second self,
They call immortal for a story's sake.

SHEMUS.

You come to buy our souls?

TIEG.

I'll barter mine.

Why should we starve for what may be but nothing?

CATHLEEN.

But there's a world to come.

SHEMUS.

And if there is,
I'd rather trust myself into the hands
That can pay money down than to the hands
That have but shaken famine from the bag.

The body, the flesh and the Self are all perishable goods but 'in a world to come' but only imperishable 'elemental forces' are habitable. The gap between body and soul is filled up by death, which is meant by 'one short sleepe'. The body sleeps but the soul never does. It interprets that only the Terminal End of A human body implies death; death of a man in flesh is not final. Both literary works insinuate that what constitutes 'oneself'¹ in the human world is related to the personality in the spirit world.

In fact, the Yoruba believes that earthly occupations are immanent not only to the flesh but also to the soul. It suggests that a fisherman is not only a fisherman here on the physical world but remains a fisherman in soul; even after his death in the world beyond. Therefore, Elesin Oba would carry on his occupation as King's Horseman, as well as Olohun Iyo, the Praise Singer.

PRAISE SINGER.

Are you sure there will be one like me on the other side? Far be it for me to belittle the dwellers of that place but, a man is either born to his art or he isn't. And I don't know for certain that you'll meet my father, so who is going to sing these deeds in accents that will pierce the deafness of the ancient ones. I have prepared my going—just tell me; Olohun-iyó, I need you on this journey and I shall be behind you.

Mysticism adorns the two supernatural works. There are three levels of spiritual systems that operate in the broad scope of the two works. In Countess Cathleen, Yeats contrasts the Christian spiritual system with the Irish supernatural beliefs. But to Soyinka, there is no need to juxtapose

¹ The totality of what man stands for on earth.

the Yoruba world of supernatural, so he deliberately did not draw from Catholicism or any other social spectrum to fully unfold the position of mysticism in the Yoruba world. Yeats employs Tieg and Shemus to x-ray the Irish belief in mysticism. Tieg and Shemus remain committed to their customary belief, unmoved to the Christian ideas as exemplified by Mary, Aleel, Countess Cathleen, and so many others. Tieg and Shemus are engrossed in the Irish supernatural world such that they are always caught up in references to it.

TEIG.

In the bush beyond,
 There are two birds---if you can call them birds--
 I could not see them rightly for the leaves,
 And I'm half certain they've a human face
 They're looking at me.
 What is the good of praying? Father says

The belief that personal communication or union with the divine is achieved through intuition, faith, ecstasy, or sudden insight rather than through rational thought is evident by Tieg and Shemus' communication with the unseen beings.

SHEMUS.

(at door)
 Whatever you are that walk the woods at night,
 So be it that you have not shouldered up
 Out of a grave—for I'll have nothing human---
 And have free hands, a friendly trick of speech,
 I welcome you. Come, sit beside the fire.
 Or you've a horse's tail to whip your flank,
 Feathers instead of hair, that's but a straw,
 Come, share what bread and meat is in the house,
 And stretch your heels and warm them in the ashes.
 And after that, let's share and share alike
 And curse all men and women. Come in, come in.
 What, is there no one there?
 (Turning from door)
 And yet they say
 They are as common as the grass, and ride
 Even upon the book in the priest's hand.
 (TEIG lifts one arm slowly and points toward the door and
 begins moving backwards. SHEMUS turns, he also sees some-
 thing and begins moving backward. MARY does the same. A
 man dressed as an Eastern merchant comes in carrying a small

carpet. He unrolls it and sits cross-legged at one end of it.
Another man dressed in the same way follows, and sits at the
other end. This is done slowly and deliberately, when they are
seated they take money out of embroidered purses at their
girdles and begin arranging it on the carpet.

TEIG.

You speak to them

SHEMUS

No, you

TEIG.

'Twas you that called them.

SHEMUS.

(coming nearer)

I'd make so bold, if you would pardon it,
To ask if there's a thing you'd have of us,
Although we are but poor people, if there is,
Why, if there is

In the Christian world, the interaction is done by medium of summon through prayer. Aleel uses this medium to summon the appearance of Angels to provide foresight and divination into the passage of Cathleen. This is followed by a trance in which Cathleen enters into a world beyond to interact with the other side of the world.

CATHLEEN

Ah, no, not that
A sad resolves wakes in me. I have heard
A sound of wailing in unnumbered hovels,
And I must go down, down—I know not where---
Pray for all men and women mad from famine;
Pray, you good neighbours.

(The PEASANTS all kneel. COUNTESS CATHLEEN ascends the steps to the door of the oratory, and turning round stands there motionless for a little, and then cries in a loud voice)

Mary, Queen of angels,
And all you clouds on clouds of saints, farewell!

Here, Cathleen enters into a trance through invocation of the Christian spirits, which may be described as the Holy Spirit by the believers in Christian superstitions.

OONA

(casting herself face downwards on the floor)
O, Maker of all, protect her from the demons,
And if a soul must need be lost, take mine

(ALLEL kneels beside her, but does not seem to hear her words. The PEASANTS return. They carry the COUNTESS CATHLEEN and lay her upon the ground before OONA and ALEEL. She lies there as if dead)

Unlike Yeats, Soyinka's sole intention is just an exploration of the supernatural belief of the Yoruba, and how this belief outplays the human barriers in 1946. Pilkings, a well-meaning District Officer, had stood to prevent ritual suicide of Elesin but he was overpowered by supernatural force. This supernatural force projects Elesin into a trance in the very eyes of Pilkings and prison guards. It is this dazed state of body that forced out the soul of Elesin. He does not willfully lose himself in this state but is overwhelmed by the supernatural intervention. The incorruptibility of the space within which this interaction ensues barricades human interference from Pilkings, Jane, and the guards. It is the same state in which Cathleen professes her death before trading her soul in the human face. No human force can prevent her from trading her soul.

While spiritual arrogance is dealt with by Yeats, Soyinka's concern is purely recounting the usual interplay between immortal and mortal. Shemus, Tieg, and the peasants follow the spiritual leadership of the three Merchants, who 'must tramp the world,'² because they 'travel for the Master of all merchants,'³ Mary, Aleel, Oona, and Cathleen follow the Christian spiritual leadership of Holy Mary, who claims spiritual superiority over Shemus and Co. Cathleen condemns the other camp as a destroyer of the world, and destroyer of the peace of the world. But Shemus lashes back, claiming that the God of Mary and Cathleen have not done better in the affairs of man because He has only visited them with more than enough famine.

CATHLEEN.

But there's a world to come.

SHEMUS.

And if there is,

I'd rather trust myself into the hands

That can pay money down than to the hands

That have but shaken famine from the bag.

(He goes out right)

(lifting) There's money for a soul, sweet yellow money.

There's money for men's souls, good money, money."

The readers are able to interact with a number of experiences which are enriched by the presence of supernatural forces like the ghosts, demons, angles, spirits, etc. Shemus and Tieg clearly picture in our mind what we love to see but that which often could not be seen. Or what we love to hear but that which often do not hear. Or what we love to feel or experience but that which of-

² Yeats, Williams Butler, *Countess Cathleen*, 1892.

³ Yeats, Williams Butler, *Countess Cathleen*, 1892.

ten could not be felt or experienced. Shemus narrates one ironic nature of man and the desire for things of the supernatural world in the physical world.

SHEMUS.

I heard say
 There's something that appears like a white bird,
 A pigeon or a seagull or the like,
 But if you hit it with a stone or a stick
 It clangs as though it had been made of brass;
 And that if you dig down where it was scratching
 You'll find a crock of gold

This looks like adventurous experiences that may not be created or experienced in a physical world. Soyinka supplements this supernatural desire with another sub-plot. The story of the Not-I' bird, and Elesin's moon tale are a chain of events that motivate the hearts of Elesin.

ELESIN.

The moon was my messenger and guide. When it reached a certain gateway in the sky, it touched that moment for which my whole life has been spent in blessings. Even I do not know the gateway I have stood here and scanned the sky for a glimpse of that door but, I cannot see it. Human eyes are useless for a this nature. But in the house of *osugbo*, those who keep watch through the spirit recognised the moment, they sent word to me through the voice of our sacred drums to prepare myself. I heard them and I shed all thoughts of earth. I began to follow the moon to the abode of gods.

The idea of the *egungun*⁴ and its paraphernalia is a sacred one, which is alien to the white, Mr. Pilkings.

AMUSA.

Mista Pirinkin, I beg you sir, what you think you do with that dress? It belong to dead cult, not for human being ... Mista Pirinkin, I beg you, take it off. Is not good for man like you to touch that cloth.
 Sir, it is a matter of death. How can man talk against death to person in uniform of death?..
 Madam, I arrest the ring leaders who make trouble but me I no touch *egungun*. That *egungun* itself, I no touch. And I no abuse am. I arrest ring-leader but I treat *egungun* with respect.

4 Ancestral masquerade

One element of the supernatural world in the literature that makes mythical tales not verifiable is the peopling of its world by ghosts, angels, demons, devils, spirits, fairies, and maybe, superman and super-inanimate. Yeats stuns the readers when he brings Angels down onto the earth, saving Aleel's energy of summoning. Another heaven on earth is the three Spirits-dancers who perform dance for the same spirited Merchants.

ALEEL. Look no more on the half-closed gates of Hell,
But speak to me, whose mind is smitten of God,
That it may be no more with mortal things,
And tell of her who lies there.
(He seizes one of the angels.)
Till you speak. You shall not drift into eternity

The implications of the ability by a human, Aleel, to seize an Angel are infinite! A human hand puts an Angel in hostage, forcing a premonition. The Angel speaks in human tongue to Aleel before being set free.

THE ANGEL. The light beats down; the gates of pearl are wide,
And she is passing to the floor of peace,
And Mary of the seven times wounded heart
Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair
Has fallen on her face; The Light of Lights
Look always on the motive, not the deed,
The Shadow of Shadows on the dead alone.
(ALEEL releases the ANGEL and kneels.)

The presence of such supernatural creatures is rather implied in *Death and the King's Horseman* (1976). This can only be worked out by a believer in the Yoruba religion. The King's corpse is a month's old, for which the unburied corpse, kept in a sacred place, is a toast of visits for spirits, Angelical beings, and all delegated creatures, among whom is Elesin Oba.

5. Conclusion

The present paper has provided some textual evidence showing the extent to which the idea of supernaturalism is presented in two different literary works that have never been explored comparatively. The paper also shows the different strategies with which this idea is construed, such that the belief systems in the two different cultural worlds of the Yoruba and the Irish are brought to the fore front. It is widely accepted that the idea of supernatural is present in all cultures, though it may be constructed in different ways. But in whatever forms they may be represented, some elements such as paranormal and occult ideas are always present.

One central contribution of the paper is that the narrative and language of cultural beliefs of different cultures may overlap, which affirms the argument that supernaturalism is to some extent a matter of universals in world cultures and by extension literatures. In addition, the paper has shown that African literature, which has often been compared to Caribbean literature and African American literature for obvious historical reasons, can as well begin to look for interesting intersecting ideologies in European literature, especially in Irish literature. For instance, while Yeats draws on magical inputs, Soyinka draws on occult idea of *egungun*. In both works, we have interaction of man with the supernatural networks by a way of summoning the spirits and transition into trance, which is exemplified by the collapse of Cathleen and the process of Elesin's death. Also, the power of Countess Cathleen is stolen spiritually while Pilkings' barrier to Elesin's death is also removed spiritually and miraculously.

Summing up all of these anecdotes in both literary works, I argue that both works clearly intend to show that the supernatural is not only superior to the human world but also that a liner relationship exists between the two worlds. As the literary works show, these hypotheses are well presented and can be described as a paramount cultural ideology in both the Irish and Yoruba worlds. Although one may argue that though such ideology may not be clearly pronounced in the contemporary Irish realities as it is in the contemporary Yoruba realities, the extent of convergence and divergence still remains a grey area that has never been explored. While the present work has attempted at showing important cultural element from two traditions that are well apart, i.e. the idea of supernaturalism—how it works, its inhabitants, its relationship with man and the physical world, more research into this neglected intersection is required.

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ANITA CHMIELEWSKA

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University of Warsaw

The Talmudic Tradition in Contemporary British-Jewish Fiction: Silence versus Talking

Abstract. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that contemporary British-Jewish fiction turns away from silence which is understood as a means of preventing problems in the community and that it depicts this kind of silence as harmful to family bonds. Instead, as I shall argue, recent British novels draw from the long-established tradition of Talmudic discussion and describe it as a method of solving intergenerational conflicts. Such an approach is visible in *Disobedience* by Naomi Alderman, *The Marrying of Chani Kaufman* by Eve Harris, *When We Were Bad* by Charlotte Mendelson, and *The Innocents* by Francesca Segal.

Keywords: British Jews, Talmud, silence, discussion, family.

1. The uniting force of the Talmud

The Jewish Diaspora has always been bound together by the Talmud, the holy text of Judaism. As a core of Jewish culture, the Talmud has been consulted by religious Jews when they were searching for the answers to subjects regarding lifestyle and, above all, religion. It consists of two parts: Mishnah and Gemara (Jacobs 2008a: 2-3). Mishnah is the Oral Law that, as it is believed, was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, passed down from generation to generation and written down in 200 CE (Jacobs 2008a: 1-2). Gemara, written around 500 CE, consists of writings that develop the thoughts from Mishnah (Jacobs 2008a: 3). The Talmud has bound Jewish people in the Dispersion for more than 2000 years. Not only has the Talmud passed down knowledge of the laws of Judaism, but also, as Shwarzer notes, its organization mirrored the architectural structure of the Temple, being thus a portable version of the destroyed place of worship (Schwartz 2001: 474-487). However, the Talmud has never been approached as a fossilized list of religious rules. Jacobs points to the fact that it “constitutes reasoning processes which have received the most careful study on the part of generations of Jewish scholars and have contributed more to the shaping of the Jewish mind than any other factor” (Jacobs 2008a: 1). The dialogue on the implementation of Talmudic texts has been the central element of Jewish education for ages.

2. *Havruta*: a discussion leading to knowledge

The discussions between students and teachers tend to develop into heated disputes. It is the students who ask problematic questions who are valued most (Jacobs 2008b: 7). Moreover, since World War I, *havruta*, a traditional method of analyzing and interpreting fragments of the Talmud in groups and especially in pairs has become the dominant approach to this text (Arbor 2014: 213). Shwartz and Katz observe that *havruta* is considered the best method of learning as it seems to strengthen the sense of community and to protect from embarrassment, a feeling rarely absent in an individual study with a teacher, who tends to be on higher intellectual level than his student (Katz and Schwartz 1998: 317). A *havruta* partner does not have to be chosen by a Rabbi, sometimes a student can do it individually. Nowadays, the Talmud can be studied in *havruta* not only in traditional Talmudic schools but also via the Internet or with friends at home. Moreover, Talmudic disputes are present in a vast body of commentaries written by generations of Rabbis. The infinity of intergenerational disputes on the pages of Talmudic literature seems to reflect the Jewish belief in the infinity of the Divine Word (Salfati 2009: 12). In other words, according to Judaism, no question exists that would not find its answer in the Talmud.

Interestingly, this model of learning finds its counterpart in the everyday life of many Jewish families. It includes both the *havruta* partners' and the teacher-student relation. According to Amos Oz, "While scholarship matters enormously, family matters even more. These two mainstays tend to overlap. Fathers, mothers, teachers. Sons, daughters, students. Text, question, dispute" (Oz 2007a: X). He observes that, just like the students in Talmudic schools challenge their teachers, in the Talmud, "sons, biological or metaphorical, constantly challenge their fathers" (Oz 2007b: 36). According to the writer, "Ancient Hebrew texts are continually engaged with two crucial pairings: parent and child, teacher and pupil" (Oz 2007b: 6). In other words, fathers may be identified as rabbis, and their children as their students. The teacher's duty is to pass on the Judaic ways of living, but he is meant also to address the challenging questions and doubts of the next generation by means of logic together with arguments that can be derived from the scripture.

3. The spirit of *havruta* in contemporary British-Jewish novels

Unfortunately, this centuries-old spirit of creative dispute has disappeared in the majority of contemporary orthodox Jewish communities (Oz 2007b: 35). Curiously though, recent British-Jewish novels draw from the tradition of Talmudic arguments in families. Such an interest is clearly visible in *Disobedience* by Naomi Alderman and *The Marrying of Chani Kaufman* by Eve Harris. A distinct echo of this preoccupation is also detected in two other novels: *When We Were Bad* by Charlotte Mendelson and *The Innocents* by Francesca Segal. Each of these books opens with a scene in a synagogue that symbolically places the texts in Judaic tradition and each of them deals with the subject of British-Jewish families' dilemmas regarding lifestyle and religion.

British Jews, an amalgam of two distinct cultures, are a marginal but an important minority in the Isles. Ruth Gilbert, one of the leading experts on contemporary British-Jewish literature,

points to the fact that “[u]ntil quite recently there has been a pervading sense that American[-Jewish] writing has somewhat dominated the literary and cultural agenda” (Gilbert 2008: 397). However, as she notes, “current studies are increasingly recognising the need to untangle the British experience from the American and the wider European perspectives and focus on the *particularity* of the Anglo-Jewish context” (Gilbert 2008: 397, italics in the original).

Most importantly, in contrast to reticent Englishmen, Jews, for a long time have been stereotypically associated with talkativeness, and consequently have perceived themselves as “a category error” (Gilbert 2008: 398). Yet, the negative perception of the propensity to talk has recently started to give way to an opposite tendency. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate that recent British-Jewish fiction turns away from silence which is understood as a means of preventing problems in community, that it depicts this kind of silence as harmful to family bonds and that instead, it turns to discussion as a method of solving intergenerational conflicts.

4. Overcoming differences

As Cheyette observes, “Most recent British-Jewish writers are not merely unapologetic in their Jewishness but can be characterized as Jews ‘with attitude’ who disrupt all conventions” (qtd. in Gilbert 2008: 402). Naomi Alderman certainly belongs to this group. In her novel with a very telling title, *Disobedience*, she presents a story of an orthodox Jewish community stirred by the arrival of a Rabbi’s daughter, Ronit, who years before decided to move to New York and pursue a secular life. After a long time of absence, she flies to London for her father’s funeral. During the event, she meets her childhood sweetheart, Esti, who is now married to a future Rabbi, Dovid. The romantic feeling between Ronit and Esti develops once again.

Ronit’s sudden arrival provokes a number of reflections on Ronit’s, Esti’s and Dovid’s part. All three of them approach the questions they are interested in by means of Talmudic discourse. Each chapter is introduced by a quotation from the Talmud and followed by musings associated with it. The first of them always comes from the narrator. The following, depending on the chapter, is either from Ronit, Dovid or from Esti. Together, united in the dialogue that has as its purpose to answer their doubts, they constitute a *havruta* group. The subjects they explore are interconnected and aim at answering one major question, namely: What is happiness?

The question is embedded in long elaborations on the opposition of silence versus talking, the graveness of the former and the regenerating quality of the latter. According to Ronit’s father and for a long time also Dovid, certain things are better left unseen and untold. Such a taboo subject is, among others, Dovid’s illness, which manifests itself through sudden attacks of panic when he is facing stressful situations. Ronit, on the other hand, does not ever hesitate to say what she thinks. She even colors the truth to make it more shocking for those members of the orthodox community whom she does not particularly like. When asked by them if she is in any relationship with a man, she answers that she has a female partner, and that they intend to organize a commitment ceremony and have children with some gay couple (Alderman 2007: 98-99). Surprisingly, this little provocation does not shock Dovid, but makes him smile (Alderman 2007: 99). Though he knows

that Ronit is not serious, he is far from being appalled by her behaviour, it simply amuses him. This reaction is significant as it shows that he is not critical of her talkativeness on subjects controversial for ultra-orthodox Jews.

As Ronit's therapist rightly observes, "Silence is not power. It's not strength. Silence is the means by which the weak remain weak and the strong remain strong. Silence is a method of oppression" (Alderman 2007: 153). As the book progresses, the readers witness a gradual change in Dovid's behaviour. From a man who refuses to address things he does not know how to cope with to an assertive Rabbi who decides to give voice to his wife during the funeral of Ronit's father (e.g. Alderman 2007: 48, 148). Quite possibly, it was the will to change his behaviour that made his wife decide to stay with him, and for Ronit not to break off her contact with the community like she once did. As the following fragment discloses, "Ronit thought she was running away from God, but in fact she was fleeing from silence" (Alderman 2007: 221).

Talking is also closely connected to the notion of gossip, which is heavily criticized in chapter seven of the novel. It opens with a fragment about the danger of engaging in conversations with women, which leads to men neglecting their duty to study the Talmud (Alderman 2007: 122). The narrator recounts how the Hendon women, when shopping, gossip about Ronit's, Esti's and Dovid's private life (Alderman 2007: 124-125). Significantly, what follows directly after the mentioned fragment is a description of Ronit's dream about seagulls that stand for the members of the local Jewish community who constantly observe and analyze her movements:

That night I dreamed of the seagulls of Hendon, of the extreme sharpness of their beaks and the flexing of their claws. Of the way they set their heads on one side and *look* at you with one, unfathomable beady eye. It was a Tippi Hedren sort of dream, of running away from flocks of seagulls, except that these birds weren't *doing* anything, not attacking or coming down the chimney or cracking glass. They were just *looking*. (Alderman 2007: 133, italics as in the original).

The novel thus points to the need for discussion, the lack of which leads to breaking relations with other people, in other words, to separation. According to both the narrator and Dovid, because it was God who created all separations, they must be essentially good (Alderman 2007: 42-46). They take many forms, such as kosher and unkosher food, or different spaces for men and women in synagogues. The musings on the subject of separation in chapter four open with a Talmudic fragment claiming it is better to be a man than a woman (Alderman 2007: 58). According to the narrator, such a statement is understandable as two people cannot be in possession of one crown (Alderman 2007: 58-59). For Esti, there is also the separation from Ronit, and for Ronit, her cutting herself off from her father.

However, if all these arrangements are good, why do both Ronit and Esti feel that they are missing something? Esti symbolically communicates her longing for her childhood friend by an act of mixing kosher and unkosher ingredients (Alderman 2007: 46-47). As for Ronit, it is her therapist who suggests she misses her father, though she may not be aware of it (Alderman 2007: 51). Their doubts

indicate that it is necessary to depart from uncritical and silent conformity to rules maladjusted to the changing needs of individual members of the community. This is especially visible in the story of a battle between Jacob and an angel. As the narrator comments: “But let us not deny that, of the many things He asks, some few may perhaps seem to us not only difficult but also unjust, unfair. Wrong. And, in these moments, let us never doubt that we too have a voice within us to speak, that we too, like Abraham and Moses, may argue with the Lord. It is our right” (Alderman 2007: 234).

Undoubtedly, all of the three, Ronit, Esti and Dovid, approve of such an interpretation of this biblical passage. Each of them is a rebel. In the synagogue, during Ronit’s father’s funeral, Dovid decides to stand in the ladies’ gallery, which is behaviour the community is not accustomed to. He shocks them even more when he allows his wife to speak publicly about her sexuality. As for Ronit, she disobeys her father when she decides to stay in New York. Just as Dovid she cannot accept the previous Rabbi’s attitude towards silence and neither can Esti. She says that words are important, but people should use them wisely: “Our words are powerful. Our words are real. This does not mean, however, that we should remain silent forever. Rather, we must measure our words. We must be sure that we use them, like the Almighty, to create and not to destroy” (Alderman 2007: 246).

The narrator draws attention to the fact that according to the Talmud, though the discussions humans engage in may be infinite and futile, they have been given free will and with it the right to disobey, not only other humans, but also God. Such a teaching is presented in one of the Talmudic stories elaborated on in the novel. It describes an argument between three prophets who cannot agree on one interpretation of a complicated point of law (Alderman 2007: 249-250). Even though God indicates the one who is right, they still hold to their own arguments (Alderman 2007: 250). According to the narrator, “We do not hear simply the pure voice of the Almighty as the angels do. We are not ruled by blind instinct like the beasts. Uniquely, we can listen to the commands of God, can understand them, yet can choose disobedience. It is this, and only this, which gives our obedience its value” (Alderman 2007: 213).

Ronit’s, Esti’s and Dovid’s reflections and their cooperation in the quest for answers are reflected by the novel’s arrangement which symbolically encourages discussion as opposed to destructive silence. It is worth mentioning Ruth Gilbert’s point that “Lesbian narrative in this narrative signifies a challenge to traditional family structures that is potentially disruptive but, it is implied, also regenerative” (Gilbert 2008: 394-406). This regeneration is evident in the outcome of the discussion in the novel. The marriage of Esti and Dovid is not destroyed, despite Esti’s lesbian affair with Ronit. The couple decide to continue on living together in an orthodox Jewish environment, raise their child in a family that promotes discussion and gives voice to everyone, no matter whether one is a woman, a man, a heterosexual or a homosexual.

5. Modernizing an ultra-orthodox community

The spirit of Talmudic discussion is also easily detected in Eve Harris’s novel, *The Marrying of Chani Kaufman*. It opens with a citation from the Torah: “Therefore shall each man forsake his

mother and father, and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:23, 24). The book’s central theme is of Jewish marriage and divorce. *The Marrying of Chani Kaufman* asks questions about the extent of the parental influence on children, of how much of this influence should be approved of when the children leave home and have found their own orthodox Jewish families. It also puts in doubt the notion that it is possible to live a happy orthodox Jewish married life in contemporary times. However, most of, just as in the case of *Disobedience*, *The Marrying of Chani Kaufmann* argues that all these issues should be approached by means of intergenerational dialogue and discussions in *havruta*. At the same time, the book depicts the consequences of rejecting such a procedure and of turning to silence.

In contrast to *Disobedience*, this novel does not provide Talmudic quotations at the beginning of each chapter. Instead, there are numerous descriptions of orthodox Jewish religious rituals, such as ritual immersion in mikveh¹, and other procedures before, during and after the ceremony of marriage. There are two major *havruta* pairs: Chani and Baruch, and the Rabbi and the Rabbetzin. Though both Chani and Baruch are religious Jews, they want to negotiate the obligations of married life in an ultra-orthodox community. Their present form is difficult to accept both for the Rabbetzin, Baruch and Chani. Nonetheless, Baruch’s and Chani’s dealing with the problem differs essentially from the one of the Rabbetzin and her husband. The first couple choose discussion, the second, despite the Rabbetzin’s plights, stay on the path of silence and consequently separate.

The answer to the question on the viability of orthodox marriage in the twenty first century is therefore positive but only if critically approached by both future or present spouses. Moreover, the book suggests that the institution of orthodox marriage cannot escape certain modernisations. Answers regarding marriage that Chani asks are provided by the Rabbetzin, who is not allowed to encourage the girl to think critically. In turn, the new generation seek a modernised way of life, in which there would be fewer regulations and taboos, especially concerning their sexual life.

Chani and Baruch create a *havruta* and try to find answers together; this is what makes their relationship successful. On a more general level, the novel appears to suggest that if the Jewish ultra-orthodox communities refuse to critically rethink and negotiate their traditions, more and more of them will choose a secular life. This is exactly what Alderman pointed to in *Disobedience*.

According to Oz, “The Talmud stipulated, and the Haggadah² later popularized, some family rules of discussion. It was a paradigm of intergenerational quizzing: youngsters ask questions and their elders reply” (Oz 2007b: 36). This practice of intergenerational discussion, as Alderman’s and Harris’s novels argue, is something that Jewish orthodox communities should turn back to as it may help to develop solutions to major doubts about the orthodox ways of living that the new generation is presently facing.

1 Mikveh is a “ritual bathing pool in which a person immerses himself as part of the transition to ritual purity” (www.chabad.org).

2 Haggadah is the “book that retells the story of the exodus, from which the Passover seder is conducted” (www.chabad.org).

6. From a goddess to a Rabbi

When We Were Bad, although it tells a story of a less orthodox community than in *Disobedience* or *The Marrying of Chani Kaufman*, just as in case of these two books, it draws attention to the regenerative potential of discussion in inter-generational relations. One of the questions that the novel tries to answer is whether a female Rabbi, Claudia, should accept the controversial choice by her son, Adam, to marry a divorced woman. Even more importantly, it explores the question of the limits of the Rabbi's influence on the synagogue's members. The Rabbi's conflict with Adam makes it possible to answer this second, even more important question.

The two, Claudia and Adam, may be clearly identified as a teacher and a student. They do not, however, discuss a specific fragment of the Talmud but the Rabbi's belief that "As its senior rabbi herself has said, community, family, is the answer. Aren't they all lucky to be part of hers?" (Mendelson 2007: 9). Claudia has become the only one that should be listened to in the synagogue environment, somehow effacing the central figure of God that she is meant to represent. Described as an ancient statue, Claudia has the air of a goddess that should be worshipped: "[she] had sat up, slick dark hair like an otter, breasts and shoulders shining: too monumental to be beautiful but beautiful all the same" (Mendelson 2007: 7). With such a Rabbi, adored by all the members of the local community, the critical thinking and the spirit of discussion among them has been lost. Not only her son, but also other characters in the novel feel oppressed, as it may be easily sensed, above all, in the opening chapter of *When We Were Bad* (Mendelson 2007: 5-13).

Yet despite the fear of disobeying Claudia, Leo decides to develop his relationship with the woman he is in love with. Finally, the mother and the son reach a consensus:

"Because she is his mother, she knows. She says: "Do you want me to say whether I could ever like her?"

"Well, yes."

"No," she tells him. I could not. But she will be good for you." (Mendelson 2007: 320).

The fragment suggests that Claudia decides to accept her son's decision, which wouldn't have been possible if she refused to talk with her son. Moreover, and even more importantly, in the process of coming to terms with Adam's disobedience, Claudia changes her attitude towards all the members of the synagogue. From a godly figure, she becomes a human being. The intergenerational dialogue of the mother and the son brings fresh air to the whole community. The title itself suggests this shift. 'When we were bad' means 'before we became good'. It thus contrasts the past state of the community with the present one. The transition between the two happened as an aftermath of the dialogue and reconciliation of Claudia and Adam. Had they chosen silence, the situation both in the family and in the synagogue community would have continued to deteriorate.

7. The threat of omnipotence

If *Disobedience*, *The Marrying of Chani Kaufman* and *When We Were Bad* all end in a positive tone showing a happy or partially happy denouement, *The Innocents* by Francesca Segal portrays the oppression that turning to silence creates. The dialogue in Segal's book had the potential to develop but did not, mostly due to the refusal to listen and to discuss by the head of the family, the "teacher". Though not a Rabbi but a businessman, Lawrence is the only person who should be truly obeyed in his family, which is very explicitly pointed to in the following fragment: "He was not stooping in apology – today, Lawrence looked like a patriarch. Tall and erect in the old black overcoat that Jaffa had brushed with extra care for the occasion, Lawrence had his arm around a *zaftig* and voluble wife he worshipped, a beautiful daughter beside him listening with respect and adoration, his prayer book in his hands as he read" (Segal 2013: 394, italics as in the original).

He gives the impression of being a loving, caring father who believes that one's family's well-being should be a priority for everyone. Yet, he is the one who decides how the lives of his relatives should appear, in which relationships they should engage in and in which not. His power over his daughter and her husband is symbolically depicted by Lawrence's taking photos of the couple during a family trip: "Together [Adam and Rachel], they turned to look up at the beaming Lawrence who extended his camera towards them, capturing for posterity the moment at which they arrived together, back on the dry land" (Segal 2013: 204); and during the ritual of Rachel's and Adam's son's circumcision:

Already in his *tallit*, Lawrence stood in the doorway, squinting at the dials of the camera that hung on a fraying leather strap around his neck, where it had been for almost every hour of the last eight days. Adam had increased the resolution on all the cameras in the family so that these first portraits could be reproduced in brilliant details, meters wide. Clear enough to preserve every nuance, every moment, every cell. Frowning in concentration Lawrence cupped his hand over the screen, anxious to be prepared. As Rachel and Adam approached, hand in hand, he looked up and Adam caught his eye. Lawrence smiled. (Segal 2013: 436, italics as in the original).

When his son in law, Adam, has an affair with a beautiful cousin, Ellie, and wonders whether or not to leave his wife, Lawrence, with the help of the family, expels Ellie from their environment. The family, which seems to be very warm and caring, is described as a jury who sentences Adam to a sense of guilt (Segal 2013: 391-397).

It should be noticed that the plot of the novel is very similar to the one of *Disobedience*. Both stories start with the return of a liberated American woman to an English Jewish community. In addition, each of these characters have an affair with a married man from this very environment and in both novels the neighbourhood presented oscillates around the central male figure who is at the same time a father figure. Quite significantly, Adam treats Lawrence as a father, his biological one having died when Adam was still a child. Nonetheless, in contrast to *Disobedience*, the dialogue between the leader and other characters is never allowed to develop. Not only Lawrence

but also the whole family halts any progress of the discussion. The question posed in *The Innocents* is whether it is possible for a relative who had an affair with a married man, the husband of her cousin, to return to her family. The final answer is negative, but it has not been concluded as a result of a discussion between the *havruta* pair of Ellie and Adam, together with the elders of the family and with Lawrence, who should be identified as a metaphorical rabbi. Instead, the answer is imposed on Ellie and Adam by other participants of the potential, yet not realised, dialogue.

It is worth taking a closer look at the title of the novel. The term ‘the innocents’ may be extended to each character in the book, including Ellie and Adam. Although one of them has been expelled from the family, she is not guilty, as the title suggests. Perhaps her relatives would not decide to turn away from Ellie if they resolved to listen to her. Still, their behaviour is not a pointless act of psychological violence but rather an act defending a family and, more symbolically, a community striving to survive. If the title of the novel extends to all the characters, it may be argued that besides Ellie and Adam, Lawrence and the rest of the family are innocent as well. The relationship between a sexually liberated woman and Adam poses a threat to the structure of the family whose intentions, after all, had in view a noble purpose.

However, the novel indicates that a much more serious threat to the community is the omnipotence given to a leader who does not allow any space for dialogue. Lawrence only takes photographs that are meant to show a happy family but obviously, this is not the whole picture. It is very important to notice that the final paragraph of *The Innocents* is the already quoted description of the family reunion during the circumcision ritual. What the reader is left with after closing the book is an aura of intimidation, something absent from any other novel analyzed in this article.

8. The regenerative power of discussion

Amos Oz observed that “[p]erhaps (...) mainstream Orthodox Judaism had forgotten the spirit of questioning that the Talmud once knew” (Oz 2007b: 35). The basic premise of Judaism, which is the disputative manner of finding answers to substantial questions concerning lifestyle and religion has somehow evaporated both from Jewish families and synagogue communities. Contemporary British-Jewish writers seem to draw from the Talmudic method of study, some more and some less straightforwardly. For them, this tradition is not a constraint but a chance to work through intergenerational conflicts.

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ZEYNEP HARPUTLU SHAH

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Siirt University, Turkey

Rivalry in Literary Biography: Boswell's *Life of Johnson* and Holmes' *Dr Johnson and Mr Savage*

Abstract. This study aims to discuss the complicated nature of literary biography by focusing on the intertextual relations and anxiety of influence among biographers of a single subject. Taking Samuel Johnson's life and outlook on literary biography as a starting point, the article examines two influential works that are separated by a significant amount of time, *Life of Johnson* (1791) by James Boswell and *Dr Johnson and Mr Savage* (1993, 2005) by Richard Holmes, suggesting that in both there is a strong sense of rivalry with their subject and an anxiety about the influence of their predecessors. Both authors exhibit love for or interest in their subject while they strive for superiority in literary biography with their distinctive narrative technique and commentaries on Johnson's character and life. In this study, I utilise Harold Bloom's theory of influence in an attempt to show how anxiety and rivalry function as part of a creative process and driving force that leads to original contributions to the field.

Keywords: anxiety of influence, rivalry, James Boswell, Samuel Johnson, literary biography, Dr Johnson and Mr Savage.

1. Introduction

If the biographer writes from personal knowledge, and makes haste to gratify the public curiosity, there is danger lest his interest, his fear, his gratitude, or his tenderness overpower his fidelity, and tempt him to conceal, if not to invent.

– Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler* (1750)

In *The Rambler*, No. 60 (1750), Samuel Johnson expounds the principals of biography as a critical genre and foregrounds it as a medium of access to universal truths about human life and feelings (Rollyson 2001: 442). A poetics of the biography in Johnson's view is comprised of "a concern for ethics, a sense of empathy and the exercise of imagination" (Benton 2015: 12). Having remained generally untheorised for a long time, literary biography still oscillates between writing history

and writing fiction, as well as representing a real or imaginative self, yet it also offers vast possibilities for literary creativity and understanding complicated human nature. The “co-creation”, or “the commingling of consciousness” in the biography genre leads to an anxiety for the biographer who “carr[ies] on an interior dialogue with him/[her]self” while crossing back and forth between the past and present (Christianson 1993: 131). Johnson’s reference to the danger of biographers’ feelings, such as fear and gratitude, as well as their temptation to conceal or invent, highlights an overlooked aspect of literary biography: the motives of the biographers in writing the life of another and their competitive responses to the earlier authoritative works.

As a theorist and author of *The Life of Mr Richard Savage* (1777), Johnson has himself been the subject of a great number of literary biographies to date.¹ With regards to the motives of Johnson’s life writers, two critical works, by James Boswell and Richard Holmes, come to the forefront with their distinctive contributions to literary biography. The significance of the two works is not accidental and neither can it be attributed to their “perfect” subject. While Boswell’s *Life of Johnson* (1791) stands out with its extensive detail, evidence and techniques that give life to a colourful and intellectual Johnson after his fifties, Holmes’ *Dr Johnson and Mr Savage* (2005) illustrates the young lonely Johnson and his obscure, poet-friend Savage’s “inexplicable” friendship through the lens of sympathy by maintaining a tender and mysterious tone. The two biographies are not similar in terms of their narrative techniques or points of view on Johnson’s actions and character. Nevertheless, both reflect an unacknowledged feature of the biography genre: rivalry with their subject and other biographers writing on the same subject. That is, every biographer embodies both love for (or interest in) their subject and anxiety about the influence of their predecessors since they long for priority in their field of expertise. Life writing could thus be interpreted as unconscious revelations of the biographers’ fear of being influenced and their will for power, while attempting to create their own voice and secure their position in literary circles. In this regard, this article first provides a theoretical background for understanding the competitive nature of the biography genre and it then moves on to an analysis of the two biographies in sequence by focusing on historical proximity, Johnson as a biographical subject and biographer, the motives of Boswell and Holmes, their distinctive techniques and approaches, and their responses to earlier biographers of Johnson.

¹ Major biographies of Johnson published in the eighteenth century include Hester Lynch Thrale’s *Anecdotes of the Late S.J., During the Last Twenty Years of his Life* (1786), Sir John Hawkins’ *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1787) and James Boswell’s *Life of Johnson* (1791). Among recent biographies, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed. by Arthur Sherbo (1974); Arthur Murphy, *An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1792, reprinted 1970); and George Birkbeck Hill (Ed.), *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, 2 Vol. (1897, reprinted 1966), Robert E. Kelley and O.M. Brack, Jr., *Samuel Johnson’s Early Biographers* (1971); Aelyn Lyell Reade, *Johnsonian Gleanings*, 11 Vol. (1909–52, reprinted 11 Vol. in 10, 1968); James L. Clifford, *Young Sam Johnson* (1955, reissued 1981) and *Dictionary Johnson: Samuel Johnson’s Middle Years* (1979); W. Jackson Bate, *Samuel Johnson* (1977); Thomas Kaminski, *The Early Career of Samuel Johnson* (1987); Robert Demaria, J.R., *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1993); Peter Martin, *Samuel Johnson* (2008); Jeffrey Meyers, *Samuel Johnson: The Struggle* (2008); and David Nokes, *Samuel Johnson: A Life* (2009) are considered influential and original works on Johnson’s life and character.

1.1. Theoretical Outlook: Biographers as Poets?

In an attempt to understand the relationship between rivalry and biographical works, Bloom's theory on poetics from *The Anxiety of Influence* might help us to think about the "inevitable and undeniable" fear of influence among biographers who, like poets, experience "the melancholy of the creative mind's desperate insistence upon priority" (1973: 13). The act of writing is associated with will to power, which requires an intentional misreading and re-creation of the previous works so that poets can have a "clear imaginative space for themselves" (1973: 5). Instead of idealising their predecessors, poets of "capable imagination appropriate for themselves" by digesting or sublimating earlier works (1973: 5). Bloom suggests that writing with poetic influence does not make poems less original, "though not therefore necessarily better" (1973: 7). However, influence remains an essential part of strong literature that cannot be "detached from its anxieties about the works that possess priority and authority in regard to it" (Bloom 1994: 11). Bloom defines influence as "literary love, tempered by defense" (2011: 14). In this study, I define influence not simply as "literary love", but also as a strong interest or personal love that biographers feel for their subject; considering Johnson's biographers, this includes not only love, but also a sense of rivalry and anxiety due to his authoritative position in life writing.

Although in his later works, *The Western Canon* (1994) and *The Anatomy of Influence* (2011), Bloom extends his theory of influence to include other literary forms, such as novels and plays, biographical narratives still seem underrated despite their strong competitive nature and high chance of being influenced by both their subject and predecessors. Literary biography shares fundamental similarities with other literary forms in terms of intentional re-creation, the anxiety of influence and the will for priority. Not only poets and novelists, but also biographers, attempt to avoid the influence of others in order to be original and to maintain their integrity without emulating their predecessors. However, this is quite a challenging task for biographers since they should also stay one step behind their subject and, at the same time, prove their wisdom and literary ability. Since Johnson was himself a prominent biographer and literary celebrity when he died in 1784, the biographers narrating his life had to confront this reality by considering his literary skills and achievements. Johnson's characterisation in Boswell and Holmes' works is original in many ways; nevertheless, true admiration and will for priority are still evident as they attempt to reconstruct a biographical (textual and historical) subject. Simultaneously, Boswell and Holmes both display a strong desire to understand and describe Johnson better than their predecessors. In this sense, their narratives could be interpreted as an inevitable outburst of love, influence and rivalry between the biographer and his subject as well as with earlier and contemporary biographers.

Regarding Bloom's six types of theory of influence (clinamen, tessera, kenosis, daemonization, askesis and apophrades), I take a two-layered approach by drawing a clear difference between the biographer and his/her subject, as well as considering Johnson's exclusive position as a predecessor. Johnson is both the subject and an authoritative predecessor and this complicates writing a successful biography commenting on his professional skills, weaknesses and strengths. Considering Boswell and Holmes' works, I elaborate on Bloom's first four types of influence and read "clina-

men” as creative misreading of earlier biographies; “tessera” as an act of completion by giving a new meaning to the predecessor’s work or filling a gap regarding the subject’s life; “kenosis” as a movement towards discontinuity with the predecessor, either in terms of technique or approach; and finally “daemonisation” as a counter-sublime in response to the predecessor’s sublime, such as generalising the uniqueness of an earlier work (Bloom 1973: 14-15). In this context, this article reads Holmes’ work partly as a misreading of Johnson’s *Life of Savage* (clinamen) and as an attempt to complete a gap in Boswell’s and other biographer’s works (tessera) through a focus on Johnson’s underrated friendship with Savage. On the other hand, publishing Johnson’s biography soon after his death, Boswell discontinues Johnson’s biography of Savage (kenosis), as well as Hawkins and Thrall’s biographies, and attempts to present a counter-sublime with a distinctive approach and narrative technique in life writing. While Boswell and Holmes present a contrastive portrayal of Johnson’s life and character, they nonetheless both explicitly appreciate Johnson’s skills as a literary genius.

2. Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*: Admiration or Rivalry?

In Boswell’s *Life*, historical proximity and personal relations with the subject gain significance since they provide several advantages over recent biographers. Boswell was fully aware of this and benefited from being Johnson’s contemporary in writing an original account of his life. For about twenty years, he collected materials and information about Johnson’s life, recorded his conversations, exchanged letters with him and inquired with him about his early years. Even after Johnson’s death,

... having been admitted to the English Bar in 1786, Boswell moved to London with his family in order to collect material for the biography. He gathered most of Johnson’s letters; interviewed his old friends and even sent a questionnaire to Edmund Hector, a former schoolmate of Johnson. (Clifford 1970: 4).

Boswell (1946) further asserts that “few biographers have entered upon such a work as this, with more advantages; independent of literary abilities, in which I am not vain enough to compare myself with some great names who have gone before me in this kind of writing.” Yet, did Boswell’s friendship with Johnson produce an unclear image that might have distorted his judgment in the biography? Boswell’s *Life* suggests that this is possible because Johnson is primarily identified as a friend, master and father figure, which Boswell was strongly in need of when he was young. When he met Johnson, Boswell was just twenty-three years old, whilst the latter was “a middle-aged celebrity” (Clifford 1970: 2). Even before their first encounter, Boswell had been an admirer of Johnson, as he later admits:

Mr Davies mentioned my name and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much. I said to Davies, ‘Don’t

tell where I come from.' – 'From Scotland' cried Davies roguishly. 'Mr Johnson', [said I] 'I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.' (1946: i261).

Boswell obviously fears that Johnson will be prejudiced against him because he is Scottish. However, they soon became friends, although with a dynamic more like disciple and master or father and son. Boswell visited London to meet Johnson on several occasions and their tour to the Hebrides provided the necessary conditions to learn more about Johnson's character and lifestyle. Boswell admired Johnson greatly and he explicitly admitted that he took him as a model in his journal: "Be like Johnson. Remember you are his friend" (1970: 93). Again in his journals, Boswell frequently questioned his acts and whether they were "worthy of James Boswell" or not, which reveals his seemingly low self-esteem (1970: 93). This might also be linked to an inferiority complex in the sense that he perceived the moral philosophy of Johnson as a shelter to save him from his own weaknesses (1970: 93).

While the above details unveil Boswell's deep interest in Johnson as a biographical subject, at the same time, he appears to be more like a child in need of love and guidance from his father. For Boswell, Johnson seems to have the intellect and moral philosophy that he lacks. He is impressed by the authoritative and magnificent intellectual conversations of Johnson who proved to be "the greatest" man of his age; nonetheless, he is unable to move beyond the position of a young admirer. In fact, Boswell is fully aware of Johnson's weaknesses, yet it is Johnson's strengths that interest him most and this is what he wishes to use in re-creating his subject in his work as a respectable figure. Although he is familiar with Johnson's less agreeable traits, his achievements are even presented as turning his weaknesses into strengths (Mulgan 2007: 29). Johnson's influence on Boswell was even ridiculed by some of the people who knew them both. Funny Burney suggested that Boswell imitated Johnson in many ways: "Every look and movement displayed either intentional or involuntarily imitation ... His heart, almost even to idolatry, was in his reverence of Johnson" (qtd. in Clifford 1970: 89). Goldsmith criticised Boswell for entitling Johnson to the utmost superiority: "Sir [said he], you are making a monarchy of what should be a republic" (Boswell 1946: ii257). That is, Boswell's tendency for imitation and his overvaluing of Johnson endanger his identity as an independent and respectable individual. Despite being aware of his own wisdom and creative writing skills, Boswell's weakness seems to have originated from his wish to become a well-known literary figure like Johnson. The alternative path he takes, therefore, provides him with an opportunity to be acknowledged as a successful biographer.

Besides his personal interest in Johnson, Boswell's strong desire to promote his career and his will for priority propel itself in a disguised way via the biography genre. In *Life*, he skilfully uses his creative writing skills to reconstruct conversations with Johnson that he is quite familiar with. His textual and historical re-creation of Johnson functions as a means of self-defence against his subject. His ambitions and motives are revealed in the fact that he decided to write Johnson's life story while he was alive and visited him in London several times to learn more about his personality and earlier years. In his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, Boswell explains this purpose in a

milder manner: “I shall lay-up authentic materials for the life of Samuel Johnson and if I survive him, I shall be the one who most faithfully do honour to his memory” (1785, 1791: 300). Interestingly, Boswell appears to have simply accepted Johnson’s success as a biographer and openly declares it: “In biography there can be no question that he [Johnson] excelled, beyond all who have attempted that species of composition” (1946: 256). In fact, this statement is misleading because Boswell himself is attempting to write an ideal biography that excels in the genre. This might be explained as a strategy to secure his position in case of a failure, or a way to disguise the rivalry between himself and his subject. Indeed, praising the greater one does not always signal mere admiration since it also reveals an unconscious will for priority and a desire to be in his place. In *Boswell’s Life of Johnson: New Questions, New Answers*, this aspect is more clearly identified by Donald Greene:

The most serious charge against Boswell, in my opinion, is that his much-touted ‘hero-worship’ of Johnson is a mask, disguising from himself and others an unconscious wish to cut Johnson down to size and establish in the end, the superiority of Boswell, the aristocratic, polished man-of-the-world, to this rugged provincial with his uncouth manners and quaint, old-fashioned prejudices. (qtd. in Vance 1985: 6)

For these reasons, in Boswell’s criticism, there has been a tendency to consider his biography of Johnson “a conscious misrepresentation of the truth” or essentially “a portion of his autobiography” (1985: 10-13). Boswell’s imaginative truth based on a selection of facts and his creative expressions, thereby, might serve as “defensive measures” erected in order to “diminish crippling anxiety” of influence (Havelka: 1968: 3).

With his distinctive techniques and approaches to literary biography, Boswell not only breaks with Johnson’s *Life of Savage* and other earlier biographies of Johnson, but also demonstrates his literary genius as a biographer. Boswell goes beyond writing a generalised assessment of his subject’s character and instead he presents Johnson to the readership within specific contexts and lively scenes in a dramatised and unique way (Mulgan 2007: 10). Using both first and third person narrative techniques, he draws attention to Johnson’s “minute particulars” with a sense of humour to display his “distinguished” subject’s character (Boswell, 1946). He reconstructs Johnson’s public self in his conversations by “combining entertainment with instruction” (Rogers 1980: xxix). In *Boswell’s Presumptuous Task*, Adam Sisman depicts his efforts as follows:

Boswell seems like a ventriloquist, putting words into Johnson’s mouth. He became adept at steering the conversation in directions which would stimulate Johnson to say something memorable; he was proud of his ability, though often it required him to play the straight man alongside Johnson, the butt of Johnson’s wit. In this sense Boswell was creating his own copy, the reporter making news for himself. (2000: xviii)

This method, however, distorts the course of events through disconnected narratives and conversations in the book (2000: 10). Boswell has also omitted some details and people from Johnson's life (such as his wife Tetty, and seeking a second wife), possibly because he considers them to be irrelevant in the context he presents or due to his desire to put himself into the picture (Clifford 1970: 12-15). Almost half of the biography is devoted to Johnson's last eight years, characterising him as a public speaker by focusing on his sense of humour, humanity and moral identity (Rogers 1980: xxix-xi). Boswell's careful choice of material and avoidance of some factual evidence serve as a method to ensure that he can present Johnson as he wishes him to be remembered. Since he is not familiar with Johnson's attitudes towards children and his family life, the contexts he presents in his work constitute scenes of the club and dinners with other male attendees.²

Despite his genius and talent, Boswell had an unsuccessful career in law and he faced many disappointments in his life. As Adam Sisman suggests, "in the wreckage of his disordered mind, he clung to the memory of Johnson as a shipwrecked sailor clings to a rock" (2000: xxi). Writing Johnson's life seems to be his final hope for success in literary circles in his fifties and he openly attacks his two rival biographers, Hester Lynch Thrale and Sir John Hawkins. Thrale's *Anecdotes of the Late S.J., During the Last Twenty Years of his Life* (1786) and Hawkins' *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1787) were published several years before Boswell's *Life*, and there were also a considerable number of short pieces in magazines on Johnson's life.³ Boswell considers his genuine companionship with Johnson a strength in his biography and undermines Sir John Hawkins' work as follows:

I never saw in his company, I think once, and I am sure not above twice ... It is evident that they never could have lived together with companionable ease and familiarity; nor had John Sir Hawkins that nice perception which was necessary to mark the finer and less obvious parts of Johnson's character. (1946: i18)

In a letter Boswell explains the reason for his deliberate delay in completing his work as stemming "from the motive of Sir John Hawkins to precede [him] that [he] might profit by his gross faults" (qtd. in Rogers 1980: xxv). In his introduction to *Life*, Boswell (1946: i18) criticises Hawkins' work as an unsuccessful biography of Johnson due to its inability to sufficiently relate to its subject, full of inaccurate statements of fact and misleading characterisation. He succinctly remembers Mrs Thrale, another biographer of Johnson, as "a lady who once lived in great intimacy with him" (1946: i19). In Boswell's first letter written to her in 1769, he admits that they were "rivals for that great man", and, as Rogers suggests, "two rivals in the wings, and public expectations high: it was

2 As Clifford notes, "Johnson was the greater man: greater in calibre, greater in learning, greater in philosophy [and] Boswell was the greater genius" (1970: 90). Mrs Thrale and Fanny Burney completed the picture with their descriptions of Johnson's family life and his relationship with the females he met.

3 For further information, see *The Early Biographies of Samuel Johnson*, ed. by O.M. Brack and Robert E. Kelley (USA: University of Iowa Press, 1974).

a daunting task Boswell faced when he contemplated his ‘deliberate’ undertaking” (1980: xx-xxiii). Indeed, his attitude towards Johnson’s first two biographers reflects not only an anxiety of influence, but also his desire to be the “best friend” of the great man who “had the management of the mind” (Boswell 1946: ii440).

Boswell further denies that the young Johnson and Richard Savage were, for a short period, intimate friends. He describes Savage as “a man, of whom it is difficult to speak impartially, without wondering that he was for some time the intimate companion of Johnson ... Savage’s misfortunes and misconducts had reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness as a writer for bread” (1946: i111). At this point, it can be suggested that Boswell wishes to be at the centre of Johnson’s life and considers Savage unworthy of his attention as a friend and a biographical subject. Boswell’s own inclusion as a character in *Life* reveals his strong desire to be present both as a character (though Johnson is the subject) and a biographer narrator. His work, in this sense, might be interpreted as “an unending contest between author and subject for posterity” and the two “are locked together for all the time, in part-struggle, part-embrace” (Sisman 2000: xix). Boswell’s insistence upon priority, therefore, enables him to write a distinctive biography of Johnson with minute details and footnotes, and it has since been a controversial topic in literary criticism.⁴ His extensive efforts reveal the anxiety of a disappointed yet ambitious writer who attempts to create a “great” subject to reflect his own intellect and greatness in biography.

3. Holmes’ *Dr Johnson and Mr Savage: Rivalry or Empathy?*

The relationship between the biographer and his subject takes a different form and direction in Richard Holmes’ *Dr Johnson and Mr Savage*, since Holmes attempts to disguise rivalry with his subject by using Johnson’s own techniques in life writing. Published over two centuries after Johnson’s *Life of Savage* and Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*, Holmes’ narrative utilises historical distance as an advantage for creative misreading and empathy. Holmes indeed writes “the biography of a biography” and works like an archaeologist gradually excavating the layers of an unknown and mysterious friendship no one has interpreted:

It concerns the kind of human truth, poised between fact and fiction, which a biographer can obtain as he tells the story of another’s life, and thereby makes it both his own and the public’s. It asks what we can know, and what we can believe, and finally what we can love. (2005: 5)

Unlike Boswell, Holmes is a contemporary writer writing the life of an eighteenth-century celebrity and, therefore, he is partially free of the risk of having a distorted judgment of Johnson

⁴ Contemporary and recent criticisms of Boswell’s biography include “an alleged bias or incomprehension ... the deliberate relegation of Mrs Thrale, the haziness with regard to Burke (compared to Goldsmith, say), the lack of curiosity in areas remote from Boswell’s experience distorting Johnson’s political opinion, turning him into a romantic Tory” (Rogers 1980: xxxi).

as a close friend. He is also a successful biographer who has already assured his fame with *Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer* (1996). Holmes confidently places himself in Johnson's position to outline the young Johnson's circumstances, thoughts and close relationship with his poet-friend. It is also important to note that this is not a complete biography of Johnson or Savage; rather, it is "the fragments of two unusual lives that converged for the brief period of two years", as Christianson notes (1993: 132). The scarcity of primary sources, such as letters, diaries and statements of eyewitnesses, in the book has been substituted or completed by Holmes' rich imagination, interpretation and literary skill as an experienced biographer.

Holmes is most influenced by Johnson's skills as a biographer and his ability to sympathise with his subject, Richard Savage. In his work, Johnson establishes his notorious poet-friend's "literary self" as a rejected but talented child "equally distinguished by his virtues and vices" (Benton 2015: 29; Johnson 1968).⁵ This representation is indeed "provisional and inevitably partial" due to the gap between Johnson's views and Savage's facts, their brief night-walking friendship and his motive for writing the life of his killer-poet friend (2015: 9). Johnson's work carries some features of a memoir of an intimate companion, while it preserves an aesthetic and objective approach to the subject's weaknesses and strengths. By distancing himself from the night-walks as a third person narrator, Johnson writes a biography that diverges from the scandalous thriller style of earlier ones. His friendship with Savage and his interest in presenting a moral truth in the genre by focusing on the environmental factors in a person's life reveal both his gratitude for his companion and his fear of being tempted to conceal some information about the poet's life and character. However, as Schwalm also notes:

... as a friend-biographer addressing Savage's biography to an audience already more or less familiar with the facts of the case, Johnson could not have suppressed or invented much about Savage – even if he had wanted to – without sacrificing the credibility of the narrative. If he wanted his vindication of Savage to be believed, he had to face the facts of his life squarely. (1985: 133)

Regarding the brief friendship between Johnson and Savage, John Hawkins claims that they had several significant features in common: "They had both felt the pangs of poverty and the want of patronage... They seemed both to agree in the vulgar opinion that the world is divided into two classes, of man of merit without riches, and men of wealth without merit" (Nokes 2009: 65). Johnson seems to have dwelt upon their friendship long after Savage's death and it must have had vital importance for him in writing his biography in "recapturing something of the limitless horizons of London, of the night, and the drunken excess he has first experienced, as a nostalgic dream, with his cousin Cornelius" (2009: 65).

⁵ Literary self, here, refers to "a sense of identity defined by the subject and represented by [his] biographer" (Benton 2015: 29).

When Holmes describes Johnson and Savage's motives and brief companionship, he uses the available evidence in a particular order and tries to fill the missing parts or scenes by using his imagination, creative misreading and a mystical tone. With an attempt to understand his subject, Holmes demonstrates his own literary skill and capacity to put himself in his subject's position, while as a biographer he assures himself of his integrity and credibility by keeping a distance between himself and his subject. Holmes' anxiety about being influenced by Johnson's description of Savage in his own work can be traced to the point where he advocates Johnson's biography. He claims that Johnson was quite aware of Savage's bad manners:

If Johnson came to see Savage's failings so clearly, as their intimacy deepened in the autumn of 1738, why did he continue to defend him retrospectively in the *Life*? This is the question that evidently haunted Boswell – particularly since it was to Boswell that the sacred baton of friendship was eventually passed; as well as the sacred duty of the biographer to tell the truth as candidly as possible. For it is a mistake to believe that Johnson did not penetrate deeply into Savage's vanity, delusions and opportunism ... This rueful and damaging admission deepens our whole sense of Johnson's powers as a biographer. He is not taken by Savage, but still extends sympathy and insight. (2005: 192)

When he describes Johnson's friendship with Savage, Holmes does not ignore their circumstances, yet he emphasises their enchantment as intimate friends who failed to understand each other. He pretends to be an invisible third friend witnessing their sorrow and happiness in situations that nobody saw or understood. Whilst doing this, it is possible to observe Savage through Johnson's eyes, as if he is not narrating their friendship as a third person. When reading about Johnson's Savage, it is difficult not to sympathise with the unlucky, rejected child who was to be a killer-poet. Similarly, Holmes draws an intense and emotional but rational picture of their friendship, which was largely considered insignificant. In this way, Holmes justifies Johnson's biographical style by turning it into another story. He owes his success to his particular method, which addresses the complicated nature of literary biography and the significance of readership in the genre, as Schwalm notes:

Ironically, however, neither the reader nor the biographer knows what "the truth" about the subject is. All either has to go on is the available evidence, that fragmentary, distorted, and perhaps unrepresentative remnant of the complicated nexus of behaviors that constitutes a life... What a biographer aims for, and what a reader looks for, is a credible or probable organization of the available evidence. Although the nature of the evidence imposes some limitations on the biographer, he has considerable freedom to select, emphasize, and arrange the evidence. Thus the same body of fact can be shaped into quite different, even contradictory, biographies. Our judgment of the truth of a biography finally depends not so much on the verification of the

facts as on the probability of the particular arrangement of facts and on the credibility of the biographical narrator. (1985: 131-32)

Rivalry among the biographers of Johnson comes to the fore more clearly when Holmes refers to Johnson's earlier biographers, in particular Boswell and Hawkins. Holmes simply notes that: "Sir John Hawkins and Boswell could not understand the friendship of Samuel Johnson and Richard Savage" (2005: 1). Holmes' will for authority is identified in this statement since he considers himself one who could understand their friendship, although Boswell and Hawkins were Johnson's contemporaries. Holmes focuses on this brief period of friendship, which empowers his status as a biographer able to fill an existing gap in Johnson's life writing. Holmes takes the companions' intimacy very seriously: "I have tried to approach this central period of intimacy that so puzzled Hawkins and Boswell from a number of different angles" (2005: 228). In order to achieve this, he uses the most important tool available to a biographer and destroys the picture of Johnson created by Boswell:

We have to reconstruct almost entirely that powerful, domineering, confident figure whom Boswell created in his own biography ... We have to recover a much more shadowy, fraught, and uncertain personality: young Samuel Johnson, failed schoolmaster, provincial poet and desperate Grub Street hack, who signed his letters in 1738 'impransus-supperless.' (2005: 9)

Holmes criticises Boswell for always projecting Johnson as "a venerable father-figure, a moral counsellor detached from passion" (2005: 20). He is aware of Boswell's eminent status as Johnson's biographer, yet he challenges both Johnson and Boswell's positions as influential biographers. While Holmes adopts some features from Johnson's biography, he strongly opposes Boswell's technical and literary approach. He does not use disconnected scenes and conversations in a dramatised way as Boswell does. He narrates Johnson and Savage's companionship by misreading Johnson's biography and filling in one of the gaps in Boswell's *Life*. He highlights the importance of understanding his subject through empathy and uses these particular techniques to dethrone his predecessors' writings on Johnson.

4. Conclusion

Considering the challenges Boswell and Holmes have faced as biographers writing on the same subject, the significance of their unconscious rivalry and anxiety of influence is addressed through their relationship with their subject and other biographers. In Boswell's case, there is an obvious link between his personal relationship with Johnson and his biography as a commemoration of his distinguished friend. Although Boswell finds the ideal figure he is looking for in Johnson, he is also aware of his subject's weaknesses. Yet, as a candidate biographer of Johnson, he holds a strong desire for authority and breaks with the earlier biographies of Hawkins and Thrale (kenosis), but he also produces a counter-sublime by using his particular literary methods (daemonisation) to

surpass his predecessors, including Johnson. He thereby transforms this influence into a creative process to reconstruct Johnson's image as a public self in a unique biographical narrative. Boswell possibly experiences the anxiety of being less original than Johnson in life writing; therefore, he strives to generate a biography with distinctive qualities. He maintains his integrity and literary success by creating a greater Johnson than his contemporary biographers, such as Hawkins and Thrale. A magnified Johnson in his work means a stronger Boswell. His anxiety and rivalry are more clearly disclosed when he defends his literary methods and describes Johnson's character as a learned and humorous man in specific contexts.

Centuries on, Holmes uses his life writing skill and confidence to demonstrate that he understands his subject better than his precursors. Unlike Boswell, he avoids using the pronoun "I" and narrates the story as a father-like or experienced friend who has removed himself from all passions and desires. The third person narrative and his intimate approach create an implicit self-defence method to disguise his will for power with the language of modesty. Holmes not only confronts his subject, but also a great number of biographies written on Johnson. He needs to be original and distinctive in all ways in order to stand out as a successful biographer. In order to achieve this, Holmes chooses one of the most interesting periods of Johnson's life, which other biographers have failed or refused to understand: his friendship with the killer-poet, Richard Savage. He creatively misreads Johnson's biography and attempts to complete a gap in earlier biographies on his life. Using these methods (*clinamen* and *tesserae*, in Bloom's terms), Holmes clears a space for himself to demonstrate his literary skill as a life writer. Although he is unable to entirely avoid the influence of Johnson's biography, he succeeds in maintaining his own literary style. His anxiety about being influenced by Johnson and his will for authority over earlier biographers help him produce a more original work and increases his credibility as a biographer by contributing to the field. In this way not only do human feelings of love and interest, but also rivalry and anxiety, function as a means of progress and development in literary biography across two centuries.

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EWA ZIOMEK

John Paul II Catholic
University of Lublin

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Hannibal Revived: an Aestheticized Portrayal of Hannibal Lecter in NBC's TV Series *Hannibal*

Abstract. This article is an analysis of the portrayal of Hannibal Lecter as presented in NBC's television series. The research focuses on the techniques employed in order to aestheticize, humanize and present the title character in a positive light for the audience to sympathize with him. Apart from the process of aestheticization, the paper also discusses the metamorphosis which Lecter depicted in the show has undergone. The article describes particular aspects of the character's construction and the tools used to influence the audience's perception of the cannibal.

Keywords: Hannibal Lecter, aestheticization, art, humour, food porn.

1. Introduction

In 1981, Thomas Harris's published *Red Dragon*, his first novel in the Hannibal Lecter series. Harris's killer, the sociopathic mastermind, soon became the icon of crime fiction. Jonathan Demme's film adaptation of Harris's next novel *The Silence of the Lambs* has been widely recognized by critics and won many awards, including five Oscars. One could wonder what the reasons behind such an enormous success are.

Thomas Harris provides his readers with a murderer and a cannibal who in addition to being evil is also an aesthete, a highly intelligent and eloquent scholar, a connoisseur of art, music and cuisine as well as a person with an exquisite sense of humour. Surprisingly enough, Hannibal is a killer with a moral code, who prefers to "eat the rude." Compared to the previous fictional incarnations of serial killers such as Robert Bloch's Norman Bates, Hannibal is a killer whom the reader may actually like and engage with, which is achieved by means of aestheticization.

In order to explain the concept of aestheticization, one has to understand what the words "artistic" and "aesthetic" mean. In *The Aesthetics of Murder* Joel Black states that any object, idea or act can obtain artistic status, as long as it meets at least one of the two requirements (Black: 1991: 12). Thus, if an object, idea or act is created by an artist with the aim of creating art, as widely as

“art” and “artist” can be understood, it achieves artistic status. On the other hand, an object, idea or act can be subjectively perceived by the beholder as a work of art, even if it was not aimed to be art. In this case the beholder is the one that decides on attaching an artistic status to it. When it is an artist that produces an artefact, one can describe it with the word “artistic.” However, if it is the beholder that considers something an artefact, it is proper to use the word “aesthetic” (Black: 1991: 12). There is usually no distinction between “artistic” and “aesthetic,” as often something that is artistic (a painting created by an artist) is perceived as aesthetic by the beholder. As regards the process of aestheticization, in some cases aestheticization may be isomorphous with beautification. Asbjorn Gronstad describes the process of aestheticization of violence as follows:

As a result of specific stylistic machinations, the segments that contain the violence have become more visually and viscerally attractive than all the segments that do not contain any violence. In this usage, the concept of aestheticization is isomorphous with the concept of beauty. (Gronstad 2008: 40–41)

One could say that, according to the abovementioned definitions, the process of aestheticization that will be discussed in this article manifests itself in all the techniques applied by the writers, film directors and, in this case, TV series creators in order to evoke an aesthetic experience in the recipient of the narrative.

2. Hannibal Revived

The portrayal of Dr. Hannibal Lecter depicted by Bryan Fuller is even more mysterious than the character presented in the novels and films. The revived murderer comes back as the embodiment of antithetical merits. He is an artist and a cannibal. A friend and a foe. In one of the reviews Libby Hill emphasises precisely those contradictions:

He is something unnatural. Uncanny. He is the danger. He is the unknowable presence lurking in the shadows. He is omnipotent. He is omniscient (...). Devil as god, manipulation as love, feminine as masculine, these are how Hannibal crafts a story and re-imagines a known quantity. And in doing so, Fuller et al. have succeeded in making not just a cogent adaptation but one of the finest dramas on television, all by tapping into the inherent terror of being made over not in God’s image, but in Lucifer’s. (Logsdon 2015)

Hannibal is no longer a cannibal who kills only the rude. Frequently he serves justice to those who, one may claim, deserve it, yet he also murders the innocent just to goad the FBI or get rid of someone who gets in his way (Pavelich 2016: 132). He is ruthless and callous, unlike Harris’s doctor who at least acts according to his own distorted code of practice.

Fuller’s Hannibal is a restrained and distant version of the killer, always in control over his feelings and instincts. Lecter strikes the viewers as a melancholic doctor seducing the audience with

an introverted personality and a peculiar sadness in his eyes. The tension that the viewers feel is not associated with a physical danger but rather a psychological horror, since “Hannibal’s main source of satisfaction is not the killing and consuming of human beings, but rather his ability to use his superior intellect to manipulate people in twisted ways” (Fuchs 2017). During the conversation with Dr. Chilton, Lecter says: “if force is used, the subject will only surrender temporarily. Once the patient is exposed, the method of manipulation becomes much less effective (...). The subject mustn’t be aware of any influence” (*Hannibal*, Season 1, “Rôti”). This is the essence of his philosophy. He does not use physical power unless he eventually wants to kill someone. He is not the kind of person who would attack a nurse on the spur of the moment, as Harris’s Hannibal does in the novel.

The show’s creators present Lecter as a figure of awe; he commands respect as far as both his professional and private relationships are concerned. Owing to his social status, he is virtually beyond any suspicion. Moreover, he even works as a consultant *for* the FBI. While helping the Bureau, he can devote his attention to killing and manipulation with impunity (Łuba 2014: 169). Apart from other characters from the TV show, it is also the audience that is prone to Hannibal’s manipulation. The viewers can never be sure whether Hannibal’s emotions and feelings are honest or whether they are just a part of his diabolical game (Fuchs 2017). In conversation with Jack, Dr. Bedelia Du Maurier says: “If you think you are about to catch Hannibal, it is because he wants you to think so. Don’t fool yourself into thinking he’s not in control of what’s happening” (*Hannibal*, Season 2, “Tome-wan”). Thus, Hannibal presented in the TV show is a figure of power, who treats other characters and the spectators like puppets (Łuba 2014: 170). According to Dan Shaw, it is precisely Hannibal’s power that makes us empathise with him: “It is his absolute control over every person and situation which he confronts that is the fundamental ground of our empathy with him” (Shaw 2016: 216).

3. The Artist and the Savage

As far as art is concerned, Dr. Lecter does not confine himself to being a passive onlooker; he is an artist who specialises in many fields. He draws meticulous sketches of architectural monuments, composes his own pieces of music and creates tableaux from the corpses of his victims. The opus that certainly draws anyone’s attention is the body of the councilman interwoven in a tree. By creating this artistic representation, Lecter does not only produce art for art’s sake. He obviously hunts for food but also provides the audience with food... for thought. The manner in which the official has been murdered and the place where his corpse has been placed are not random. Sheldon Isley is thought to have been responsible for having a forest, which was the habitat for endangered birds, cut out and replacing it with a car park. It comes as no surprise that the place which Hannibal chooses for the display of Sheldon’s body is precisely the car park. Lecter puts a lot of effort into presenting the body as a piece of art in such a way so as to underscore Isley’s lack of morality.

JACK: The time that he devotes to his work... He really takes pride. Belladonna for the heart. Chain of white oleander for the intestines. Ragwort for the liver.

JIMMY: These flowers are all poisonous.

JACK: Yes. This is a judgment. The Ripper believes that his victim was... Toxic, somehow, a poisonous man. (*Hannibal*, Season 2, "Futamoto")



Figure 1. The body of Sheldon Isley intertwined with a tree.
(NBC "Photo Galleries")

Angela Ndalianis dubs Lecter a bricoleur deconstructing and reassembling the world. This reconfigured and unique piece of art has been created to tell a story about life and death (2015: 281). She also points out that even though one may call Hannibal an artist, his art "is an art that disgusts" (2015:282).

As stated at the beginning of this article, Hannibal is a person full of contradictions. Although Lecter presented in the TV show appears to be even more cultured and sophisticated than the one portrayed in the novels and films, his figure is not completely devoid of savagery. It is indisputable that his way of preparing meals, which would be later on discussed in detail, is remarkably artistic and aesthetic, yet the ingredients remain roughly the same. Fuchs writes that Hannibal is at the same time "a connoisseur of fine art and a brute driven by instincts and neither of the two" (2015: 99). Lecter's psychiatrist, Bedelia Du Maurier, during one of their conversations says: "you are wearing a very well-tailored 'person suit.' (...) Maybe it's less of a person suit and more of a human veil. That must be lonely" (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Sorbet"). Indeed, Lecter wears a mask which is always appropriate for the role he is playing. He may behave like a friend or a foe, a connoisseur of art or a cannibal, a worried psychiatrist or a ruthless psychopath, yet the audience can never tell which one is real, since he is both and neither.

Dagmara *Luba* uses two terms to describe the duality of Hannibal's personality. She argues that he is an embodiment of perversion and obscenity, in other words, a socially unacceptable "abject," while being an "object" of fascination and desire. Therefore, he exists at the intersection of the two notions and may be perceived both as an object and an abject (2014: 172). Regarding Hannibal's humanity, it is also difficult to define him as either a human or a non-human. One may say that Hannibal is a negation of everything that is human, while being a human. It is difficult to place Hannibal into any category, since he is characterised by excess. Calabrese writes that "excess describes overcoming of a limit in terms of an exit from a closed system" (1992: 49). While describing Hannibal, the borders do not matter (*Luba* 2014: 172), as he is always outside any closed system, being on the verge, beyond limits. Michael Fuchs writes: "there is no 'real' Dr. Hannibal Lecter (...). Lecter disappears in a world of simulacra, where his subjectivity forever remains liminal (2015: 107).

4. Hannibal's Sense of Humour

The trait of Hannibal's personality which particularly appeals to the readers as well as the viewers is his sense of humour. Westfall distinguishes three kinds of joke employed by Hannibal Lecter: mockery, expressions of power and inside jokes (2016: 174). Whereas in the novels and films the author and directors employ mainly the first and the second type of humour, the TV series is full of jokes expressing power and, even more frequently, inside jokes.

The scene in which Hannibal is held captive by Manson Verger, which is present both in the books and the adaptations, is also re-enacted in the TV series. The viewers can hear Hannibal establishing his superiority while being tied up: "I take it Matteo didn't make it. Did he foul himself? I imagine he smells worse than you by now" (*Hannibal*, Season 2, "Tome-wan"). A similar sense of humour is applied when Hannibal is attacked and incapacitated by the orderly, Matthew Brown. With his wrists slit, noose around his head, standing on a wobbling bucket Hannibal, once again, resorts to his sense of humour saying: "you're a nurse at the hospital (...). Are you setting a new standard of care?" (*Hannibal*, Season 2, "Mukōzuke"). It is essential to mention that whenever he jokes, Fuller's Hannibal is devoid of any emotions, which only makes the jokes sound more sarcastic and sophisticated.

The third type of humour distinguished by Westfall is omnipresent in the TV series. Inside jokes, which are precisely for the audience's benefit, establish the bond between the viewers and Dr. Lecter (Westfall 2016: 181). In the seventh episode of the first season, during the party, Hannibal says: "before we begin, you must all be warned: nothing here is vegetarian," and then he almost dares to look into the camera continuing: "bon appétit" (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Sorbet"). Many a time does he interpose inside jokes referring to food, for instance while having a conversation with Jack: "well, next time, bring your wife. I'd love to have you both for dinner" (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Amuse-Bouche"), or before killing Tobias: "I didn't poison you, Tobias. I wouldn't do that to the food" (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Fromage"). He also jokes during the conversation with Dr. Chilton. Answering Chilton's comment that the Romans used to eat flamingos' tongues, Hannibal says:

“don’t give me ideas. Your tongue is very feisty” (*Hannibal*, Season 1, “Sorbet”). Another instance of an inside joke appears during the conversation with Chilton who informs Hannibal that Will calls Lecter a monster; Hannibal replies: “well, in that case, you are dining with a psychopathic murderer, Frederick” (*Hannibal*, Season 2, “Kaiseki”). The series is packed full of inside jokes, therefore it is impossible to quote them all. The humour employed in the series is definitely one of the aspects that aestheticize Hannibal’s portrayal.

5. The Aesthetics of Food

It is not an exaggeration to say that food is an essential part of the TV show. The way in which Hannibal’s culinary masterpieces are presented truly influences the viewers’ senses and makes them forget about the ingredients. Scenes of consumption last long enough for the audience to almost smell and taste the dishes. The bottles of fine wines, expensive tableware and dim candle light present the setting in an appealing manner, allowing the spectators to relish the scenes and diverting one’s attention from cannibalism. To emphasise the significance of the cuisine the episodes have been named after the fares; the first season refers to French haute cuisine, the second to Japanese and some of the episodes from the third season have been titled after Italian cuisine (Shaw 2016: 204). Dan Shaw writes that Hannibal’s culinary sensibilities and the aesthetics of the courses:

... attract us to him as a man of enviable discernment. We want to feel with a man of such taste, to experience the delicate sensations that only someone with such a degree of discernment can appreciate (...). Hannibal’s artistic and culinary proclivities appeal to us emotionally, drawing us even further under his spell. (2016: 204-205)

In “Sorbet,” Hannibal prepares dinner for the Baltimore elite and the way in which he does it was aptly described by one of the guests who said that Hannibal’s food preparation is “an entire performance” (*Hannibal*, Season 1, “Sorbet”). Tim Jones writes: “his world, and the steps he’s taken to bring it into being, looks truly... delicious. It’s quite the effort to remember what’s actually underlying all the luxury spread before us” (2016: 152). One could notice that while cooking Lecter, indeed, resembles an artist working on his masterpiece. In the mentioned episode, he looks genuinely proud of the courses he has meticulously decorated.

Referring to Lecter’s cannibalistic nature, Selena Breikss argues that “his cannibalism has transcended the taboo” (2016: 139). Even though the spectators are aware of the anthropophagy, they decide to separate the ravishing images they see on the screens from the fact that the courses’ main ingredient is human flesh. They acknowledge the violation of a corpse, yet they marvel at the splendour of the meals. As Dagmara Łuba points out, in the TV series cannibalism is presented as a ritual, a culinary art that overshadows the murder itself. The viewers do not see Hannibal hunting for meat, but they almost always see the act of food preparation before the dish is served (Łuba 2014: 170). The associations that one may have with anthropophagy are completely distorted

by the series creators. Hannibal the cannibal is not stigmatised because he preys on human meat; instead, his cannibalism makes him outstanding and extraordinary. Hannibal's anthropophagy is a celebration of being beyond, being above others. It is a combination of epicurean cannibalism, based on sensual feelings, and a cannibalism rooted in domination (2014: 171).

Hannibal's culinary art is undoubtedly a means to aestheticize the killer, as, even though the viewers know where the ingredients come from, the artistic cookery allows them to ignore the cannibalistic nature of the protagonist. In the series, Hannibal spends a lot of time on dining with different characters from the show. If a character is at least remotely significant to the narrative, Hannibal has probably invited them to dinner. It would be a painstaking job to count the scenes which present food, in one way or another, since they are ubiquitous. However, every dinner gives the opportunity to get to know Hannibal better and empathize with the character on different levels. The guests whom Lecter invites to his humble dwelling are, most frequently, Will and Jack, yet he also shares a meal with a few other characters, which play essential role in the viewers' perception of the doctor.

In "Relevés," Hannibal visits Will at the hospital and brings him silkie soup (*Hannibal*, Season 1). One might say that the sheer act of bringing the meal does not justify the fact that it is Hannibal who actually may be held responsible for Will's worsening health condition. However, in fact, it makes Lecter look more sympathetic for a viewer. For one thing, the viewers are shown that the doctor cares about Will, even though he has been playing with Graham's psyche for the entire season. He provides him with a simple dish that is a stereotypical meal prepared by a family member for a sick person. It is possible that such a gesture makes the viewers, at least for the time being, forget about Lecter's own agenda and fall for his deceit. Moreover, the spectators may, by means of affective mimicry, feel the grief which Hannibal seems to experience seeing Will at the hospital. Therefore the expression that Hannibal is sympathetic has a double meaning: the doctor sympathises with Will, thus he is sympathetic towards him; additionally, he is sympathetic for the viewers, in other words, he is likeable for the audience.

Another aspect of the scene which makes the spectators like Hannibal even more is its humour. Lecter prepares a meal that for Will appears to be just a chicken soup, whereas, judging by his displeased response, Hannibal would not call his masterpiece using such simple words. The dialogue between the characters reads as follows:

WILL: Smells delicious.

HANNIBAL: Silkie chicken in a broth. A black-boned bird prized in China for its medicinal values since the seventh century. Wolfberries, ginseng, ginger, red dates, and star anise.

WILL: You made me chicken soup?

HANNIBAL: Yes. (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Relevés")

While watching the scene, the viewers can clearly see Hannibal's discontentment. Even though Mikkelsen's face does not express it, his tone of voice speaks volumes.

The second scene that, paradoxically, aestheticizes Hannibal is the dinner with Abel Gideon, during which Lecter serves Gideon's leg as a main course, politely, as always, encouraging Abel to taste it (*Hannibal*, Season 2, "Futamono"). The scene bears resemblance to the dinner described in the novel, when Hannibal treats Krendler with the detective's brain. The similarities do not end here. Abel Gideon for sure classifies as "the rude," thus it is difficult for the audience to feel empathy towards him. Nonetheless, the emotion that perhaps is prevalent among the spectators is curiosity, whether Gideon will consume his own leg, which, obviously, looks delicious. Having watched previous episodes the viewers know that it is not sense of morality that convinces Hannibal to slowly, cutting all possible members of his victim, kill Abel. This time, Lecter does not help out the FBI in delivering justice. He has his own vendetta against Gideon, who pretended to be the Chesapeake Ripper and took credit for Lecter's crimes. Yet, all in all, Hannibal does not torture an innocent person, the ambiance is, as usual, atmospheric, the food looks appetizing, the soothing classical music accompanies an interesting conversation between the characters:

HANNIBAL: Your legs are no good to you anymore. (...) This is a far more practical use for those limbs. (...) You were determined to know the Chesapeake Ripper, Dr. Gideon. Now is your opportunity.

GIDEON: You intend me to be my own last supper?

HANNIBAL: Yes.

GIDEON: How does one politely refuse a dish in circumstances such as these?

HANNIBAL: One doesn't. The tragedy is not to die, Abel, but to be wasted.

(*Hannibal*, Season 2, "Futamono")

Another scene that aestheticizes Hannibal's image is the scene of consuming "breakfast for dinner" (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Œuf"). After the traumatic events that Abigail Hobbes experienced, she puts her trust in Hannibal, who, together with Will, saved her life. Lecter, despite his cannibalistic and psychopathic nature, appears to have sincere fatherly feelings towards her. Fuchs writes that "it seems too simple a dinner for Hannibal's refined taste, but he has a good reason for choosing this exact meal, which goes beyond the boundary-defying gesture of having breakfast for dinner" (2015: 104). Sausages and eggs – breakfast – was the last meal Abigail had with her family. By saying: "it's also the first meal you're having with me" (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Œuf"), Hannibal attempts to take her late father's place. The scene presents Abigail sitting at the table together with Hannibal and Alana Bloom. The image truly resembles a portrayal of a typical family, which is confirmed by Abigail saying: "I see family" (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Œuf").

Surprisingly enough, the scene in which Hannibal kills an innocent person on-screen may also serve as a means to aestheticize the character. The comical aspect of the scene and the humour employed in the dialogue diminish the horrific aspect of the narrative and distance the audience so that it can vicariously enjoy the killing without feeling guilty. Being in Florence, Hannibal and Bedelia are having Professor Sogliato over dinner (*Hannibal*, Season 3, "Secondo"). The man despises

Hannibal and tries to humiliate him at a banquet that takes place the day before, saying that Lecter would not recognize Dante Alighieri's work, since he is a foreigner. After presenting his broad knowledge about Dante by reciting his sonnet to the public, Hannibal appears to give another chance to the professor and invites him to dinner. Nevertheless, the dinner does not end happily for the guest, since Lecter stabs him with an icepick. However, he does not kill him instantaneously. Sogliato seems not to feel any pain, but mutters and stutters that he went blind. The grotesque nature of the scene is emphasized by Hannibal's indifference to the whole situation. It is even more ridiculous when Bedelia decides to pull the icepick out, killing the professor. Hannibal seems to enjoy the run of events and ends his meal telling Bedelia that it is her who killed their guest... technically:

HANNIBAL: That may have been impulsive.

BEDELIA: You've been mulling that impulse ever since you decided to serve Punch Romaine (...).

HANNIBAL: Technically, you killed him (...).

BEDELIA: Two men from the Capponi are dead.

HANNIBAL: I can only claim one... technically. (*Hannibal*, Season 3, "Secondo").



Figure 2. This is probably the first murder that Hannibal committed, presumably, on the impulse, yet the dialogue between him and Bedelia as well as their attitude to the whole situation make the killing ridiculous. (NBC "Photo Galleries")

The significance of food is not as explicit in the novels and films, as it is in the series. The TV show transforms depictions of food into visual spectacle. Tom Gunning claims that the spectacle evokes curiosity, and incites shock and surprise (Fuchs 2015: 106). This visual spectacle of food depiction has been recently named as the phenomenon of "food porn." According to Signe Rousseau it denotes evocative depictions or even descriptions of food both in literature and visual media (Fuchs 2015: 107).



Figure 3. The images of food are omnipresent in the TV show.
(NBC “Photo Galleries”)

Aesthetic representations of food inspired *Hannibal*'s fans to prepare courses based on the dishes from the TV show. Probably the most well-known food blog about the cuisine from *Hannibal* is the one created by the food stylist, Janice Poon. Fuchs argues that such attempts toward recreating the meals from the series exceed the boundary between reality and fiction: “NBC’s show indicates that the repeated spotlighting and excessive visualization of food may spur viewers to transform textual traces into lived experience. In this way, images of Hannibal’s dishes cross the borderline between fiction and reality” (Fuchs 2015: 108).

Crossing the borderline only proves that food functions as an aesthetic means to create an artistic image both of the series and of Hannibal. It influences our senses and makes us forget about the cannibalistic aspect of the performance. Employing the previously mentioned theory of excess, *Hannibal* exceeds cannibalism by its aesthetic celebration. Encouraged by the show, the viewers prepare similar courses at their homes, crossing the boundaries between fiction and reality.

6. Techniques of Aestheticization

The television series employs a number of techniques in order to aestheticize the title character. In the TV show, Hannibal is presented as an upper class aesthete always elegant and sophisticated. Cinematographic frames are focused on texture details, accentuated lighting and foregrounding silhouettes, which provide the viewer with a painting-like image (Wise 2013). During the scenes of dialogues between Hannibal and other characters, the protagonist is granted a noticeable number of close-ups. Shaw claims that it is also the way in which the series is shot that has an impact on our perception of the main character, creating a more sympathetic portrayal of the villain: “close-ups of Hannibal help to secure our empathy for his character independently of our cognitive evaluations of his actions” (Shaw 2016: 201).

In the show, rarely do the viewers witness Hannibal's acts of murder, which also plays a key role in the process of aestheticization of the main character. The audience does not see Lecter kill anyone on-screen up until the eighth episode of the first season (*Hannibal*, Season 1, "Fromage"). Even then, Hannibal kills Tobias seemingly in self-defence, since it is the doctor who is attacked. According to Fuchs, the clues, not the evidence that Hannibal truly is the cannibal, construct an enchanting monster whom the spectators fear but also desire (2015: 100). Even if later on the audience witnesses Hannibal during the carnage, the viewers never see Hannibal kill as the Chesapeake Ripper. Pavelich claims that for the spectators it would be too much to "maintain anything like sympathy for the character" (2016: 129). He argues that the spectators can turn a blind eye to the fact that he is a murderer and a cannibal, yet seeing him rip the organs out while his victims are still alive "would be harder for audiences to swallow" (2016: 129). Therefore what the viewers do see on the screens are "only the stylish results of Lecter's crimes" (Shaw 2016: 203).

Taking techniques of the shooting into consideration, one may notice that the way in which the scenes are framed, the dark and cold colours, and finally, the expositions of the corpses resembling artistic tableaux (Łuba 2014: 171) clearly result in creating an artistic product. Pas claims that taking a closer look at the tableaux one can find "traces of Goya, Redon, Ensor, Gunther von Hagens Körperwelten, Joel-Peter Witkin, Andres Serrano, Sally Mann and many more" (2015). Not only can we find artistic elements in the crime scenes, but also we may appreciate the artistry when the setting seems ordinary. It does not matter whether Dr. Lecter is having a therapeutic session with his patients or enjoying an exquisite course at the table, an aesthetical aspect found in every scene presents the final product "as a work of art, embodying class, beauty and grandeur" (Wise 2013).

Nevertheless, it is the artistic aspect of murders that allures the audience. The television series like *Hannibal* tend to depict violence in such a way so as to attract their viewers and make them even more interested in the scenes which contain violent elements rather than the ones that do not depict cruelty. Therefore, one may find it difficult not to agree with Gronstad who claims that sometimes aestheticization is isomorphous with beauty (2008: 41). The creators of the TV show beautify the horrific aspects of the series by means of aestheticization. Clarke argues that *Hannibal's* narrative and form are thus constructed "around the aesthetic appreciation of murder, (...) render[ing] murder into art" (2016). In *Hannibal*, both violence and murder are presented "through the lens of art (Clarke 2016).

While discussing the theory of aestheticization employed in the television series, one has to remember that apart from showing a beautifying aspect of murder the viewer has to feel distant from the gory scenes. The role of aestheticization is also to let the audience enjoy the violence by reminding them it is not real. Bryan Fuller points out that this is exactly what the creators attempted to do:

If it's too real it's no fun for me. I'm very sensitive. The horror that we do on the show has a heightened quality to it and I kind of need that vibrating above reality-sense in order to enjoy the work, and have fun with it. If it's too real, then it's not as much fun. (Wise 2013)

Gwyn Symonds argues that by image-rendering open wounds or body parts can be depicted in great detail, depersonalizing violence and “fetishiz[ing] physical damage” (Clarke 2016). He thereafter claims that the viewers are able to detect details which are imperceptible to a human eye. By doing so, the spectators experience hyperreal representation of violence. In *Hannibal*, techniques such as manipulation of depth or close-ups give us the impression of a hyperreal aesthetics (Clarke 2016).

Angela Ndalians asserts that *Hannibal* is undoubtedly “one of the most powerfully affect-driven shows to ever grace the television screen” (2015: 279). She claims that the audience is influenced by a “cacophony of sensory assaults” (2015: 279). The show employs synaesthesia, since it stimulates our sense of smell by the visual representations of food. Apart from evocative depictions of food enabling us to almost smell and taste the courses, *Hannibal* refers to our senses by displaying corpses like pieces of art and influencing our emotions with the classical or psychedelic music. Ndalians writes that all of this “collaboratively work[s] to absorb the ‘viewer’ on the level of the sensorium” (2015: 279). She also adds that while watching *Hannibal*, the viewers get immersed “in a disturbing feast of the senses that simultaneously makes us, as much as the show’s characters, co-victims of Hannibal’s machinations” (2015: 280). Influencing our senses, *Hannibal* invites us to his “mad surrealistic world” (Logsdon 2015), and encourages us to look into our deeply hidden sinister nature.

7. Conclusions

The TV series employs various techniques to aestheticize the title character. The creators of the show present Hannibal as a clever manipulator, who remains mysterious and mesmerizing. They depict him as a figure of awe and power, commanding respect and attention. The viewers become prone to his hypnotising personality and are, as the characters of the show, victims of his manipulation. Just as in the novels and films, Lecter is an aesthete who is devoted to art and music. He creates artistic tableaux from the corpses and delicious masterpieces of culinary art from his victims’ flesh. What is more, the show does not diminish the role of humour as an intrinsic element of the character, employing jokes expressing power and inside jokes by means of which Hannibal appears to be even more sympathetic. Finally, the omnipresent images of food make the viewers even more engaged with the character and engrossed in watching the show.

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WORK IN PROGRESS**TOMASZ PACIORKOWSKI**

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Adam Mickiewicz

University in Poznań

An Overlooked Colonial English of Europe: the Case of Gibraltar

Abstract. Gibraltar, popularly known as “The Rock”, has been a British overseas territory since the Treaty of Utrecht was signed in 1713. The demographics of this unique colony reflect its turbulent past, with most of the population being of Spanish, Portuguese or Italian origin (Garcia 1994). Additionally, there are prominent minorities of Indians, Maltese, Moroccans and Jews, who have also continued to influence both the culture and the languages spoken in Gibraltar (Kellermann 2001). Despite its status as the only English overseas territory in continental Europe, Gibraltar has so far remained relatively neglected by scholars of sociolinguistics, new dialect formation, and World Englishes. The paper provides a summary of the current state of sociolinguistic research in Gibraltar, focusing on such aspects as identity formation, code-switching, language awareness, language attitudes, and norms. It also delineates a plan for further research on code-switching and national identity following the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Keywords: Gibraltar, code-switching, sociolinguistics, New Englishes, dialect formation, Brexit.

1. Introduction

Gibraltar is located on the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula and measures just about 6 square kilometres. This small size, however, belies an extraordinarily complex political history and social fabric. In the Brexit referendum of 23rd of June 2016, the inhabitants of Gibraltar overwhelmingly expressed their willingness to continue belonging to the European Union, yet at the moment it appears that they will be forced to follow the decision of the British government and leave the EU (Garcia 2016). Such a turn of events may lead to numerous changes in the sociopolitical structure of the community, which has never been stable for any significant length of time.

The present paper seeks to introduce readers to Gibraltar’s turbulent history and provide a review of the current state of sociolinguistic research concerned with identity formation, code-

switching, and language awareness, attitudes, and norms in Gibraltar. It also lays out suggestions for further research, and urges sociolinguists and those interested in language contact and New Englishes to pay closer attention to the processes currently taking place in this unique British colony.

2. Gibraltar past and present

2.1. Brief overview of external history

Before one delves into any consideration of the complex sociolinguistic situation of Gibraltar, a brief historical overview is necessary. Gibraltar came into the British hands in 1704, and has been officially British since 1713, which marks the date of the Treaty of Utrecht. The history of Gibraltar is, however, much longer than the period of the British settlement. Since earliest times, Gibraltar has attracted much attention from different races, nations and cultures due to its strategic geographic position. It is an apparent fact that dominance over Gibraltar grants dominance over the Straits commanding the entrance from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean (Levey 2008). After taking control of it in 711, the Umayyad Emirate and its successor states controlled Gibraltar all way until 1492, when it was captured in the name of the Duke of Medina Sidonia and proclaimed part of Spain by Queen Isabella. A long-lasting period of stability arrived in Gibraltar, which only came to a halt with the Spanish War of Succession. The war had its onset in the death of King Charles II in 1700, leaving no heir to his throne. Two contestants emerged, namely Duke Philip of Anjou, who was a protege of Louis XIV of France, and Archduke Charles of Austria. Fearing the threat to their interests of Bourbon rule over both France and Spain, Britain decided to support Austria and the Netherlands, which led to an Anglo-Dutch fleet conquering Gibraltar in 1704. Officially, “the Rock” was taken over in the name of the Archduke Charles of Austria; however, Britain unsurprisingly saw an immense strategic potential in this small piece of land (Constantine 2013).

Following the capture, a decade of political conflict and unrest spread around Europe. This ended in 1713 with the aforementioned Treaty of Utrecht which, in article X, formally declared Gibraltar a British property: “The Catholic King does hereby, for himself, his heirs and successors, yield to the Crown of Great Britain the full and entire propriety of the town and castle of Gibraltar, together with the port, fortifications, and forts thereunto belonging; and he gives up the said propriety to be held and enjoyed absolutely with all manner of right for ever, without any exception or impediment whatsoever.”

Since that day, Spanish governments have on numerous occasions tried to undermine the significance of the Treaty, but all those efforts have so far been to no avail. Initially, the Spanish thought the enactment of Article X would be temporary; therefore, a nucleus of the Spanish population remained in Gibraltar, at the same time providing a solid foundation for a new society under construction. The final Spanish effort to take back Gibraltar took place between 13th September 1779 and 12th March 1783, during the Anglo-French conflict accompanying the American War of

Independence. The fortress was defended by General George Eliott and around 5,500 to 7,000 men under his command, during what came to be known as the Great Siege of Gibraltar (Kramer 1986).

The Gibraltar of the 19th century saw three immense changes: its status was altered from merely a military outpost to a British Crown Colony, it gained importance due to the opening of the Suez Canal, and an Alien Order in Council was established in order to limit immigration to British subjects (Constantine 2013). The last development engendered a substantial wave of immigration from Malta and India. Nevertheless, there were numerous Spanish citizens commuting daily across the border to fill their professional positions. The distinction between the British and the “others”, which the UK government insisted on, became increasingly difficult to maintain over time. Ethnic differences were almost of no importance in Gibraltar from the very onset, as the colony was of a multiethnic nature. Many Spanish citizens also managed to receive permanent residence in Gibraltar, despite the laws in force, e.g. through marriage with British nationals (Constantine 2013).

The beginning of the 20th century was rather uneventful in Gibraltar, as Spain remained neutral during the First World War and no apparent threat to Gibraltar was present. More power was secured by the citizens of Gibraltar, as in 1921 elections took place and four positions on the City Council were filled by native Gibraltarians (Kramer 1986). Gibraltar also provided shelter for numerous Spanish refugees during the Spanish Civil War, when even *The Gibraltar Chronicle* was published with special war editions in Spanish (2008).

The Second World War initiated immense social and linguistic changes, as Gibraltar played a major role in the conflict, serving as a base for British naval convoys venturing to Malta. Many Gibraltarians were forced to leave their homeland and were relocated either to the United Kingdom or other Crown Dependencies, such as Jamaica. They were fully-immersed in the British culture and education, and some people were actually exposed to English as a native language for the first time (Constantine 2013). Both local and British identity were fostered, and important political changes were inspired (Levey 2008). The first political party of Gibraltar was formed, as many people felt mistreated by the British, since the repatriation process was far from perfect, and demanded more independence. The Association for the Advancement of the Civil Rights dominated the political scene of Gibraltar for the next forty years (Constantine 2013).

The 1960s began with the intensification of tensions between Gibraltar and Spain. Gibraltarians decided to organize a referendum to decide which side they would prefer to find themselves on, be it Spanish or British. A total of 12,182 people took part in the voting process, and just 44 opted for coming under Spanish rule. As Spanish pride was deeply hurt, in 1969 the border between Gibraltar and Spain was closed and remained so for the next 13 years. This radical step, which was supposed to crash the Rock both economically and morally, was implemented overnight and barred all cross-border activity. Contrary to the Spanish vision, however, the plan backfired, and the neighbouring Spanish villages suffered the most as Gibraltar continued to flourish (Levey 2008; Constantine 2013). Interactions with the native Spanish populations were limited and distrust towards the Spanish government peaked, leading to the decline of the Spanish language among Gibraltarians. Despite the blockade being lifted in 1982 and rekindling of a significant amount of cross-

border movement, the earlier state of contact with and proficiency in Spanish was never restored (Levey 2008).

2.2. Gibraltar today

The Rock today is inhabited by around 30,000 people. Its major ethnic groups include Spanish, Italian, English, Portuguese, and North African (United Nations 2016). Additionally, there are prominent minorities of Indians, Maltese, Moroccans and Jews, who have also continued to influence both the culture and the languages spoken in Gibraltar (Kellermann 2001).

Such a mixture of peoples, together with the peculiar and long troublesome geographical location of Gibraltar, raises many questions of language and identity, as people who live on the same territory for a prolonged time tend to develop shared values and interests, and eventually a sense of common local identity (Anderson 1991). Such groups often develop distinct ways of speaking which differentiate them from other geographical or social groups, thereby evolving into a speech community (Labov 1963; Milroy 1987; Melancon 2000; Milroy and Gordon 2003). This is especially apparent in the evolution of so-called “New Englishes”, as one can see for example in the case of Australia, where following independence the variety of English spoken there received official recognition and now constitutes a standard of its own (Moore 2008).

The official language of Gibraltar is English, which is used both in formal and educational settings; however, due to its complicated past and the proximity of Spain, Spanish is also widely spoken. Although it does seem to possess features differentiating it from the Andalusian speech forms of the neighboring *campo* region, it continues to belong to the group of Andalusian dialects.

It is often claimed, however, that the most distinctive language spoken in Gibraltar is the so-called *Yanito*, which was defined by Levey (2008) as “(...) an Andalusian dominant Spanish form of oral expression which integrates mainly English lexical and syntactic elements as well as some local vocabulary”. This definition implies that *Yanito* is a form of a code-switched discourse. The ability to switch easily between English and Spanish has often been commented on, including the near impossibility of spotting the moment at which Gibraltarians switch from one language to the other (Levey 2008). In this respect, Gibraltarians have even been compared to bilingual Puerto Ricans who live in the United States, but the social roles of code-switching in the two communities seem to be quite different (Moyer 1993).

The present-day sociopolitical situation of Gibraltar has been made even more complicated by the Brexit referendum of 2016, in which a whopping 96% of eligible Gibraltarians opted to remain in the European Union. Despite such an overwhelming victory for the “Remain” camp, it seems that Gibraltar will be forced to secede from the Union hand in hand with the United Kingdom against the will of the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants. As one may suspect, this has brought much unwanted uncertainty over the future of Gibraltar’s economy, laws affecting the movement of people, and even political status.

3. History of research on the linguistic situation in Gibraltar

Despite such a wealth of research possibilities and its accessible location, Gibraltar has so far remained relatively neglected by scholars of sociolinguistics, new dialect formation, and World Englishes. The only specialist studies devoted to the linguistic situation of Gibraltar are Kramer (1986), Moyer (1993), Kellermann (2001), and Levey (2008), and of these, only Levey 2008 focuses on Gibraltarian English as a new colonial variety. The status of Gibraltar as a blank spot on the map of postcolonial Englishes may be illustrated by its absence from such authoritative recent references on world and postcolonial Englishes as Kortmann and Schneider (2008) or Schreier et al. (2009). It is, therefore, important to pay closer attention to the work which has already been done on Gibraltar in order to suggest and delineate further research needs of Gibraltar.

3.1. Johannes Kramer, *Spanish and English in Gibraltar* (1986)

Kramer opens his study of Gibraltar by specifying three central issues:

1. the historical background of Gibraltar;
2. the educational system of Gibraltar;
3. the effects of the co-existence and intermingling of English and other languages spoken in Gibraltar, in particular Genoese, Andalusian Spanish, and Italian.

He also attempts to tackle the issue of English-Spanish bilingualism and “*Gibraltar’s Spanish dialect called Yanito*”.

The overview of the history of Gibraltar, which spans the period between 1704 and 1969, is thorough, well-researched, and provides a reader with a sufficient grasp of the colony’s external and social history. The following chapter, devoted to the educational system of Gibraltar, is based completely on the work of a young Gibraltarian which, as the author laments, remained unpublished. The focus here is mainly on the role of religion and religious organizations on education. Additionally, as Kramer pointed out, Gibraltar still remained a military outpost at the time of writing, centuries after its capture by the British, and thus it had no official educational bodies (Traverso 1980, quoted in Kramer 1984:31).

The chapter on the linguistic situation of Gibraltar is the longest in the book and begins by introducing descriptions of the separate languages involved in language contact. In comparison with the others, the Genoese variety of Italian seems to be relatively neglected, with only a brief mention of its origins. The influence it possibly had on the linguistic mix in earlier times remains unexplored. As remnants of the language can be found only in religious rites, it is assumed that Genoese disappeared due to immense pressure it experienced from Spanish (Kramer 1986).

The reasons for the importance of Spanish are investigated briefly and seem to boil down to the following:

1. the slow influx of Spanish speakers into Gibraltar despite law against such movements of peoples;
2. adstratum influence due to the proximity of Spain;

3. trade with Spain, communication with the Spanish-speaking workforce, and intermarriage. Notably, the existence of a Romance-based pidgin is presupposed for the 19th century (Kramer 1986).

As was the case with many British colonies, English was the language of the military and the British soldiers who occupied Gibraltar. No merit was seen in learning local languages, and thus the soldiers refrained from doing so. It is, however, probable that religion rather than language was the major deterrent to acquiring Spanish. Most soldiers were Protestants, while the speakers of Spanish were usually Catholics. The first locals to learn English as a second language were the Jews, who having suffered persecution in Spain felt no affiliation towards Spanish and therefore switched rapidly to English without ever looking back. They oftentimes served as translators for the military staff (Kramer 1986).

The motivation for the rise of English seems to be of a dual nature. Firstly, an external motivation arose due to the fact that speakers began to realize the necessity to have a decent command of English to land a well-paid job. Secondly, an internal motivation sprang from the growing distrust of Gibraltarians towards Spain.

A dictionary of *Yanito* presented in Kramer's study is taken directly from Manuel Sevilla's *Diccionario Yanito*, except that it has been subdivided into separate semantic fields. Kramer thereupon embarks on a presentation of the sound system of *Yanito* and laments the absence of Gibraltarian Spanish from Spanish dialectology, as the dialect simply seems to be nonexistent in the relevant literature. Having collected some vocabulary items, he compares them with the closest investigated regions, namely Tarifa and Manilva; the comparison is supplemented by an approximate phonetic transcription.

Interestingly, there seems to be evidence both supporting and disproving the hypothesis about Gibraltar's place among the Spanish dialects of Andalusia. Dialectal realizations which bear out the hypothesis are, for example:

1. Yeísmo – pronouncing *ll* as [y] and other sounds derived from it;
2. persistence of aspirate /h/;
3. partial assimilation of such consonant clusters as /gw/ and /bw/;
4. disappearance of intervocalic /d/ (Kramer 1986).

Among the features which argue against Gibraltarian Spanish as an Andalusian dialect are, for example:

1. lack of voiceless dental fricatives;
2. absence of velarisation of /n/;
3. nasalisation of the vowel preceding /n/ (Kramer 1986).

It is argued that these features may stem from the language-contact situation between Spanish and Genoese. This claim seems dubious, however, as the Genoese-speaking population was rather small in the early days of the colony and, additionally, most of the features may be ascribed to English-Spanish language contact (Kellermann 2001).

The examples of *Yanito* code-switching provided in Kramer's work come from *Calentita*, which is a column published in a Gibraltar newspaper *Panorama*. This column presents recent news in a commentary which is done by two typical housewives — Cloti and Cynthia.

Onomastic issues are also tackled, namely the etymology of the words *Yanito* and Gibraltar. *Yanito* is believed to come from Latin *plānus* (Spanish *llano*), which means 'flat'. It is pointed out that the word is often used to describe a spoken dialect in contrast to the written standard, as for example in the case of northern German (Kramer 1986). As is well known, the name Gibraltar originated from Arabic *jabal Tariq* 'Tariq's Mountain' and was given to the territory in the honor of the Berber leader who captured Gibraltar in 711, *Tariq Ibn Ziyad* (Kramer 1986).

To conclude, *English and Spanish in Gibraltar* is a landmark first attempt at describing and analysing the complex linguistic situation in Gibraltar. As such, it is an important achievement, even if the study at times comes across as haphazard and erratic in its methodology. In general, it is valuable today more as a guide for further research than as an empirical study. However, the work does successfully indicate gaps in the existing state of knowledge and identify problems for future research (Kellermann 2001).

3.2. Melissa G. Moyer, *Analysis of Code-Switching in Gibraltar* (1993).

Moyer's research plan, at first, had been to learn more about the linguistic situation in Gibraltar, but in the end the research question was narrowed down to an analysis of the code-switching phenomenon in Gibraltar. The speech community of Gibraltar is described, and the decision is made to treat it as an idealized unit for the sake of the study. Code-switching is defined as a communicative act between two proficient bilinguals or to be more exact: "where lexical elements from two languages are combined structurally in a single sentence or larger unit" (Moyer 1993:69).

The data was collected using the interview form, along with language diaries and questionnaires. However, the greatest challenge remained the observer's paradox. This was tackled by providing each recording with an appropriate commentary made by the researcher. Of a total of 21 recordings, 16 were selected as they represented a wide range of settings and situations. It is also crucial to mention that although 50 language diaries were administered, only 11 of those were turned in. In the diaries, the participants had to choose their dominant language (English, a mix of English and Spanish, a mix of Spanish and English, or Spanish) in the domains of work; telephone conversations; streets, and stores; and home. Six out of the investigated group tended to use more English than Spanish, and the remaining five more Spanish than English. The analysis of the domains indicates that Spanish is more heavily used in informal contexts (home and street), but interlocutors also need to be considered when determining the language of any conversation.

Moyer's study finds that code-switching is the most common form of linguistic form of expression except for the domain of telephone conversations. Usually the code-switched discourse is Spanish-dominant; however, it is noted that an English-dominant mix is often used to assert Gibraltarian identity. Therefore, code-switching or, in other words, *Yanito* may claim some form of covert prestige. The group, however, was relatively homogeneous in terms of social background,

as only two never continued their education in Britain, and just one was not a Roman Catholic. It thus needs to be underscored that such a sample is in no way representative of the population of Gibraltar as a whole. The thesis claims that the representatives of lower classes of the community show more local identity and tend to communicate more in Spanish and a mixture of Spanish and English, but this conclusion is based entirely on impressionistic observation.

The recordings are analyzed by means of discourse analysis, for which a wide framework is employed:

1. discourse strategies accomplished by a switch;
2. the search for nonliteral meaning in both macro- and micro-sociolinguistic realities.

Four different code-switching patterns in conversations are identified:

1. alternative use of two language by different participants;
2. combination of different semantic constituent within one sentence;
3. insertion of individual lexical items;
4. insertion of ritualized expressions.

To develop a theoretical framework which could account for meaningful and non-meaningful code-switching in relation to group and society, Moyer proposes the following scheme:

Table 1. Code-switching: Individual, Social and Interactional meaning
(adopted from Moyer 1993: 233)

Individual speaker production:	Meaning of code-switching:	
	Interactional meaning	Social meaning
Passive switching	RVI Responsive code-switching in verbal interaction	RSD Responsive code-switching in a social domain
Active switching	IVI Initiative code-switching in verbal interaction	ISD Initiative code-switching in a social domain

In this model, RVI and RSD represent passive code-switching, as the speaker is simply reacting to the previous utterance. This can be seen as a sign of solidarity in the RVI type or orienting oneself towards a certain societal domain in the case of the RSD type; for example, Gibraltarians tend to automatically switch to English in the domains of government and education. Code-switching discourse sometimes also seems to constitute the unmarked choice in verbal interactions (Moyer 1993). The IVI and ISD types of switches may be considered active, as the speaker takes the initiative either to achieve a certain discourse function and negotiate social relations (IVI), or establish a switch towards an interaction within a certain domain (ISD; Moyer 1993).

Within the wider sociolinguistic literature, numerous researchers have tried to establish constraints on code-switching, such as Muysken (1995), Poplack and Meechan (1995). However, their analyses fail to account for all the instances of code-switching observed in Gibraltar as some examples of sentential code switching cannot be explained as many of them are far from being ungrammatical due to the fact that they follow the rules of both English and Spanish grammars (Moyer 1993).

The data collection which led to writing of the thesis is to be praised. It is, however, problematic in that the selection of subjects seems to have a strong middle-class bias. The author, unfortunately, fails to provide us with a more detailed look at her findings. Nevertheless, Moyer's research is an important step towards uncovering the complexity of the linguistic situation in Gibraltar, and it provides important insight into the Gibraltarian speech community of the early 1990s.

3.3. Anja Kellerman, *A New New English: Language, Politics, and Identity in Gibraltar* (2001)

The aim of Kellermann's thesis was to examine language attitudes, language use, and language form in contemporary Gibraltar. To meet these research objectives, 70 interviews were conducted over three visits to Gibraltar in 1991 and 1992. Three major groups can be specified in the data, namely:

1. Gibraltarian teachers;
2. a small number of UK teachers, who served as a control group;
3. a community sample (Kellermann 2001).

The groups were sprinkled with a sample of the population which worked for the Gibraltar government: party leaders, employers, and educational experts (Kellermann 2001). Thus, an extensive spoken Gibraltarian English corpus was created, which could be subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Over the course of several generations, the society of Gibraltar has become a multinational one for a number of reasons. English is now the main language used in Gibraltar. Surprisingly, however, it was not imposed by the colonial power of the United Kingdom, but was seemingly voluntarily adopted by the population of Gibraltar. English began serving as an identity marker, and the shift away from Spanish could be understood as an "act of identity" (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985). It has gone a long way from being just the language of international communication to, in the end, the language of local communication as well. Additionally, the socioeconomic value of English is an important factor which contributed to Gibraltarians abandoning their first language in favor of English.

The administered language attitude survey seems to indicate that there continued to exist a general distrust towards Spain. The informants saw themselves on the spectrum between British and Gibraltarian, with 43% being pro-British, 23% feeling both British and Gibraltarian, and 34% considering themselves simply Gibraltarian. There was no integrative attitude present towards Spain. The majority of speakers also detest being depicted as Spanish, but do not mind being seen as Brit-

ish. The thesis suggests that an anti-Spanish complex runs deep in the society, and it remains to be seen if it is there to stay. Interestingly, *Yanito* seemed to enjoy quite a high level of covert prestige but was stigmatized as far as overt prestige was considered, the assumption being that this may be due to the aforementioned distrust towards Spain and Spanish (Kellermann 2001).

Owing to the growing indifference of Britain towards Gibraltar (illustrated by the sovereignty referendum offered by the United Kingdom in 2002 to share the territory of Gibraltar with Spain), the citizens began striving for more independence and the right to self-determination. This, in turn, gave rise to a local Gibraltarian English identity. The English part of the identity is, however, slowly becoming weakened, with the local Gibraltarian part continuously gaining strength.

The institutionalization of English and the adoption of British English as the pronunciation model, combined with the fact that for many educators English was a second language (and, therefore, their pronunciation diverged from that of the model), has given rise to a new variety, Gibraltarian English. A general tendency may be observed to opt for intermediate consonantal and vocalic forms which exist neither in British English nor in Spanish. There also exists a continuum ranging from pronunciations closer to the British model to highly divergent variants. This could serve as evidence that the normalization process is currently in progress, of which the end result seems to be located close to the British English standard, without entirely conforming to it.

The thesis is marked by great academic rigor and extensiveness of the data collection and analyses. It still remains to be investigated, however, whether the tendency towards the standardisation of a new Gibraltarian variety of English is still under way, as one must remember that the data used in the research was collected in the early 1990s and, contrary to what Kellermann claimed, could already have been somewhat outdated at the time of publication.

3.4. David Levey, *Language Change and Variation in Gibraltar* (2008)

According to the author, the study was undertaken due to all the recent developments in the field of sociolinguistics in Europe at large. Its main objective was to analyze the use of English among adolescent speakers in Gibraltar and compare them with the patterns found in older generations.

The study was undertaken in three middle and two secondary schools. A total of 72 Gibraltarians (38 between the ages of 13-19 and 34 between the ages of 9-12) were selected, and from them a 40-hour long audio corpus was created. Social variables such as age, sex, ethnicity, and class are considered. The steps taken to minimize the observer's paradox included, for example, building friendly relationships with the subjects beforehand and postulating introductory questions to establish a level of rapport. The interviewees also remained largely uninformed about the objective of the research, so that that knowledge would not interfere with their linguistic performance. The tasks were:

1. personal information questions;
2. reading wordlists;
3. translation wordlists;
4. interviews on language attitudes, preference, and competence (Levey 2008).

The results of Levey's study indicate that *Yanito* and Spanish seem to be losing ground due to the increasing dominance of English as the first language, as the latter seems to have overtaken the Home domain. A growing number of children are brought up solely with English spoken to them. Such a turn of events is attributed to the border blockade of 1969 (see above, §1).

A conspicuous divide is found between the preadolescents and adolescents, with the former using more English than the latter. This may either be indicative of a language shift in progress or simply reflect a momentary, age-graded phenomenon, as younger pupils tend to be more impressionable and, therefore, influenced by their teachers and parents. Interestingly, *Yanito* was found to be spoken with older siblings, but English with younger ones (Levey 2008).

With respect to class, upper-middle class and middle-class children opt for using English as their main mode of communication, while those from lower social classes tend to use Spanish. Social networks also come into play and seem to correlate with the Jewish, Indian, and Moroccan ethnic groups, with the first two priding themselves on the best command of English. It is also pointed out that the autochthonous Gibraltarians seem to operate according to distinct patterns, as they exhibit the highest level of Spanish maintenance and the most considerable generational shift to English. In contrast, gender was deemed to have no effect (Levey 2008).

As far as phonetic realizations are concerned, Gibraltarian English seems to be approaching the British English standard more than previous studies suggested. It is not, however, claimed that this is the variety that the speakers fully aim at. Typical features of Spanish substratum influence, such as /tʃ/, ʒ/dʒ, j/dʒ, or the KIT/FLEECE and TRAP/STRUT/BATH mergers, were no longer found. Young Gibraltarians also exhibit certain substandard features found in other English-speaking communities too, such as T-glottaling and TH-fronting, but Levey stresses that they cannot be assessed and judged using the same methods as in the United Kingdom, as their social meaning and context differ greatly.

It is suggested that Gibraltarian English may further assimilate to the British standard due to the positive attitude towards the United Kingdom among the young. Additionally, both preadolescents and adolescents often made remarks that suggest that they consider the local vernacular to be a limitation or defect on the part of a speaker, rather than a legitimate dialect. This shift in progress is also considered an "act of identity", but one that emphasizes the British national and linguistic identity of Gibraltarians. Nevertheless, the paper concludes that the further development of English in Gibraltar may not necessarily follow this trend, and therefore that more research is required.

The author contributed a sound piece of scholarly work on the phonetics of the current state of Gibraltarian English. Perhaps the only faults of the study, but unfortunately significant ones, are that: 1) it is focused only on the phonetics of Gibraltarian English, and 2) the issue of code-switching is almost entirely omitted from discussion, as the author treats "English" and "Spanish" as discrete, unitary linguistic systems. One can only agree with Levey, however, that more research is necessary to determine the long-term trajectory of language shift and attitudes among speakers of Gibraltarian English and their relation to changing self-identification.

4. Conclusions and goals of future research

It is necessary to note that despite a significant wealth of research possibilities, Gibraltar has so far failed to attract much interest from the broader scientific community, including sociolinguistics or sociologists. Weston (2011) suggests that this may be because Gibraltar remains under official British rule and therefore to many seems unworthy of study. The present paper embarked on the task of encapsulating the history of sociolinguistic research in Gibraltar to date. Undertaking this research is of paramount importance, especially in these post-Brexit referendum days when the sociopolitical situation in Gibraltar has become even more complex: although 96% of Gibraltarians voted to remain in the European Union, it appears that Gibraltar will have to leave the EU together with the United Kingdom. Such events are called Events X by Schneider (2008), defined as moments at which the citizens of a subordinate territory realize that the importance they ascribed to their motherland is not reciprocated. A growing sense of local identity may influence language use and may lead to a shift in the sociolinguistic spectrum among Gibraltarians. The conclusion seems inescapable that a new set of sociolinguistic data must be collected in order to monitor the processes currently taking place in Gibraltar, as they may help uncover not just linguistic, but deeper societal phenomena underway in times of political and social unrest.

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NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

Mayowa Akinlotan currently works with the Linguistics Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin, USA. His research interests cut across structural variation, new Englishes, sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, syntax, language and literature, etc. His works have appeared in conference proceedings and different journals including *English Today*, *Anglica*, *Token*, *Glottology*, *Baltic Journal*, etc. Email address: mayowa.akinlotan@utexas.edu

Anita Chmielewska is a PhD student at the Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw. Her research interests include modernist poetry and contemporary British-Jewish literature. Email address: anita.chmielewska2@gmail.com

Zeynep Harputlu Shah is an assistant professor in the School of Foreign Languages at Siirt University, Turkey. Her research interests include literary biography, Victorian and Edwardian literature, urban history, technology and literature, theories of subjectivity and everyday life, theories of space and place, and urban novels by Dickens, Gissing and Morrison. Email address: zeynepharputlu@siirt.edu.tr

Tomasz Paciorkowski is a doctoral student at the Faculty of English at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. His interests include World Englishes and native speakers in ELT. Email address: tpaciorkowski@wa.amu.edu.pl

Ewa Ziomek is a PhD student at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. In her doctoral dissertation she analyzes the portrayal of the serial killer in contemporary literature and film, focusing on the metamorphosis that the character of the murderer has undergone throughout the last decades. Moreover, she also examines the impact of aestheticization of violence on the readers/spectators of crime texts. Email address: ewaziomek92@gmail.com

